





GLASNIK SLOVENSKEGA ETNOGRAFSKEGA MUZEJA  
BULLETIN OF THE SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

# E·T·N·O·L·O·G

9/1999, št. 1

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LJUBLJANA 1999



Etnolog

Glasnik Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja

Letnik 9 (60), leto 1999, št. 1

ISSN 0354-0316

UDK 39(497.4)(05)=163.6+-111U=133.1

E-T-N-O-L-O-G

Etnolog I(1926/27), 1926 - XVII(1944), 1945 in

Slovenski etnograf, I(1948), 1948 - XXXIV(1988-90), 1991.

Od leta 1926 do leta 1999 je izšlo 60 letnikov glasnika Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja.

From 1926 to 1999 60 volumes of the bulletin of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum have been published.



999906669

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ISSN 0354-0316

UDK 39(497.4)(05)-163.6+-111U=133.1

## ETNOLOG

Glasnik Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja  
Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum

Etnolog izhaja enkrat do dvakrat letno. Izdaja ga Slovenski etnografski muzej.  
Published annually or semiannually by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

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Naročila in pojasnila na naslov / Information and Subscriptions:  
Slovenski etnografski muzej, Metelkova 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija.  
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# ETNOLOG

Revija je indeksirana v podatkovni zbirki Institut de l'information scientifique et technique pod šifro  
COTE INIST 25965 in v Anthropological Index Onlin  
(Anthropological Index of the Royal Antropology Institute).

Redakcija te številke je bila končana aprila 1999.  
Za znanstveno vsebino svojega prispevka odgovarja vsak avtor sam.  
Ponatis člankov je mogoč z dovoljenjem uredništva in navedbo vira.

Cena te številke je 2500 tolarjev. V ceno je vključen DDV.

Tiskano s subvencijo Ministrstva za kulturo in Ministrstva za znanost in tehnologijo  
Republike Slovenije ter Oddelka za kulturo in raziskovalno dejavnost Mestne občine Ljubljana.

Etnološki in antropološki  
vidiki preučevanja smrti  
*Ethnological and Anthropological  
Approaches to the Study of Death*

Mednarodni simpozij / *International Symposium*

5. – 8. november 1998 / *5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November 1998*

institute for ethnology and folkloristics  
of the slovene ethnographic museum

*Ethnological Studies of  
Death and Life after Death*

Svetlana M. TRUŠTAR,  
Slavic Folk Conceptions of Death  
According to Linguistic Data  
17

(Slavic folk conceptions of death  
according to linguistic data)

Biljana ŠPILČIČ,  
Violent Death in South Slavic  
Children's Folklore  
27

Violent death in south slavic  
children's folklore

Ekaterina V. ČIČIKOVA,  
The Mind of Death in Russian and  
Caucasian Folk Narratives  
39

The mind of death in russian  
caucasian folk narratives

Lyubmila VUKOVIČ,  
Notions of Ghosts and Bad Death  
in the System of Magic Beliefs  
45

(Notions of "ghosts" or "bad" death  
in the system of magic beliefs)

Neža TOMŠIČ-PRINČIČ,  
Talking about the "Other World":  
Cross-Cultural Models and Myths  
Ethnic Experiences  
53

(Talking about the "other world":  
cross-cultural models of the  
"other world")



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Finloški in antropološki  
vidiki proučevanja amari  
Ethnological and Anthropological  
Aspects to the Study of Amari

Magistrski študijski program  
Slovenski jezik, književnost in kultura

avtor: [illegible]  
mentor: [illegible]

Ljubljana, [illegible] 20[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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## VSEBINA

## CONTENTS

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UVODNA BESEDA	11	INTRODUCTION
<b>Verovanja in mitične predstave o smrti in posmrtnem življenju</b>		<b>Beliefs and Mythological Notions of Death and Life after Death</b>
Svetlana M. TOLSTAYA: Slavic Folk Conceptions of Death According to Linguistic Data 17		(Slovanski ljudski koncepti smrti glede na lingvistična dejstva)
Biljana SIKIMIĆ: Violent Death in South Slavic Children's Folklore 27		(Nasilna smrt v južnoslovanski otroški folklori)
Yekaterina YAKUSHKINA: The Motif of Death in Serbian and Croatian Folk Narrative 39		(Motiv smrti v srbskem in hrvaškem ljudskem pripovedništvu)
Lyudmila VINOGRADOVA: Notions of »Good« and »Bad« Death in the System of Slavic Beliefs 45		(Koncepta "dobre" in "slabe" smrti v verovanjih Slovanov)
Iveta TODOROVA-PIRGOVA: Talking about the »Other World«. »Our« Conceptual Models and »My« Human Experience 51		(Razprava o "drugem svetu". "Naši konceptualni modeli" in "moje" človeške izkušnje)

---

---

Marija STANONIK:  
Nagrobni napisi na slovenskih  
pokopališčih  
63

*Epitaphs in Slovene Cemeteries*  
74

Ljupčo S. RISTESKI:  
The Concept of Death in the Folk  
Culture of Macedonians  
87

*(Koncept smrti v makedonski ljudski  
kulturi)*

---

**Stari in novi rituali  
ter tradicionalne  
in sodobne šege ob smrti**

***Old and New Rituals – Traditional  
and Contemporary Customs  
Connected with Death***

Helena LOŽAR-PODLOGAR:  
Pogrebne šege na slovenskem  
podeželju  
101

*Death Customs in the Slovene  
Countryside*  
108

Urszula LEHR:  
The Magic of the Time of Death. A  
Contribution to the Study of Funeral  
Customs in the Carpathian Village  
117

*(Magija časa ob smrti. Prispevek  
k raziskavam šeg ob smrti  
v karpatski vasi)*

Inja SMERDEL:  
S postelje do pokopališča.  
Zgodba o mrliškem vozu  
127

*From Bed to Cemetery.  
The Story of a Hearse*  
132

Branko ĐAKOVIĆ:  
About the Custom of Repeated  
(Double) Burial  
137

*(O šegi ponovnega (dvojnega) pokopa)*

Mateja HABINC:  
Visiting and Tending the Graves with a  
Special Reference to the Case-Study in  
Brežice  
145

*(Obiskovanje grobov in skrb zanje na  
primeru študije iz Brežic)*

---

Marta GREGORČIČ:  
Zmanjkalo je solz.  
Konceptualizacija fenomena smrti  
skozi časovno prostorsko dimenzijo  
in tradicionalno  
vs. moderno  
na primeru pogrebnih obredov  
163

*Out of Tears.  
Conceptualization of the Phenomenon  
of Death through the Time-Space  
Dimension and the Dichotomy Between  
Traditional and Postmodern Funeral  
Rites*  
179

Mirjam MENCEJ:  
Verovanje o vodi  
kot o meji med svetovoma  
živih in mrtvih  
195

*Beliefs about Water as a Boundary  
between the World of the Living and  
the World of the Dead*  
200

Anna PLOTNIKOVA:  
The Earthly Loci of Death: the  
Coffin, the Grave, the Cemetery  
205

*(Zemeljski prostori smrti:  
krsta, grob, pokopališče)*

**Multidisciplinarni vidiki  
preučevanja smrti**

***Multidisciplinary Aspects of the  
Study of Death***

Robert ORAVECZ:  
O vsebini suicidalnih zapisov  
slovenskih samomorilcev in  
poslovilnih pisem rodoljubov,  
ustreljenih med drugo svetovno vojno  
219

*On the Contents of Suicide Notes and  
the Farewell Letters of Patriots,  
Executed during the Second World War*  
225

Uroš BAVEC:  
Arheološko najdišče in legenda  
o umrlih:  
primer Gorenji Mokronog  
231

*An Archaeological Site and the Legend  
of the Dead:  
Case-Study of Gorenji Mokronog*  
241

Željko DUGAC:  
Frescos and Graffitos as Witnesses  
of Mass Death  
247

*(Freske in grafiti kot prič  
množične smrti)*

---

**Antropologija smrti**

Maja ŠUBIČ, Tomaž KRPIČ:  
Kokoš, cachiru  
in druga leteča bitja  
255

Irena ROŽMAN:  
Odnos do smrti z zgledom homeopa-  
tskega tabuja med nosečnostjo  
285

Borut TELBAN:  
Smrt in sodba živih  
v papuanovogvinejski  
skupnosti  
295

Natalija VREČER:  
Smrt in žalovanje v begunstvu:  
Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje v Sloveniji  
321

Maja MILČINSKI:  
The Problem of Longevity and  
Death in Daoism  
339

Marija Mojca TERČELJ:  
Pojmovanje smrti v stari Mehiki  
in religiozni sinkretizem v današnjih  
obredih ob smrti  
(s posebnim poudarkom  
na kulturi *zoque*, Chiapas)  
349

SODELAVCI 370

**Anthropology of Death**

*The Hen, Cachiru  
and other Winged Creatures*  
271

*Attitudes to Death with Regard to a  
Homeopathic Taboo During Pregnancy*  
290

*Death and the Judgement of the  
Living in a Papua New Guinean  
Community*  
308

*Death, Grief and Mourning in Exile:  
Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia*  
330

*(Problem dolgoživosti in smrti  
v daoizmu)*

*The Conception of Death in Ancient  
Mexico and the Religious Syncretism  
of Present-day Death Rituals  
(With Special Emphasis on the Zoque  
Culture, Chiapas)*  
359

CONTRIBUTORS

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## UVODNA BESEDA

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Nena Židov

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11

Odkar Etnolog izhaja v novi podobi, se je precej »okrepil« tudi njegov obseg. Kljub temu da se v uredništvu zadnja leta trudimo, predvsem zaradi omejenih financ, ki so nam na voljo, da bi nekoliko »shujšali« Etnologa, nam to nikakor ne uspe. Tolažimo pa se z mislijo, da obseg Etnologa kaže na njegovo priljubljenost med pisci prispevkov. Kljub temu, da načelno izdajamo eno številko na leto, smo se tokrat odločili, da bo Etnolog izšel v dveh številkah.

V prvi številki letošnjega Etnologa, ki je pred vami, objavljamo izbor referatov, ki so bili predstavljeni na mednarodnem simpoziju Etnološki in antropološki vidiki preučevanja smrti. Simpozij so organizirale osrednje slovenske etnološke ustanove: Oddelek za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Slovenski etnografski muzej in Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje pri ZRC SAZU. Simpozij je potekal od 5. do 9. novembra 1998 v prostorih Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja.

Številni udeleženci in udeleženke so imeli možnost prisluhniti izredno zanimivim referatom, ki so iz različnih zornih kotov osvetljevali fenomen smrti. Da je šlo za izrazito multidisciplinarno srečanje, potrjuje dejstvo, da so na simpoziju aktivno sodelovali etnologi, antropologi, jezikoslovci, sociologi, psihologi, zdravniki, psihiatri, filozofi in arheologi. Imeli smo priložnost poslušati referente in referentke iz Slovenije, s Hrvaške, iz Srbije, Makedonije, Bolgarije, s Poljske, z Madžarske, iz Rusije in Nemčije. Da je bil simpozij - kljub za marsikoga »čudni« temi - zanimiv tudi za širše poslušalstvo, je vse tri dni kazala prenatrpana muzejska dvorana, v kateri je potekal simpozij.

Ker smo v uredništvu Etnologa prepričani, da je simpozij pomembno doprinesel k preučevanju fenomena smrti, smo se odločili, da bomo večji del predstavljenih referatov tudi objavili. Simpozij je bil razdeljen v več tematskih sklopov, katerim sledijo tudi prispevki, objavljeni v pričujoči številki Etnologa. Slovenskim avtorjem smo dali možnost, da svoja besedila objavijo v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku, besedila tujih avtorjev pa objavljamo le v angleščini, z izvlečkom v slovenščini. Angleških izvlečkov ne objavljamo, ker so bili še pred simpozijem natisnjeni v Knjigi povzetkov / Book of Abstracts.

V razdelku *Verovanja in mitične predstave o smrti in posmrtnem življenju* Svetlana M. Tolstaja predstavlja nekaj temeljnih idej in semantičnih modelov, ki se kažejo v besednjaku in frazeologiji »o smrti« v slovanskih jezikih. Biljana Sikimić opozarja na prisot-

nost nasilne smrti v nekaterih otroških folklornih besedilih in besedilih, namenjenih otrokom, **Jekaterina Jakushkina** pa predstavlja smrt v okviru življenjske usode posameznika, kot se kaže v srbski in hrvaški slovstveni folklori. **Ljudmila Vinogradova** išče slovenske predstave o »dobri« in »slabi« smrti v povezavi z opozicijo naravne in nasilne smrti. **Iveta Todorova-Pirgova** govori o predstavah o »drugem svetu«, kakršne so se izoblikovale v okviru širše skupnosti, in o »drugem svetu« glede na izkušnje posameznikov. **Marija Stanonik** na podlagi nagrobnih napisov na slovenskih pokopališčih ugotavlja, kako žalujoči gledajo na življenje in smrt, ter sledi spreminjanju nagrobnih napisov. **Ljupčo Risteski** piše o pojmovanju smrti v makedonski ljudski kulturi.

Razdelek *Stari in novi rituali ter tradicionalne in sodobne šege ob smrti* zapolnjujejo prispevki sedmih avtorjev in avtoric. **Helena Ložar-Podlogar** predstavlja tradicionalno obredje ob smrti na slovenskem podeželju. **Urszula Lehr** opisuje magično in religiozno vedenje, povezano s pogrebnimi šegami, v karpatskih vaseh. O transportu umrlih na Slovenskem piše **Inja Smerdel**. **Branko Đaković** predstavlja šego dvojnega pokopa pri južnih Slovanih. **Mateja Habine** piše o obiskovanju in skrbi za grobove na pokopališču v Brežicah. **Marta Gregorčič** primerja odnos do smrti in umrlega ter s tem povezane pogrebne obrede in šege nekoč z današnjo pogrebno industrijo. **Mirjam Mencej** predstavlja verovanje o vodi kot o meji med svetovoma živih in mrtvih pri Slovanih. Prispevek **Anne Plotnikove** govori o ljudskih verovanjih in obredih, povezanih s krsto, grobom in pokopališčem.

V razdelku *Multidisciplinarni vidiki preučevanja smrti* **Robert Oravec** prikazuje zgodovino raziskovanja poslovilnih pisem samomorilcev in išče skupne poteze suicidalnih zapisov slovenskih samomorilcev in poslovilnih pisem rodoljubov, ustreljenih med drugo svetovno vojno. **Uroš Bavec** razmišlja o razlogih za »mitizacijo« nekaterih grobišč in njihovo ohranjanje v spominu okoliških prebivalcev. **Željko Dugac** na podlagi fresk v istrskih cerkvah rekonstruira odnos prebivalcev Istre do smrti v času velikih epidemij v 15. in 16. stoletju.

V razdelku *Antropologija smrti* **Maja Šubic** in **Tomaž Krpič** v besedi in sliki predstavljata krilate živali, ki jih v različnih kulturah najpogosteje povezujejo s smrtjo. **Irena Rožman** piše o odnosu do smrti na primeru homeopatskega tabuja med nosečnostjo. Vpogled v smrt in sodbo živih v papuanovogvinejski skupnosti nam omogoča prispevek **Boruta Telbana**. **Natalija Vrečer** nas seznanja z doživljanjem smrti in žalovanjem bosanskih beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji. **Maja Milčinski** piše o problemu dolgoživosti in smrti v daoizmu, **Marija Mojca Terčelj** pa o pojmovanju smrti v stari Mehiki in religioznem sinkretizmu v sodobnih pogrebnih obredih v Chiapasu.

Čeprav tematika smrti za marsikoga na prvi pogled ni ravno atraktivna, vas vabimo k branju prispevkov, ki so nedvomno zanimivi tako za strokovno kot za širšo javnost.

Bralcem se opravičujemo za morebitne napake v angleških besedilih. Avtorji so namreč sami poskrbeli za prevode, uredništvo pa zaradi omejenih finančnih sredstev ni moglo poskrbeti za angleško lekturo vseh prispevkov.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since *Etnolog* appears in its new form, its volume has quite expanded. Because of the limited financial means that are at our disposal the editors have endeavoured over the past years to keep the journal from growing, but with little success. Thinking positively, this of course also means that the scope of *Etnolog* indicates how popular it is among contributors of articles. Though in principle one volume is published annually, we have now decided that *Etnolog* will be published in two volumes.

This first volume of *Etnolog* presents a selection of papers, presented at the International Symposium "Ethnological and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Death". The symposium was organised by the main Slovene ethnological institutions: the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and the Institute of Slovene Ethnology at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts. The symposium was held from 5 to 9 November 1998 in the premises of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The numerous participants had the opportunity to listen to eminently interesting contributions which shed light on the phenomenon of death from different angles. The symposium's notably multidisciplinary nature was reflected by the active participation of ethnologists, anthropologists, linguists sociologists, psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists, philosophers and archaeologists. Papers were presented from Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Russia and Germany. In spite of its "weird" topic the symposium also attracted the interest of the wider public: the hall in which the symposium took place was occupied to the last seat for three days.

The editorial board of *Etnolog* believes that the symposium was a major contribution to the research of death and decided to publish the majority of the papers presented at it. The symposium was divided into several thematic sections and the same division is observed for the papers, published in this volume of *Etnolog*. The Slovene authors were given the opportunity to publish their papers in Slovene and English, while the papers of foreign authors are published only in English with Slovene abstracts added. The English abstracts are not published here since they already appeared in the symposium's Book of Abstracts.

In the section *Beliefs and Mythological Notions of Death and Life after Death* by Svetlana M. Tolstaya presents some fundamental ideas and semantic models as they appear in the vocabulary and phraseology of Slavic languages. Biljana Sikimić draws attention to the presence of violent death in some children's folklore narratives and in texts meant for children; Yekaterina Yakushkina, on the other hand, presents death as a part of an individual's destiny as it appears in Serbian and Croatian literary folklore. Ljudmila Vinogradova searched for Slavic ideas about "good" and "evil" in connection with the contrast between natural and violent death. Iveta Todorova-Pirgova reflects on ideas about the "other world" as they established themselves within a wider community, and on the "other world" as conceived by individuals. Marija Stanonik researched tombstone inscriptions in Slovene cemeteries to find out how the mourning



view life and death and traced the changes in tombstone inscriptions. **Ljupčo Risteski** writes about the conception of death in Macedonian folk culture.

The section *Old and New Rituals - Traditional and Contemporary Customs Connected with Death* presents contributions by seven authors. **Helena Ložar-Podlogar** introduces the reader to death customs in the Slovene countryside. **Urszula Lehr** describes magic and religious behaviour connected with funeral rites in a Carpathian village. How the dead were and are transported in Slovenia is illustrated by **Inja Smerdel**. **Branko Đaković** presents the custom of repeated burial with the South Slavs. **Mateja Habinec** writes on visiting and tending graves in the cemetery of Brežice. **Marta Gregorčič** compares the attitude towards death and the deceased and the funereal rites and customs connected with both attitudes in the past with the present-time funeral industry. **Mirjam Mencej** presents beliefs in water as the boundary between the world of the living and that of the dead with the Slavs. **Anna Plotnikova's** paper deals with popular beliefs and rituals, connected with coffins, graves and cemeteries.

In the section *Multidisciplinary Aspects of the Study of Death* **Robert Oravec** presents a history of the research of farewell letters of suicides and searches for common elements in the suicide notes of Slovene suicides and in the farewell letters of Slovene patriots, executed during the Second World War. **Uroš Bavec** reflects on the reasons for the "mythical attitude" towards certain cemeteries and how they live on in the memory of the nearby population. **Željko Dugač** analysed frescoes in Istrian churches in order to reconstruct the attitude of the population of Istria toward death during the period of the great plagues of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In the section *The Anthropology of Death* **Maja Šubic** and **Tomaž Krpič** present in text and illustrations the winged creatures commonly associated with death in different cultures. **Irena Rožman** writes on the attitude toward death in the case of a homeopathic taboo during pregnancy. Insight into death and the judgement of the living in a Papua New Guinean community is provided by **Borut Telban's** article. **Natalija Vrečer** introduces us to the experience of death and mourning of Bosnian refugees in Slovenia. **Maja Milčinski** writes on the problems of longevity and death in Daoism, and **Marija Mojca Terčelj** on the conception of death in ancient Mexico and on the religious syncretism in present-day death rites in Chiapas.

Though to many death as a topic may not appear attractive at first sight, we invite you to read these articles which are undoubtedly interesting from a professional angle, but also to the wider public.

We apologise to our readers for possible errors in the English texts. The authors were responsible for the translations and due to our limited financial means the editorial board was not able to have all of them edited.

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# VEROVANJA IN MITIČNE PREDSTAVE O SMRTI IN POSMRTNEM ŽIVLJENJU

## *BELIEFS AND MYTHOLOGICAL NOTIONS OF DEATH AND LIFE AFTER DEATH*

ATROCIDITY IN THE DEATH CAMPS OF POLAND

BY DOMINIQUE VILLEY

The author of this book, a French historian, has written a study of the death camps in Poland during the Second World War. The book is written in a clear and readable style, and is a valuable contribution to the history of the Holocaust. The author examines the role of the Polish people in the Holocaust, and the impact of the Holocaust on Polish society. The book is a well-written and informative study of the Holocaust in Poland.

In her book, *Atrocity in the Death Camps of Poland*, Dominique Villey provides a history of the concentration camps in Poland and examines the role of the Polish people in the Holocaust. She discusses the impact of the Holocaust on Polish society and the role of the Polish people in the Holocaust. The book is a well-written and informative study of the Holocaust in Poland.

It shows that the extermination of Polish Jews and Gypsies was not a sudden event, but a process that began long before the war. The author examines the role of the Polish people in the Holocaust, and the impact of the Holocaust on Polish society. The book is a well-written and informative study of the Holocaust in Poland.

Though it may seem as if the Holocaust was a sudden event, it was in fact a process that began long before the war. The author examines the role of the Polish people in the Holocaust, and the impact of the Holocaust on Polish society. The book is a well-written and informative study of the Holocaust in Poland.

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# SLAVIC FOLK CONCEPTIONS OF DEATH ACCORDING TO LINGUISTIC DATA

Svetlana M. Tolstaya

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17

## IZVLEČEK

### **Slovanski ljudski koncepti smrti glede na lingvistična dejstva**

Avtorica navaja nekaj temeljnih idej in semantičnih modelov, ki se kažejo v besednjaku in frazeologiji "o smrti" v slovanskih jezikih.

1. Koncept duše in interpretacija smrti kot "ločitev duše od telesa, njen odhod iz telesa" in podobne izraze je mogoče najti v izrazih (povezanih z umirajočo osebo) kot, na primer, "nekdo ima dušo v svojem nosu" (srbsščina), "v zobeh" (bolgarščina) itd.
2. Eden najpomembnejših konceptov v "besedilu o smrti" je ideja poti, zato smrt opisuje tako veliko glagolov gibanja. Umirajoča oseba tako "gre narazen", "leti", "potuje", "je na poti" itd.
3. Interpretacija smrti kot vrnitve na zemljo, ki je bila element in material za ustvarjenje človeka (primerjaj z Genezo), predstavlja semantično osnovo naslednjih izrazov: "iti v črno zemljo", "iti pod črno zemljo", "biti poročen s črno smrtjo", "jesti zemljo" itd.
4. Naslednja ideja o smrti je koncept konca, sklenitev življenja, izčrpanje virov, življenjskih moči in pripadajočega časa. S tem v zvezi so povezani naslednji izrazi: "priti do konca", "končati se", "biti zunaj let", "pojesti življenje nekoga" itd.
5. Krščanske koncepte smrti kot poti v novo življenje ali novo rojstvo lahko opazimo v izrazih, kot so, na primer, "rešiti se" v bolgarščini, roditi se, "da umreš" itd.
6. Včasih je zunanji simptom umiranja ali specifičnost pogrebne šege uporabljen kot izrazni motiv. Na primer "zaviti z očmi", "dati roke skupaj", "imeti kolivo v ustih" itd.

**Ključne besede:** umiranje, umrla oseba, duša, pogrebne šege, pot, zemlja, besednjak o smrti

**Key words:** dying, diseased person, soul, funeral rites, route, earth, vocabulary of death

Comparative poorness of verbal representation of such an important fragment of the traditional world picture as folk concepts of death and the corresponding rituals and everyday behavior has more than once been pointed out by scholars investigating Slavic folk culture. Such poorness is even more evident against the background of the developed terminology and phraseology of the wedding ritual and matrimonial beliefs. It is normally accounted for by the consecration of the theme of death, by the danger of direct nom-

ination of the very phenomenon of death, the deceased, the other world etc. «The vocabulary of death» comprises mostly euphemistic designations and idioms based on non specific vocabulary, nevertheless justified by the whole system of concepts concerning life and death, correlated with the ritual of leave-taking of the deceased, burial and remembrance. To a considerable extent the sphere of the meanings (concepts) elaborated in the vocabulary and phraseology of death coincides in various Slavic languages, which fact, considering their etymological community, allows to reconstruct ancient Slavic beliefs relating to death and, so to say, the whole «text of death».

It seems that the only «specific» area in the Slavic vocabulary of death are the words containing the common Slavic root *\*mьr-/mer-/mor*, from which the «key words» *\*sьmьrьtь* 'death' and *\*-mьrěti* 'to die' represented in all the Slavic languages are derived. Nevertheless, even these words, as shown by V. V. Ivanov (ИВАНОВ 1987) and V. N. Toporov (ТОПОРОВ 1991), in the Indo-European retrospective turn out to be not void of inner form, i.e. semantically derived and reduced to be primary meaning 'to disappear', a corresponding verb (alongside with the meaning 'to die') having been registered in ancient Hittite texts. Such semantic development 'to disappear' → 'to die' is convincingly explained as an ancient euphemism (while opposite direction of semantic development seems unlikely).

Such actual, for the Hittite language, i.e. inner form has, of course, been wholly erased in the Slavic ground and the verb *\*-mьrěti* is undoubtedly non-motivated in Slavic languages. Nevertheless, the ancient semantic model 'to disappear' → 'to die' with certain semantic filiations like 'be missing, be lost' → 'to die' (or semantically correlated causative row: 'to destroy' → 'to kill, to put the death') turns out to be actual also for the Slavic languages and is encountered in a considerable layer of so-called «secondary», i.e. motivated vocabulary of death. I mean such verbs involved in the field of death as *\*tєrєti (sє)* 'to lose, be lost', *\*gubiti (sє)/ \*gьbnoti/\*gybati (sє)* 'to destroy, be destroyed', *\*propasti/\*propadati* 'to be missing', *\*tratiti* 'to spend', *\*konьcati (sє)/ \*konьciti (sє)* and some others, e.g. *\*gladiti*.

All these verbs with the common main meaning 'to disappear, to be missing' or (causative) 'act so that something /somebody disappears, is missing' (and their derivatives) may, in various Slavic languages, have the meaning 'to die /to put to death, to kill'. Being unable to quote here the necessary illustrative material, I would just like to point out that this semantic connection 'to disappear' → 'to die' is confirmed and supported by the connection between opposite (antonymous) meanings: 'to find /be found' and 'to bear /be born' (words with the meaning 'to find /be found' have in a few Slavic languages the meaning of 'to bear /be born', Толстая 1997). Such correlation of words and meanings reflects, characteristically of the Slavic folk culture, the mirroring opposing concept of birth and death, two polar marks of human life (see Толстая 1990). It should be also noted that the verbs nominating burial in the Slavic languages *\*chorniti*, *\*chovati*, *\*pretati* are indirectly connected with the same semantic sphere of «losing-finding». On the one hand, we find antonymous correlation 'to lose /have lost' ~ 'to keep / have kept' (i.e. 'not to lose' / 'not to have lost'), and on the other hand there is semantic opposition 'to hide' ~ 'to find'.

Such essential, for the folk tradition, category, as a contraposition of good, natural, self death to bad, unnatural death, is also reflected in the vocabulary of death. The very common Slavic word *\*sъmьrtь* originally used to denote a natural, good, right death (which is expressed by the prefix *\*sъ-/\*su-*, meaning 'good' and 'own'). Unnatural, bad death is denoted by the verbs *\*gubiti (se)/ \*gъbnoti/\*gybati (se)* 'to destroy, be destroyed' with the primary meaning 'to bend', and further, possibly, leading to the notion 'crooked', having stable negative connotations and interpreted as 'something wrong, bad, dangerous' (Жуйкова 1998; Толстая 1998).

Let us briefly examine a few more motifs and semantic models reflected in the vocabulary and phraseology of the Slavic languages, being key ones the folk concept of death.

1. Let us begin with the cardinal, for the given sphere, concept of the soul and interpretation of death as separation of soul from the body. According to Serbian beliefs, a living person's soul is «tied» to the body (whence expressions *везана душа*, «tied, i.e. corporal soul»), while after death it frees itself from the body (it is nominated *слободна душа* «free soul»). See Чајкановић 1994.5: 72. This concept interprets death as «separation» of the body from the soul, as the breach of the bond, which bond is sometimes perceived as christening or matrimonial bond, whence the Serbian expressions like *раскрестити човека с душой* «unchristen somebody with the soul», *свјешеник раскрещивае умирајућег с душой* «the priest unchristens the dying person with the soul» (Vukanović 1986: 304).

There exist various notions about the exact location of the soul in the body, as well as about the manner in which it leaves the body in the moment of death. Most frequently it's believed that the soul leaves the body through the mouth (Serbians have a proverb *Душа једна врата има*, (i.e. «there is only one door for the soul»), but it might also be the nose (Serbians say about a dying person *Душа му у носу стоји* «he has his soul standing in his nose», (Чајкановић 1994/2: 62), or *дошла душа у нос* «the soul has come up to the nose»); cf. Serbian folk curse *Душа ти на нос да излазила* (Piroт, Златковић 1989: 32). It might also be the throat (or a hollow on the neck): *дошла душа под грло* «the soul has come up to the throat»; Bulgarians consider the teeth to be the last refuge of the soul before death, so they say about the dying person *носи душата в зъбите си* «he wears his soul in his teeth» or *душата му е до зъбите* «his soul has come up to the teeth» or *държа душата си зад зъбите* «he keeps his soul behind his teeth» (ФРБЕ 1: 285-286).

It might be the eyes: Silesian Poles used to believe that the eyes burst in the moment of death, and that is how the soul comes out of the body (Moszynski 1967: 594; cf. also Чајкановић 1994/5: 108). It may be also the nails: Bulg. *душа и под нокът остая* «the soul holds on but under the nail». Czechs believe it to be the elbow: *mit duši v lokti* «he has his soul in his elbow», Serbians believe it to be the bones: *Дух му се у кости забио* «his spirit has hidden in his bones», *Запекла му се душа у костима* «his soul has been baked in the bones», *Једва носим у костима душу* «I can hardly wear my soul in my bones» (Чајкановић 1994/5: 72). Russians also consider the soul to gradually «run out» of the body, cf. the expression *в чем только душа держится*

«what is there to keep the soul» (though it might also have a different inner meaning, underlining bodily diminution, insufficiency). Russian dial. *Душа коротка стала* «the soul has become short», Ukrainian *душа на одній нитці держиться* «The soul holds on to a thread» (ФСУМ 1: 277) etc.

East-Serbian (from Pirot) curses might also nominate the ribs as the place of souls the departure: *Душа ти на ребро излезла* «your soul has come to your rib» etc. (Златковић 1989: 32). The same texts may have, in accordance with the general «lowered» stylistics of the curses and their characteristic «non-normativity», the motif of the soul's departure through *the anus* (*Душа на дуне да ти излази кад појдеш на онија свет* - the same), which is in accordance with the folk concept of death of wizards, witches etc.

Separation of the soul from the body can be interpreted as the action of either the soul itself or the dying person or some other «third» subject. In the former case, the soul, as a rule, «comes out» (the standard expression about death in Polesye: *душа вышла*) or «goes away» (*душа уходит* - about the dying person, Zakarpatye, Sinevir). Moreover, the soul may «fly away» (East-Slavic), «fall down» (Serb. *док му душа не испадне* - Трипковић 1967: 5), «break off» (Тешић 1988: 144-145); cf. also Old-Russian *изрони душу из храбра тела* («Слово о полку Игореве»), Rus. Karel. *душа выпадает* «the soul falls out» about a dying person (СРГК 2: 13). When the dying person is the agent, he «parts with», «separates with» the soul, «bids farewell» to it, «lets out, spews, exhales» the soul, «climbs down the soul» (Vologda dial. *сдобляется с душеньки спуститься* - Брагина 1980), *отдаёт Богу душу* «gives the soul to God». Serbians say about the agony that the person «collect the soul» or «fights with the soul» (agony being interpreted as the fight between the angel and the death, the fight between the angel and the devil for the human soul). See ГЕМБ 49: 163.

«The third» party of the act may be God who takes the soul (Serb. *узме му Бог душу* «God will take his soul»), an Angel or Archangel, a saint sent by God to take the soul out of the person and bring it to heaven, or Death, devil, an evil spirit that «grab» the soul with a scythe, hooks, a knife, a sabre etc. (Byelor. Gomel. *анхал за правым вухам, нечисть за левым, хто з их пераможа, той душу бярэ*).

Relatives of the dying person take care to, according to a folk expression, *пропустить душу* «let the soul through», while it is leaving the body, therefore unfasten the clothes, open the windows, the doors, the chests, and in the case of a difficult agonizing death they raise up the tie-beam, take to pieces the ceiling or the roof. The expression *сторожить душу* or *караулить душу* «to guard the soul» is connected with the known up to now custom of putting a vessel of the water at the head of dying person's bed and make sure, by the waving of the water, that the soul has left the body.

It is quite often that in similar expressions the word *душа* «the soul» is substituted by *дух* «the spirit»: *дух вышел, дух вон, испустил дух* «the spirit went out, the spirit got out, let the spirit out» etc. Peasants of Vologda region, while throwing some earth onto the coffin, used to say: «*дух вон, слух вон, вид вон*» «the spirit out, hearing out, seeing out».

The spirit, the air, the vapour, in folk concepts, are the substance of the soul, its material embodiment. Though sometimes similar context might echo the Christian

concept of the soul based on the triad body-soul-spirit, in Polesye beliefs, expressions *дух на небо иде, а душа в землю* «The spirit goes to the heaven, and the soul goes to the earth» or *душа, вона шчо, вона никуда не попадае, згниває* «the soul does not get anywhere, it rots» (РА, Rovno region, Glinnoye).

2. The second essential motif of the «the text of death» is the route. The fact that it is not a concept introduced by scholars understanding the ritual of burial as *rite de passage*, but a category inherent in the folk culture itself, is justified by the vocabulary and phraseology connected with the idea of movement and route, widely represented in all the Slavic languages. The verb *ходить* ‘to go’, as well as its derivatives and synonyms, is in the centre of these nominations of death. They say about the dying person that he *отходит* «going off», about the deceased person - *отошел* «went off» (*Вот у нас у соседки мужик отошел, молодой еще был*). Tambov dialects have *уходиться* in the meaning of ‘to be drowned’ (*У нас уходилась одна молоденькая, так ее схоронили*), and *ухожики* are ‘the drowned ones’; the same dialects present a rare usage of the verbs *улететь, отлететь* «to fly off» in the meaning ‘to die’ (*У меня два мужа улетели; Начал обираться, значит скоро улетит от нас*) (Махрачева 1997); it is possible that similar usage has been affected by common expressions like *душа отлетела, улетела* «the soul has flown off». The verb *убраться* «to be removed» is known in the same meaning: *У меня сын убрался, молодой такой был, 32 года* «My son was removed, he was so young, 32 years old» (Tambov).

There is another verb noted in Polesye, *бродить* «to wander», denoting the state of the agonizing dying person. The motif of «the water route» is present in Perm dialect expressions *уйти за реку, уйти за Каму, тот берег видать* «to go over the river, to go over the Kama, the other bank can be seen» (about the dying person) (Подюков 1991: 65). The way after death can be directed either upwards (Rus. Arkhangel. *на гору собирается* «is going up the mountain», about the dying person, АОС 9: 82) or downwards (Perm. *уйти книзу* ‘to die’, Подюков 1991: 67).

Eastern Slavs often say about the dying person that he is *собирается в дорогу, дивится на дорогу* «getting ready for the journey, looking at the road» (РА, Brest region, Rubel), *уже на дорозе* «already on the way» (РА, Brest region, Khoromsk), *идет в далекую дорогу* «is leaving on a far journey» (Zakarpatyie, Sinevir). It was customary in the Vologda region to place the dying person onto the floor along the floor-boards *чтоб ему по путям было* «so that he is on his way». Bulgarians used to name the dying person *пътник* «a traveller» (Вакарелски 1938: 258), and the special loaf of bread baked just after death, was called *пътнина*, and it was believed that, after the ritual breaking up of the loaf, the soul of the deceased «started on its route» (Лозанова 1997: 42). In Polesye, while nailing the coffin, they wished the deceased person «a happy journey». All the Slavic traditions prohibit crying, bewailing, keening during the agony, with the stable motivation: «the dying person ought not to be disturbed on his route».

However, the verbs of the movement are more frequent in full constructions with the designated aim, the ultimate point of the route. This ultimate point is usually defined as «home»: the dying person *собирается до дому, до дому поглядае, идет в*



*дорогу до дому* «is going to leave for home, looking forward to his home, going on his way home». The inevitability of death is thus alluded to: *да дому тре ици кались* «some time it is necessary to go home», *треба додому уже ити ему* «he has to go home already» (PA Gomel region, Ruchayevka), about the deceased: *нишов до дому* (PA, Rovno region, Svaritsevichi), *уже [пошел] на вечный дом* «already [gone] to the eternal home» (PA, Kiev region, Kopachi).

The aim of the route may also be meeting one's deceased relatives, joining the assembly of ancestors, described in the following expressions: *пошел до дедов, до жонки, до родыны, пошел до своих, до всех своих, пошел до своего рода, до своего дому, уже с небоичиками говорит, з продкамы за руку здоровається* «gone to the grandfathers, to one's wife, to the family, to one's own people, to all one's people, gone to one's kin, to one's home, already talking with the deceased, greeting the ancestors by the hand» (PA, Brest region), *на свой хлеб пошла, на свое местожительство* «gone to eat one's own bread, to one's own place of abode» (Vologda region) etc. An adapted to Christianity variant of such beliefs is reflected in phrases like *отправился к Богу на небеса, на тот свет собрался* «gone to God in heaven, getting ready for the other world».

From time to time, there can be met expressions connected with archaic notions about the vegetable kingdom as the locus of the dead. Thus, an old woman from Ol-tush, a Polesye village, said about herself: *Я худо поеду в гай* «I shall soon go to the grove» (PA, Brest region); in Kaluga dialects there has been registered an expression *собирается в березки* «going to leave to the birches», which means 'close to death'. In Siberian dialects *пойти в березовый (в зеленый) гай* «to go to the birch (green) garden» means 'to die'; Russians in Lithuania say *под березы пора* «it is time to go under the birches»; in Novgorod region *уйти под елку* «to go to the fir-tree» means 'to die' (see Подюков 1991: 71). A Yaroslav phrase *пора на веники* «time to go to the besom» with the same meaning is also interesting (it is connected with the custom of putting besoms into the coffin).

3. The semantic models mentioned above suppose vertical linear movement of the soul - from the dead body up to the heaven above. They are opposed by the phraseology understanding death, so to say, a corporeal point of view, i.e. as the way of the person from the face of the earth into its entrails, as coming back into the element and substance from which the human being has been created (cf. from the Orthodox Christian burial service «яко земля еси и в землю отыдеши» «thou art like the earth and into the earth thou shalt go»).

Carpathian Rusyns say *пойти до чорної землі* «go to the black earth» meaning 'to die'; Serbians say *он оде под црну земљу* «he goes under the black earth»; Bulgarian curses: *Чтоб тебя взяла черная земля!* «May the black earth take you!»; *Иди ты в черную землю!* «Go into the black earth!» etc. Slovenes say about the deceased person «he has been wed to the black earth» or «he is in the arms of the black earth»; and Greeks say «he has been eaten by the black earth» (see Толстой 1997), cf. Perm. *землю накормить* «to feed the earth» meaning 'to die' (Подюков 1991: 62). Kashubs similarly say «he has long been grinding the earth» (Sychta 6: 221). There is a group of sim-

ilar phrases in the Czech containing the word *hlina*, which in the given case also means 'the earth': «there is already a pile of clay upon him», «he is in the black clay», «he is grinding, puddling the clay», «he has gone to Hlinsk» etc. All these expressions mean 'he is already dead, in the grave' (Zaorálek 1947: 109-110).

Kashubs speak about old age thus: «earth is already coming upon me», «earth is pulling him», «he is growing into the earth» (Sychta 6: 221). It can be heard in Polesye about very old people that they «smell of earth» (PA, Kiev region, Kopachi), or they «getting ready to go into earth» (PA, Brest region). The Perm dialectal expression *до пещу* «until the sadn» means 'until death'; they say about very old people *песок на глаза сыплется* «sand is pouring onto one's eyes» (Подюков 1991: 67), cf. also Novgorod. *глаза песком засыпать* «to pour sand onto one's eyes»; Arkhang. *пещу на глаза положить* «to put some sand onto one's eyes» (АОС 9: 82) etc.

There exists a widely spread belief, according to which a person should die on the ground, so it was customary in numerous local traditions to take the dying person down from the bed onto the ground or at least onto the floor, especially during an agonizing death. Serbians thought that the dying person should by all means «grab the earth», «seize the earth», for being separated from mother earth, he cannot die.

Eastern Slavs and Russians in particular have an expression *земля не принимает* «the earth won't admit», which represents a very ancient concept concerning good, natural, «one's own» death and – bad, «not one's own», «evil» death. It was forbidden to bury in the earth those who died of unnatural reasons – self-murderers, hanged people, drowned people. Such category of the deceased people and corresponding beliefs and rituals have been thoroughly investigated by D. K. Zelenin (Зеленин 1995), who, using a Northern Russian dialect term called such deceased people *заложные*. According to folk beliefs, every time a *заложный* deceased person is buried in the earth, he is coming back to the ground, which just is that «the earth won't admit»; he is not prone to decay and, by nights, gets out of the grave and harms people. Such beliefs have given origin to a special burying practice: such dead bodies were not buried in the earth, but they were thrown out into deserted places or left on the place of death, heaped up with twigs and branches of trees, brushwood, stones etc. to prevent them from «walking». Serbians thought that «the earth won't admit» great sinners – perjurers, murderers, transgressors of property laws etc. Bodies of such sinners were burnt after their death, and the custom was preserved in some places up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Филиповић 1959).

The corporeal image of death gives origin to nominations of death based on the outward observed symptoms like *очи в гору подошли* «eyes gone up» (Polesye), *глазки встали* «eyes stopped» (Russia); *на леву сторону глаза вывернулись* «eyes turned out to the left» (Arkhangelsk region, Каспина 1996: 49) cf. the proverb *ложись под образа да выворачивай глаза* («lie down under the icons and turn your eyes out», АОС 9: 82); *ноги протянул* «stretched one's legs» (Russia), *задраць (адкінуць) ногі* (Byelorussia, Юрчанка 1972: 235), Pol. *zadartł gegi* «put one's feet up», SW) etc., as well as characteristic features of the very funeral rites, e.g. *сложить руки* «to fold arms» (*У меня муж рано сложил руки в 31 год* «My husband folded his arms early -

at age of 31», Tambov region, Махрачева 1997); *треба рабиць пака руки складеш* «one has to work until folds one's arms», PA, Gomel region, Ruchayevka), Rus. *под образа лечь (положить)* «to lie/lay down under the icons», Rus. Perm. *пора полотенце готовить, руки на грудь положить, растянуться вдоль лавки* «time to get the towel ready; to put the arms on one's chest; to spread oneself along the bench»; Bulg. «he carries *kolivo* in his mouth» (ФРБЕ 1: 749) etc.

4. The next semantic model of nomination of death stresses the concept of the end, the completion of one's life, of «exhaustiveness» of one's life resources (lot), of the life forces and assigned time. The verbs *конать* and *кончаться* are central in the group; they are used to denote agony and death in all the Slavic languages (let us note that the original semantics of these verbs again brings us back to the concept of «disappearance»; both *кончаться* and *исчезнуть* mean 'to cease to exist'). Beside these verbs, there are synonymous expressions describing various aspects of the «end», e.g. Serb. dial. *пребринуо све бриге* «all his cares have been left behind him», or *оставио кашику* «put his spoon aside» (Тешић 1988: 145), Rus. Volog. *отряхнулся от жизни* «shuffled off life»; about old people: *отживает, доживает, чужой век живет* «living through the remainder of one's days; living somebody else's life» (Poles. *чужую жизнь заедает* «eating somebody else's life»), *вышел из годов* «run out of one's years»; *безгодовий* «having no years», cf. about one's death *часуется* «living out the hours». According to folk beliefs, a human being's earthly existence is measured and every violation of one's measure of time (not living long enough up to one's measure or, vice versa, a too long life) is considered to be dangerous for the person as well as for the whole society.

The Christian idea of death as the end of the earthly route and transition to a new eternal life, as a second birth is basic for such nominations of death as Bulg. *спаси се* «saved oneself», *роди се* «was born» (Вакарелски 1939: 10). Russian *dukhobors* «do not call a Christian's extinction - death, but a *change* (*изменение*), and so do not say *our brother is dead*, but *our brother has changed*» (evidence of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Тихонравов 1862: 12 of spec. pagin.).

A few cultural metaphors can be pointed out, being used in the vocabulary of death. Thus, the concept that a man has his counterparts in the world of nature has produced such phrases as *закатилась его звезда* «one's star has set», primarily correlated with the phenomenon of death and connected with the belief that at the moment of one's birth a new star is lighted in the sky, and at the moment of one's death it is extinguished. The same image of life as light and death as darkness is present in Pole-sye phrases *догорела свечка* «the candle is gone out» (about one's death) and *уже ваша свичка догарывает* «your candle is burning out» (your life is at an end) or in Perm. expression *свеча погасла* «the candle is gone out», i.e. 'death has come' (Подюков 1991: 70). A Serbian expression *посјекло се му дрво* «his tree is felled» is connected with a folk belief, according to which a man has a counterpart in the world of trees, and, if the tree is felled, the man will die.

Among the stable and widely met in the vocabulary of death metaphors is the one describing death as a sleep, according to the Russian proverb «сон смерти свой» (i.e. «sleep and death are closeones»). The image has served as the basis for such well-known

expressions as *уснуть вечным сном* «fall to eternal sleep», *усопший* «the late», *успление* «Assumption» and, moreover, it is being developed as an ordinary picture of sleep, bed, lying in bed etc., cf. Perm. *растянуться подоль лавки, постелить постельку, еловым одеялом укрыться* «to stretch oneself along the bench, to make one's bed, to cover oneself with fir blanket» meaning 'to die' etc. (Подюков 1991: 70).

The presented examples of phraseology and vocabulary concerning death, should they be taken outside the ritual context and the context of beliefs, might be interpreted as ordinary linguistic metaphors, euphemistic substitutions of the verb *умирать* (*умереть*) 'to die', produced by the taboo on the direct nomination of death and the process of dying; however, the very character of such substitutional nomination brings out the deep roots of such «secondary» vocabulary of death in the cultural concepts, its direct connection with the beliefs and ritual practice, its cultural foundation and semantic depth.

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# VIOLENT DEATH IN SOUTH SLAVIC CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

Biljana Sikimić

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27

## IZVLEČEK

### **Nasilna smrt v južnoslovanski otroški folklori**

Prisotnost motiva nasilne smrti v določenih otroških folkloernih besedilih lahko predvideva magični izvor besedila samega. Dokazi za to predpostavko so otroška prekletstva in zaklinjanja, kjer je smrt ena glavnih dogajanj. Primer za to je norčevanje iz pripadnikov drugih narodnosti (Vlahov, Latinov, Ciganov itd.): "Ti, Latin z repom, jutri boš umrl." V nekem zaklinjanju, na drugi strani, najdemo tudi tipično grožnjo živali iz otroške folklore: v pesmi, ki jo pojejo polžu, temu ukazujejo, naj pokaže svoje roge: "Polž, pokaži roge, če jih ne boš pokazal, te bom ubil s sekiro na zeleni trati!"

Ni potrebno dokazovati, da so tudi pesmi pestunij besedila magičnega izvora, nasilna smrt pa je motiv, ki ga najdemo pogosto tudi v drugih besedilih odraslih, ko se igrajo z otroki. To velja za sledeči motiv iz srbske oziroma hrvaške pesmi: "List se je zvrnil, starka je ponorela in pobila vse otroke", kjer lahko starko razumemo kot eno izmed otroških demonov. Verz "Volkovi bodo ubili mati na polju", ki mu sledi prošnja volku, naj tega ne stori (ker je mati dobra in bo dala svojemu detetu mleko), je drugačen. Pomembno je, da je perspektiva ubijanja samo grožnja, tako kot je to vidno v drugih otroških besedilih magičnega izvora. Smrt živali ima popolnoma drugačen status in velja za naravno dejanje, celo za smešno dejanje (npr. "Ko so ubili gos, so vsi otroci jokali, ko pa so jo pojedli, so bili vsi veseli."). "Naravne" smrti kot opozicije "nasilni" smrti v južnoslovanski otroški folklori ne najdemo. V južnoslovanskih jezikih je nasilna smrt najpogosteje izražena z besedama "zaklati" in "zadaviť".

**Ključne besede:** folklor, južni Slovani, smrt, otroštvo, žrtev

**Keywords:** folklore, South Slavs, death, childhood, victim

The aim of this article is to point at some lacunas evident in contemporary South Slavic folklore research. We have in mind the whole line of children's rhymes that are deliberately completely avoided in both folklore anthologies and textbooks. The main reason for this neglecting is probably the fact that contemporary reader, and even scientific researcher, find these texts morbid.

Our starting point was the distinction between natural and violent death in Slavic perception of the world, considering the violent one a not-one's-own death. The idea

was to check how it is reflected in South Slavic folklore texts, paying special attention to the usage of these texts for and by the children. We will focus only on children's point of view of incidental situation, as it is performed by the adults for children in the early childhood, and how it is performed by children themselves, some years later.

Due to the specific type of material certain terms used in this article need additional explanation. The violent death is frequently displayed in children's folklore through the incidental situation. Incidental situation can remain not effectuated, i.e., remain on mere threat or curse, or some similar verbal expression. This situation is created by actors, that in children's folklore could be directly mentioned in the text itself (directly mentioned actor is the explicitly quoted actor that is unchangeable and not depending on the context), and indirect participants of the incidental situation, so-called contextual actors. Contextual actors take part in the text from the context, from performer's or narrator's standpoint. This actor is changeable, and in each situation of the text performing it is related to the concrete child or children. This child is mentioned by its proper name, or its presence is evident from the use of personal pronoun in first or third person singular. First person is used by child itself or by the narrator instead of the child.

Actors of incidental situation can assume two different positions - the positions of agens or patiens, frequently related by conjunctio instrumentalis (cf. Toporov 1998). In anthroponymic code agens can be, e.g., Aunt, Turk, Queen, or Me. The Wolf or Bear belongs to the zoomorphic code agens, in ridicules agens could even be Hen. The agens in children's curses sometimes is not specified, but it is obvious - the concept of the death in curse being provoked, violent one, e.g.: *tomorrow you will die*. The usage of the distinction ones-own and not-ones-own death related to the patiens in children's folklore can provoke interesting consequences. The violent death (slaughter, where the agens is a man) has completely different status (status of the ones-own death) and it is considered a natural act, even funny, e.g.: *When they killed the goose, all the children cried, when they ate the goose, all were happy*. On the other hand, perishing of the wild animal (disregarding the agens) has a status of not-one's-own death. Natural death of the human being (one's-own death) opposed to the violent one, is rarely found in South Slavic children's folklore.

Specific material of the death orientated children's folklore for the purpose of this article is limited to texts only, children's games being considered solely if their texts are also independently attested, not vice versa. Existence of the same text both within ritual and independently (without context) is always good indication in searching for the text origin, and further for the origin of the motif itself. This treatment will be illustrated mainly with such transformed texts, starting from the children's games, or adults' ritual folklore, children magic texts and other texts of not marked usage. The inverse process was also possible, i.e., some neutral children's text gradually could substitute original incantation texts.

## 1. Anthropomorphic patiens

### 1.1. Contextual actor (Child): agens (Aunt, Uncle, She-bear)

Involved contextual actor - child participates in the game as potential victim, as it is said in the text itself. Children's game comprises closed circle, one child in the middle is to be Aunt (*tetka*), with its hands she imitates the process of making cookies. At the end of the rhyme, Aunt becomes angry and drives children away, catches them and strangles them, because of the teasing words of children's singing: *Tetka kolačice pljeska na bukovu listu, list se provali, tetka se pomami, pa svu decu pognjavi*. ("Aunt is making cookies, on the beech leaf, the leaf broke, aunt went mad, and killed all the children", Vlasenica in Bosnia). This children's game text is well-known all over Serbo-Croat language territory, which is not the case with the game itself. The same text is a song sung to a child while swinging or as a lullaby. According to the agens type all the known variants are divided in three region groups, while the patiens is contextual actor - the child to whom this rhyme is sung. In the East agens is She-bear: *Nuni nuni nuška, kraj Morave kruška. Tuj mi sedi tetka, te mi ljulja Petka, Nuni, nuni, Petko, ete gu ide mečka da udavi Petka*. ("Pear tree beside Morava. There sits my aunt, swinging Petko. Sleep, sleep, Petko, here it comes she-bear to choke you", Niš, Serbia); in central area agens is Uncle: *Ljulja ljulja ljuške, na Moravi kruške. Gde je moja tetka? Kolačice pljeska. I meni bi dala ali ne da tetak otpao mu repak na veliki petak*. ("Pear trees are on Morava. Where is my aunt? She is petting cookies. She would give them to me, but the uncle would not allow, let his tail fall off on Good Friday", Čačak; Serbia); in western regions text model the agens is Aunt: *Hajdemo mi na more, na zelene javore, gdjeno moja tetka kolačice pleska na bukovoj ljeski; ljeska se prevali, tetka se pomami*. ("Let us go at the seaside, on green maples, where my aunt is petting cookies on beech leaves, leaf overturned, my aunt became furious", Herzegovina). Starting from the supposition that even in this case peripheral regions are more conservative than central ones, we can suppose that the Uncle is secondary in text variants, together with his action (he would not allow cookies to the child). In that case, the Aunt and She-bear are isofunctional and the incident they provoke is fatal.

The actions performed by the mentioned actor (Aunt), which is not always agens, are: petting cookies, crushing nuts and nibbling hazel-nuts. Searching for explanation of this actor's function, the folk tale about the origin of fleas, lice, nuts and hazel-nuts, can be helpful. An old woman was bored, and she prayed the God: *Daj mi Bože jal ušicu, jal bušicu, ja oraščić, ja lešnjčić - da se zabavljam* ("God, give me louse, or flea, or nut, or hazel-nut, to amuse myself"). Its function in text can be made clear with South Slavic ethnographic data about existing correlation between the children, from one side, and nuts and hazel-nuts from the other. In Samobor, Croatia, people believe that during the year abundant with nuts and hazel-nuts, lots of children will be born, also. For the same purpose (to have many of children) during Montenegrin wedding, people throw nuts and hazel-nuts; Catholics in Karlovac put hazel-nut branch in front of the bride; in Homolje (Northern Serbia) the bride herself puts acorns, hazel-nuts and nuts under her dress in order to give birth to boys only.



Text variants collected in a zone of Balkan language league together with Aunt and Uncle contain She-bear as a text actor. This bear kills (strangles or takes away) the child called Petko. The examples are from Western Bulgaria (Dimitrovgrad, Kjustendil) or from South-eastern Serbia (Boljevac, Niš, Leskovac, Bujanovac). In this region sometimes the Aunt makes a plea to the She-bear not to scare children, but She-bear then strangles the Aunt. The Aunt (*tetka*) in this region is one of euphemisms for the bear. This is the case at Boljevac, at the Saint Andrew - Bear's Day (this festival is known only to the South Slavs, cf. Gura 1997:172, SD s.v. Andrej) when the parents shell corn and show it to the children explaining that the aunt was here and ate dinner. In the vicinity of Pirot the same day is called Aunt's Day (*Tetkin d'n*), and the bear is called *tetka*. Also, in some villages near Niš She-bear is called *teta*, *tetka*. Early in the morning on Bear's Day, the adults show to the children bit corn saying: *Children, the bear was here*, or: *Look, what the aunt ate*. In the village of Hum they make bear traces in snow. On that day working is prohibited, because the bear can strangle a person disobeying that rule, tear his clothes, or make some other damage.

Completely different is the situation to the west from the Balkan language league territory, where the unique text actor is Aunt (*tetka*). Location of this actor (*tetka*) is pear tree, or beech along side the Morava river, or brook, middle of the field, heaven, seaside, green maple, or the Aunt is sitting on beech/pear leaf (connected with following incident: this leaf broke or overturned). Demonic role of the Aunt is evident only through her relationship with the contextual actor (me, my child): *tetka se pomami, su djecu pognjavi, samo mene ostavi* ('the aunt infuriated and killed all the children but me'). This action is frequently expressed through incidental folklore formula *provali/pomami* (broke/infuriated).

There is a similar situation in children's game *Sije baba mlivo* ('The old woman sowing flour', attested in Bosnia). Children in wheel dancing sing to the Old woman that imitates sowing with sieve: *Seje baba mlivo na rešeto krivo, ne može ga posipati već ga stade prosipati* ('The old woman is sowing flour with a torn sieve, she can't do it, so she begins to spill it'). Then, the children blow in flour, old woman gets infuriated and runs after them. The same text is used while swinging child's head in hands: *Sije baba mlivo na rešeto krivo*. ('The old woman is sowing flour with a torn sieve'). The same text is attested without ritual context, only as a song and contains the same incidental formula *provali/pomami* (broke/infuriated): *Sij baba mlivo, na rešeto krivo, rešeto se provali, baba se pomami*. ('Sow, old woman, flower with a torn sieve, the sieve broke, the old woman got infuriated'), or: *Seje baba brašno na dedino krilo. Krilo se provali, baba se pomami pa svu decu podavi*. ('The old woman is sowing flour on the old man's lap. The lap broke, the old woman got infuriated, and strangled all the children'. All these examples come from Bosnia).

Even the connection Aunt : cake is a folklore formula, cf. following proverbs: *Hvala mu kao i tetki bez kolača* ('Thank him like aunt without a cake'), *Bog te sačuva božićne jugovine i tetina kolača; Ne raduj se božićnoj jugovini ni tetinu kolaču* ('God save you from Christmas south wind and aunt's cake'; 'Don't look forward to Christmas south wind or to aunt's cake'); also, when the child chokes up, others tell him: *Doneće ti tetka kolače* ('The aunt will bring you cakes', Kosovo).

**1.2. Contextual actor (Child): patiens (my Mother), agens (Wolf)**

In children's folklore mother's death is frequently issofunctional with the death of the actor itself, i.e. child. The illustration for this thesis is the case of involving the child in folklore text already mentioning mother (it implicitly includes a particular child). On the other hand, in the same example polyfunctionality of the same text can be followed, so at Pumat, on the island of Krk, there is a saddle shaped stone 'horse' used by children for riding that 'horse'. On this occasion, while riding stone or branch, children say following rhyme: *Ijo, cu, na konja, pal je Marko pod konja, na šenicu bilicu, milu majku zazove, ćiću mu je dala, i još će mu dati, kada ide spati.* ('Jump on the horse, Marko fell under the horse, on the white wheat, he called his dear mother, she gave him breast, and will give it to him again before he goes to sleep'). There is a belief that on the same stone initiation occurs when future magician comes to age, what makes possible supposition that this game, as well as the text, is a relict of some initiation ritual (cf. Bonifačić-Rožin 1976:150-151).

The same rhyme, with slightly modified incident, is spread all over Serbo-Croatian language territory: *Cucun cucun na konju, vuci majku zakolju, u pšenici u polju. Nemojte ju zaboga, majka mi je dragana, sise mi je davala. Opet će mi davati kad stanemo spavati.* ('Ride on horse, wolfs slaughter the mother, in wheat field. For God's sake, don't do that, she is dear, she gave me her breast. She will give me again before sleep'). The actors provoking incident are almost always wolfs (sometimes a Turk can stand in the place of wolf, or the evil is not named). Only once the victim is described as an old woman. Location is regularly the same: wheat field (rarely: deep brook, broad stone). Further development of the death incident is possible this way: *da je za breg odnesu, da je vrane pojedu* ('to take her behind the hill, for crows to eat her'). Still, this fatal incident remains in text only in a form of threat. Contextual actor - child is begging the wolf not to accomplish his threat, sometimes even offering him some recompensation: *nabraću ti jagoda* ('I'll pick up strawberries for you', transferred without adaptation from the folklore offer to a bear). Some examples of this rhyme have at the end continuation in a form of a children's prayer before sleep.

In folklore children's curses mother's death is used in strictly determined situations. The following one is connected with playing speechless: *ko ne rekne ap, umrla mu mat i najmladji brat.* ('Who wouldn't say ap, may his mother and the youngest brother die', Slavonija). This curse is also used in a situation when some child would not share his food with the other children: *Ko jede sam da mu umre majka.* ('Who is eating alone, may his mother die', Kosovo), or: *Moja ruka prosi ako nećeš dati umreće ti mati sutra u 6 sati* ('My hand is begging, if you don't give anything your mother will die tomorrow at six o'clock', Belgrade). In the same context issofunctionally appears death threat to the child itself: *Podijeli krivoj ruci pa te neće mrki vuci pred djamijom dje klanjaju Turci.* ('Give to the twisted hand, black wolfs will not kill you in front of the mosque where Turks are praying', Kordun). In South Slavic children folklore wolf kills domestic animals, too: *Pojo vuk telce, i popove štence, ne žali pop telce, man on žali štence. Seoski su telci, a popovi štenci.* ('Wolf ate calves and priest's pups. The priest is sorry for pups, not for calves. The calves belong to the village, pups to the priest').

Death threat to the mother in children's folklore is isofunctional with some other incidents, e.g. house fall: *Dete, dete, kokoške ti prete, plovčiči ti govore da ti majku umore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening you, little ducks are talking to kill your mother', Serbia), and: *Dijete, kokoši ti prijete. Orozi ti govore da ti kuću obore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening. Cocks are talking to strike down your house', Bosnia), *Dijete, kokoši ti prijete da ne jedeš jaja za godinu dana za luburu jaja; orozi ti govore, da ti kuću obore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening not to eat eggs for a year, for a dish of eggs, cocks are telling that they will strike down your house', Bosnia).

In South Slavic children's folklore some texts are known where incidental situation - wolfs killing mother - is effectuated. The examples are from Slavonia and Bosnia: *Gavran gače sa jele. Pitajte ga što vele? Bome dobro ne vele: vuci ženu pojeli! Čija žena žalostan? Arlovova Marija! Arlov žali Mariju, i pečenu pogaču*. ('Raven is cracking at the fir-tree. Ask him what they are saying? Indeed, they don't say good: wolfs have killed the woman! Whose woman, forlorn? Arlov's Maria! Arlov is lamenting Maria and baked cake'). The final segment of this rhyme is unique, it preserves fragments of husband's funeral laments, cf. *Dabar kuka i plače: Jaoj moja Jurija! i kuvana večera i mekana ložnica, i satrena obuća!* ('Dabar, is weeping and crying: ow! my Yuria, and cooked dinner, and soft bedroom and cleaned shoes!') or: *Jaaj moja Urijo, nepredena kudiljo, nevarena večero, neprostrta posteljo!* ('Ow, my Uria, tow not spun, dinner not cooked, bed not prepared!'). This husband's lament reveals ideal women's qualities as wife and housewife. Similar content - praising ideal woman's qualities - is found in some South Slavic wedding laments, where the bride is weeping before wedding in front of her friends, cf. the example from Kosovo: *Zašto ćerku odvojiste? Da li kuću ne pomela? Da li vodu ne donela? Da l ve nije jedna oprala? Da l vi nije izatkala? Da l čarape nije saplela? Da l u trlo nije ulegla? Da li stoku nije pomuzla?* ('Why did you separate your doughtier? Didn't she broom the house? Didn't she bring the water? Didn't she, poor thing, wash you? Didn't she weave? Didn't she knit socks? Didn't she enter the sheep-fold? Didn't she milk the cattle?'), or: *Zar te nije, tajko, izula? Zar ti nije obuću našla? Zar te nije ispratila? Zar te nije pričekala? Zar te nije ponudila? Ni postelju namestila?* ('Didn't she take off your shoes, father? Didn't she bring your shoes? Didn't she see you off? Didn't she meet you? Didn't she offer you? Didn't she prepare the bed?'). The same ideal usage of the women is found in droll children's rhyme from Serbia: *Aoj Ero nevero što si ženu otero, tebi žena treba da ti mesi hleba, ručak da gotovi, večeru da sprema* ('Ow! Era, you treacherous one, why did you throw out your wife, you need her for making bread, cooking lunch, preparing dinner'), or: *ženu mi ne diraj, žena mi treba, da mi mesi leba, ručak da kuva, decu da čuva, gaće da krpi i boj da trpi*. ('Don't touch my wife, I need her, for making bread, for cooking lunch, for looking after children, for mending my pants and for sustaining beating'). This motif of ideal woman is found in Russian wedding laments, even using the same syntax.

## 2. Anthropomorphic patiens (Others)

### 2.1. Text actors : ridicules

Children's ridicules texts mention particular victim by name. They are connected with context and with the active presence of the patiens. The victims in the text containing death threat are mentioned as group members, generically, with pointing out their ethnic origin. Certain types of mocking of the aliens contain specific incidental formula: death threat (expressed by the verb "krepati") followed by troublesome funeral (the same text can refer e.g., to the Serb - Vlach, Dalmatian, or Croat - Đokac): *Oj ti Vlaše repati, sutra ti je krepati! Kuku ruci koja će te vući i lopati koja će te kopati; Đokac bokac repati, sutra ćeš nam krepati. Teško onoj ruci koja će te vući, teško onoj lopati koja će te kopati* ("Hey, you Vlach/Croat with a tail, you will die tomorrow! Woe to the hand that will pull you, and to the shovel that will bury you"). Verb *krepati* ("perish miserably") does not reflect one's own death, the act being even temporally planned ("tomorrow; when"). The same text is used for the citizens of the town of Šabac: *Šabačani repati, kada ćete krepati? Teško onoj ruci koja će vas vući! Teško onoj lopati koja će vas kopati!* It can be used by Orthodox people to the Catholics: *Latinine repati, sutra ćeš mi krepati, teško onoj ruci, koja će te vući, teško onoj lopati, koja će te kopati*, and vice versa, by Catholics to the Orthodox: *Kudrovine repati, sutra ćeš mi krepati* (both examples from Sarajevo). In Bosnia the same text is used for Gypsies.

Other incidental formula, typical of Serbia, describes pest (*čuma*) that kills all except one, insulting at the same time their mother. It may again be aimed at members of certain ethnicity, e.g. Gypsies: *Ciganka Banka kurva joj majka, mnogu decu porodila, došla čuma te pobila. Sam' ostalo Janče Jovanče* ("Gypsy banka, her mother is a whore, she gave birth to many children, then pest came and killed them. Janče Jovanče just remained"), or residents of different villages, e.g. village Ljubinci: *vaša majka djavoljajka, mnogu decu porodila, došla čuma te pobila, sal ostao taraban* ("Your mother is devilish, then pest came and killed them, just taraban remained"), village Obrež: *Vaša majka torolajka. Mnogu decu naradjala, došla čuma te potrla, sal ostao Baloban* ("Your mother is a whore. She had a lot of children, then pest came and killed them, just Baloban remained"), residents of the other side of Morava river: *sve ih majka porodila sve ih čuma pogodila, samo jedan ostao* ("all of them mother bore, all of them the pest struck, just one remained").

### 2.2. Text actors: old woman and old man

Completely different is the incidental situation describing violence between an old couple. The old woman (*baba*) and old man (*deda*) in the following examples are common, patiens is not personalised. From the synchronical point of view this incident operates as a humorous one because of the inverse picture of usual gender behaviour. The examples are from Bosnia, Lika, Istria: *Seje/kuva baba lobodu, posla dedu po vodu, nema dede: - leti baba poskokom, nadje dida pod plotom: tikva ga je pritisla pa mu dušu istisla* ("The old woman is sowing/cooking orach; she sends her old man to bring the water, there is no old man: old woman runs and jumps, she finds the old man under the

fence: a pumpkin pressed him and squeezed his soul”) or: *Podje baba u skok, nadje dida uz plot. Uze baba kablinu, razbi didu glavinu. Ne žali baba glavine, nego svoje kabline* (“The old woman jumps, she finds the old man beside the fence. The old woman took a big tub, and crashed old man’s head. The old woman is not grieving for the head, but for her big tub”).

Ritual context of Macedonian Christmas carol with the same actors and similar incidental situation: *padnalo grede, utepalo dede* (“beam fell and killed the old man”), the old woman is mourning by ridiculous lament: *O lele starče, kuso magarče* (“Oh, woe, old man, donkey without a tail”), can be the clue for the explanation of similar South Slavic children’s texts.

### 3. Zoomorphic patiens

#### 3.1. Death threat: snail

In children’s incantation text directed to the snail with a command to stretch his horns, patiens is snail, present during the text performance, agens being contextual actor, that is the child pronouncing the rhyme. This structure is typical of children’s incantation texts, although death threat does not come regularly (cf. completely different attitude toward the ladybird). Death threat to a snail exists with other Slavic peoples, e.g. with the Kashubs. South Slavic variants are explicit: *ako nećeš pustiti, mi ćemo te ubiti* (“if you don’t want to stretch them, we will kill you”), *ja ću tebe ubiti, na zelenoj travi, sikirom po glavi* (“I will kill you, on the green grass, with an axe on your head”, both examples from Serbia). Isofunctional to death threat is the threat of destroying the snail’s house: *ako je nećeš pustiti hižu ću ti prodati* (“if you don’t want to stretch it, I will sell your house”); *da ti kuće ne prodam starom dedi/babi za duhan* (“I will sell your house and buy tobacco for the old man/woman”); *caru i carici za krajcaricu* (“to the king and queen for kreuzer”, Bosnia, Croatia), *če ne ti bodem hišo potrlj*; or: *drugač ti hišo poderem* (“if not I will break your house; otherwise I will tear your house”, Slovenia). It is likely that following examples of the threat of breaking the dishes could refer to the snails house: *ja ću tebe ubiti i sudove razbiti; polupaću ti sudove* (“I will kill you and break dishes: I will smash your dishes”, Northern Serbia). Even in this text appears as isofunctional the threat of mother’s death: *da ti mati ne umre, da ti djeca ne plaču, da ti kruha ne ištu, da ti vode ne piju* (“that your mother not die, that your children not cry, not ask for a bread, not drink water”, Bosnia). Ethnographic evidences about the children’s attitude toward snail show that this threat in fact is later frequently effectuated.

#### 3.2. Effectuated death: swallow

Zoomorphic victims of the incident always are mentioned in the text. Basic difference in the folklore status of zoomorphic victim consists in the fact that for domestic animals violent death (caused by man) is one’s-own death, what is not the case with wild animals, especially not with inedible ones.

Folklore text presents the death of a swallow as a violent one, not-one’s-own death. In the children’s text present in the whole Balkan Slavic region (Macedonia, Bulgaria,

Southeast Serbia) determined by collectors as lullaby, counting-out rhyme, or simply children's rhyme to a swallow (when children see that bird, at Macedonia and Bulgaria) there is an invitation for the swallow to prepare feathers for the dinner. The swallow is answering: "I don't feel like having dinner, because my fledgling is killed." Some variants describe the incident: *Carica ga je nagazila i creva mu isterala*; *Carička ga nastanula na zlo mesto na slabinu* ("The queen stepped on him, and squeezed his intestines; Queen stepped on his wrong place, on flank"), *Car mi ga je nagazio* ("The king stepped on him", Eastern Serbia, Bulgaria); in the variant from Levač: *orlica ga raščupala na zlo mesto na grbinu* ("The eagle dishevelled him on the wrong place, on back"). Beside its evident presence in the South Slavic children's folklore, this text appears in some East Serbian collections as a Serbian family feast (*slava*) song.

### 3.3. Effectuated death: goose

Zoomorphic victim killing (slaughtering) is in children folklore accepted as a regular event, the death of one domestic animal serving for food is one's-own death. This is clearly expressed in following nursery rhyme: *Delengu, delengu, četir guske na leglu* (or: *četir guske bele sedam jaja snele*), *a kad su ih zaklali svi smo redom plakali. A kad smo ih pojeli svi smo bili veseli*. ("four geese on the nest/four white geese laid seven eggs, when they slaughtered them we all cried. But, when we ate them, we were all happy", Serbia, Slavonia, Bosnia), or: *Mi tu gusku zaklasmo pa za njome plakasmo nije mi žao guske, ko od guske peruške* ("We slathered this goose and cried for her, I was not sorry for the goose, as for goose's feather", Slavonia), *Jednu gusku zaklaše, svu noć deca plakaše, ćuti, ćuti, dilbere, kupiću ti cipele* ("One goose was slaughtered, all night children cried, be silent, be silent, my dear, I will buy you shoes", Radjevina, Serbia).

### 3.4. Zoomorphic patients: others

In the following children's rhyme from Bosnia, slaughtering of rooster or cow include implicitly wedding context: *Šta na piru bi, bi? - Zaklaše pjevca krilaša, nametnuše kupusa glavaša; zaklaše kravu Gutuju, dovedoše Fatu Rutuju* ("What was on the wedding? They slaughtered winged rooster, they put on him big-headed cabbage; they slaughtered cow called Gutuja, they brought Fata Rutuja"). Such treatment is expected in other ritual contexts, e.g. in Macedonian and Western Bulgarian Christmas songs: *Idat Božik, nosit nože da kolime tele; tele velit: lele, ne koli mene, koli ga zajka/kokoš* ("Christmas is coming, it is caring the knife for slaughtering the calf; calf is speaking: wou, don't slaughter me, slaughter rabbit/hen"). The same motif appears in the Christmas song from Pelješac (Dalmatia): *a žene su dobre ćudi (...) ubit će jalovicu, počastit će me, ispeć će peč kruha (...) provriti će bačvu vina* ("Women have good temper, they will kill barren cow, they will stand me a treat, they will bake an oven full of bread, they will open barrel of vine"). One text of St. Lazarus day procession from Southern Serbia mentions slaughtering of a hen: *naš je Lazar u selo. Meste mu pogače, koljite mu kokošku, točete mu rakiju* ("Our Lazarus is in the village. Knead for him round cake, slaughter for him a hen, pour for him brandy"). In all these examples it is possible to consider these animal victims as parts of the food code.

Slaughtering of an domestic animal folklore text can treat even as an award, e.g. in mockery to the crying child, due to the later processing of the animal into high quality food: *Riči, riči, magare, preko blata u bare, zaklaćemo junicu, daćemo ti uzicu i njezino crivo, da ti nije krivo.* ("Roar, roar, donkey, across the mud toward pond, we will slaughter heifer, we will give you string and her bowel, may you not feel injured"); *Čuva plačko goveda i babinu junicu (...) Zakla baba junicu, dade Ibri nožicu.* ("Cry-baby is keeping cattle and old woman's heifer. Old woman slaughtered the heifer and gave to Ibri the leg"), *Zakla baba junicu, dade plačku guzicu.* ("Old woman slaughtered the heifer and gave ass to cry-baby").

On the other hand, natural death of a domestic animal (dying of a calf, or a cow, e.g.) in the folklore text is an unnatural fact, i. e., material damage: *Kuku lele, krepa babi tele; šuti baba sjutra će i krava.* ("Woe, old woman's calf died, keep silent, old woman, the cow will die tomorrow"). Material damage, consequently from the folklore perspective is perishing of some domestic animal caused by wolf or bear, cf., e.g. Russian curse to the landlady not willing to reward members of the ritual procession: *Pervaja beda - lošad' so dvora, vtoraja beda - korova so dvora, vaša skotinka zabludissja! Volk sožret, i medved' obderet!* ("First evil - to take the horse from the yard, second evil - to take the cow from the yard, your cattle to disappear! Let the wolf devour and bear scratch!")

Possible global conclusions on synchronic basis derived from here presented South Slavic children's folklore should take into account its relative conservatism, and consequently, possibility of persistence of some archaic traces in it. Close connections between the texts containing the death motif and the adult's ritual texts or incantations is evident. This fact makes possible supposition that in past difference between the folklore of adults and that belonging to children was not evident, like it is today. Here analyzed South Slavic children's folklore texts can serve as a ground for dyachronic ethno-linguistic research of the concept of Death in Old Slavic culture. From the other side, it is necessary to emphasize that violence and cruelty are inherent to the children's folklore in general.

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# THE MOTIF OF DEATH IN SERBIAN AND CROATIAN FOLK NARRATIVE

Yekaterina Yakushkina

39

## IZVLEČEK

### **Motiv smrti v srbskem in hrvaškem ljudskem pripovedništvu**

Iz ljudske kulture je razvidno, da je smrt glavni dogodek v človekovi usodi. Določanje časa in okoliščin smrti je eden najpomembnejših (skupaj s poroko) aspektov obsodbe, ki jo izvajajo sojenice, demoni usode pri južnih Slovanih. Pojmovanje človeške usode je pogosto sinonim za pojmovanje smrti (sudjen dan = smrt, določen dan = smrt). Podobno imajo ljudje tudi demone, ki določajo človeško usodo, za demone smrti. Ti najpogosteje določijo nenaravno smrt, kot na primer, da se bo oseba utopila. Ne le, da predvidijo okoliščine smrti, temveč jo tudi povzročijo s tem, da obsodbo izgovorijo. Magična moč njihovih besed povzroči smrt (določiti usodo nekoga = izvajati "smrtno obsodbo" = ubiti).

Že dejstvo, da jim ljudje niso žrtvovali, včasih zadostuje, da se odločijo "ubiti" neko osebo. Iz primerov moralnih ljudskih zgodb je razvidno, da bo oseba, ki ne verjame v magičnost obsodb demonov, ušla napovedani smrti. Ne glede na to je glavna misel vseh ljudskih zgodb o človeški usodi, da je obsodba (smrt) neogibna, navkljub vsem poskusom, da bi jo preprečili. Oseba lahko živi dlje, kot je bilo določeno le, če ji nekdo podari del svojega življenja, da se tako ohranja "uravnoteženost". Na ta način je določanje smrti pravzaprav omogočanje ustreznega življenja in skupni seštevek ostaja konstanten.

**Ključne besede:** ljudsko pripovedništvo, Srbi, Hrvati, smrt, usoda

**Key words:** folk tales, Serbs, Croats, death, fate

My paper is dedicated to the issue of the predetermination of death in Serbian and Croatian folk narratives about people's fate. This body of texts consist of stories in which demons - *sudenice* ("rodenice") and angels - act who predetermine man's fate. Folk stories about a fixed death are non-fantasy and most of them are close to the genre of Saga. These stories are not equally common in all parts of Serbia and Croatia, and we should emphasise that they are less common than the belief in the *sudenice*. As an area where these stories have been preserved we can single out East Serbia: Kosovo, Kruševac, Levač (material gathered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), Takovo (mid-20<sup>th</sup> century), Požarevac, Niš (material gathered in the early 1970s for an ethnographic atlas of

Yugoslavia), Leskovac (1980s). The Croatian stories originate from Varaždin (late 19<sup>th</sup> century), Samobor (early 20<sup>th</sup> century), Dugo Selo and Đakovo (1920s and 30s).

M. Valjavec who collected folk stories about *sudenice* in the environs of Varaždin, established that in the stories we know positive verdicts are very rare. Of the eleven stories recorded in Varaždin there are only three in which the decision of the demons is positive, although in one of them it is only relatively positive: "If he doesn't marry the daughter of the king of the *Vile* (nymphs), we shall kill him". In other stories the judgement is negative. This means that because of the fact that their judgement is more often connected with death than with other events in human life, we can presume that originally *sudenice* were the demons of death, and only later became the demons of destiny.

40

The most common plot in folk stories about destiny is as follows: after pronouncing a verdict, the person dies the death adjudged to him, in spite of all his attempts to avoid it. Parents don't allow their child - if predetermined to drown - to come close to a river, but the child chokes when drinking water. Parents close the well in which the child is to fall, but it dies near it. Relatives don't let a child, predestined to be eaten by a wolf, to go to the forest, but the rose the boy likes turns into a wolf, and the child perishes and so on. In non-fantasy narratives the basic function of *sudenice* is the emphasised predetermination of the time and circumstances of someone's death. The story-teller perceives them just this way. "Three *rodenice* have come. They are women who decide what kind of death one will die." We can thus say that the concept of fate in non-fantasy narratives is reduced to the predetermination of time and nature of death. Moreover, in language death is fixed as a result of judgement: *suden dan* - the adjudged day.

In the texts of folk narratives the semantic 'to adjudge death' is expressed by the words "to kill" or "to take away": "If he doesn't marry the daughter of the king of the *Vile* (nymphs king), we shall kill him". In other words the *sudenice* cause the death of a person. But they cause it not by their own action, but through their words which in this case have the power of action and inevitably cause death. It is very important to note that their activity is not limited to the moment of someone's birth. They supervise events of someone's life, and if death was not adjudged at the moment of birth, they can cause it subsequently. "If he doesn't marry the daughter of the king of the *Vile*, we shall kill him". The image of murder corresponds with the fact that, as a rule, an unnatural death is adjudged. The *sudenice* usually decide that a person will drown, fall from a tree, will be murdered, bitten by a snake or eaten by a wolf. These motifs are not equally typical of various local traditions. In Požarevac all stories about fate (there are six of them, recorded when material was collected for an ethnological atlas of Yugoslavia) contain the motif of a child's death near a well: "The first said: 'Let him die at once', the second: 'No, let him die when he goes to school'. But the eldest said: 'I'm the eldest and cleverest. Let him drown in a well on his wedding-day.'" In Niš we find a story which contains a motif "the child was to drown in a river on the day of his marriage". Much more common are stories about death caused by a wolf, and their form is in our opinion typical only of the specific region of Niš: "A dead wolf was lying on the road, the groom touched it with his foot, the wolf moved, and the terrified groom dropped dead." In Takovo we find either the motif of death caused by a wolf or the motif of

death in a well. In Kruševac and Leskovac we find only the motif of death in water: it is adjudged to a child that it will choke when drinking water or to "jump in a well on its Saint's day". Stories about death caused by the bite of a snake come from Levac and Takovo. The same motif is also found in Otok in Slavonia. In Varaždin the more common motif is to be eaten by a wolf.

The motif of death caused by a wolf also appears in stories about Saint Sava. St Sava (or the Archangel) is handing out food to the wolves and tells the last wolf to eat the man who accidentally overheard the conversation between St Sava and the wolves. The man attempts to avoid this fate but he fails: the wolf catches him even though he is sleeping between two shepherds.

The motif of "predetermination of death in the form of murder" is sometimes transformed in a series of motifs, and within this plot the *sudenice* can obtain the attributes of enemies, for instance of cannibalism. The sister of a new-born baby accidentally sees in a forest three women grilling a man (Levač). "Here, under a large tree she saw three women grilling a man: the first was turning the spit, the second was fanning the flames, and the third one was carrying firewood. /.../ The three women argued whether to kill a child which had been born that day in the wood". However, their action is not a simple feature of cannibalism committed by a cruel creature or enemy like for instance a *psoglav*. It reminds us of the ritual of predetermining someone's destiny in the same way as in some local traditions the belief exists that the *sudenice* sometimes spin a string (of human life?). In Čuprija, for instance, people believe that there are three *sudenice*: the first spins, the second knits, the third judges. Their roles in this action are precisely distributed and structured. Something similar is found in descriptions of the actions of an *Usud* (a judge who predetermines human fate in fantasy tales). During his lifetime the judge as a rule passes through three levels of prosperity, from poverty to richness, determining in this way the fate of a person. The process of announcing a verdict preserves its structure when each woman states her opinion, beginning with the strictest and finishing with the kindest, and turning into suggestions to kill a child and into a dispute on when to kill it. "The first said: 'Let's kill him'. The second: 'We won't kill him now, but when he is ten years old'. At the end the third said: 'Let's kill him when he gets married. He will marry a girl from an other country and when they return home they will have to sleep in a forest. He will take off his shoes, but a snake will sneak into his shoe and bite him, and he will die'". It's very important that the predetermination of death by the *sudenice* is considered as an act of murder on the person whose fate they predetermine. Because of this aspect there are no motifs of cannibalism or of being grilled to death in predetermination.

Frequently, the story-teller particularly insists that precisely the *sudenice* cause someone's death: "She said: God said so and he died" - "God didn't say so, but the *sudenice* judged that way". A typical feature of all stories about fate is that the first *sudenica* suggests to "take" a child at once: "Three the *sudenice* came. The first said: 'He must die at once'. The second said: 'Let him live'". Beside the first suggestion to kill a child at once, a typical formula of these stories is the gradual putting off of the day of death when every *sudenica* expresses her opinion: "Let him die at once" - "Let him die

when his mother loves him most of all - when he begins to talk” - “Let him die when he gets married, during the first night”. Quite often the *sudenice* fix as the day of death a person’s wedding day, when the groom takes his bride across a river (Leskovac, Kruševac); or in a forest on his way home (Levač); during the first night (Dakovo, Varaždin): “They judged: when he is twenty years old, he will get married and a wolf will eat him”. Usually this motif is typical of Saga about the predetermination of a person’s fate, but there are also interesting legends which include this motif. When childless people give shelter to a wanderer (God), he promises them in gratitude that they will have a child. On the night when the *sudenice* come, God overhears their verdict. They say that the child will drown on the day of his wedding. God tries to prevent this, but the man chokes on drop of water when crossing a river. Despite God’s request the *sudenice* refuse to prolong the man’s life by a few days. “We don’t change our decisions. This is the way it must be.” They agree to prolong someone’s life only in exchange for reducing someone else’s life. The *sudenice* can not get three additional days of life “out of nowhere”: all destinies are part of a total volume of vital energy and all of them are co-ordinated. When they determine how long a person will live, his life span, the *sudenice* give him some of this vital force, depending on the destiny and life span of other people. This is the reason why it is not possible to resurrect a person or to prolong his life unless an equal portion is taken from the life of someone else. In the mentioned stories parents never agree to offer a part of their life in exchange.

The decision of the *sudenice* often depends, as it is laid down in non-fantasy narratives, on the attitude of the child’s parents towards them and towards the visitors-travellers who sleep in the house the night the *sudenice* come. Disrespect for them is punished with the child’s death: “These people are such misers that they even didn’t put candles on the table for us to stay here longer. At this time of day they should put something on the table, at least bread and some meat for the child to be happy. So let it be then that he drowns when he is seven years old”.

The possible perception of the *sudenice* in folk stories as enemies aspiring to kill a person corresponds with the beliefs connected with the *sudenice* in traditional culture. *Sudenice* are considered to be enemies of new-born babies. Within the system of mythological creatures they are close to *babice*, the demons which harm pregnant women, mothers and new-born babies. The death of a baby is explained by the actions of the *sudenice*. It is considered that those children die at once to whom the *sudenice* predetermined death in infancy: the reason for the child’s death is connected with the fact that the *sudenice* decided to *take* him. There is a system of protection against the *sudenice* as well as against other demons which are harmful to mothers and children. In local traditions *sudenice* are considered to be the personification of a mother’s illness and as mythological creatures which harm women with children.

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# NOTIONS OF «GOOD» AND «BAD» DEATH IN THE SYSTEM OF SLAVIC BELIEFS

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Lyudmila N. Vinogradova

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45

## IZVLEČEK

### **Koncepta "dobre" in "slabe" smrti v verovanjih Slovanov**

Ljudske opredelilne "dobre" in "slabe" smrti so povezane z opozicijo naravne in nasilne smrti. To idejo lahko zasledimo že v prvotnem slovanskem korenu \*- mьrьbь 'uničiti' in predponi \*sьb- 'sebstvo', 'dobro'. V ljudski kulturi so bile cenjene želje po dobri smrti. Po ljudskih verovanjih dobra smrt pomeni: umreti naravne smrti, ob primernem času, na primernem prostoru in v družbi bližnjih sorodnikov. Tiste, ki so umrli "dobre" smrti, so imeli za častiljive prednike - v nasprotju s tistimi, ki so umrli "slabe" smrti. Slednji se ne morejo preseliti na drugi svet in postanejo škodljiva demonična bitja. Ljudje so poskušali nevtralizirati usodne posledice "slabe" smrti s posebnimi obredi. Glavni obred je bil poskus umrlemu zagotoviti njegov delež zemeljskih blagoslovov (hrano, obleko, simbolično pokristjanjevanje, simbolično poroko itd.). Praznoverje o "umrlem, ki hodi" je najbolj stalen del slovanske mitologije.

**Ključne besede:** smrt, pogrebne šege, mitologija, umrli

**Key words:** death, funeral rites, mythology, deceased

Ethnologists studying folk cultures have reasonably observed that understanding of the inevitableness of death is not a biological trait of human consciousness (in contrast to common for the man and animal universal sensations connected, for example, with hunger or sex appeal), i.e. such information is obtained not due to instinct but in the process of concrete social communication. It means, that the ideas concerning the man's mortality and supposed life hereafter belong to the sphere of culture. Correspondingly, every ethnic culture creates its own special image of death. However, the history of ethnologic research until quite recently lacked thorough investigation in such most important segment of traditional culture as the system of beliefs and customs connected with death. Thus, Polish ethnographers have reasonably observed that in Slavic research «the ethnography of man's dying is an extremely poor section of ethnology and, first of all, as specialists are prevented from thorough study of the phenomenon of death by their own taboo» (PSL, 1986 N 1-2: 57). The fact that the theme was to



a great degree tabooed until recently is confirmed by facts from Moscow higher educational institutions: attempts to suggest to linguistic and folklore students from the Moscow State University for diploma paper topics concerning lexical and phraseological studies about death, agony, funeral, - used to provoke inner protest and negative attitude both in students and their professors.

Hidden fear of death and utterly negative attitude to it have lead the man of the modern civilization to hushing up the very theme of death and post-death existence. In this connection, we may recall that nowadays it is a widely spread custom to keep children from participating in funerals and discussing problem connected with death; it is also considered improper to introduce the theme during social contacts; it is also considered wrong for a person to get ready for his own death etc.

It is quite different in folk culture. Though death inspires natural fear by its incomprehensibility and the idea of the end of earthly existence, nevertheless, death is interpreted only as a transition from one state to another, from one world to another. It's known that people belonging to the traditional culture used to tranquilly and light-heartedly get prepared to their own death, used to expect meetings with late departed relatives, believed they would frequent their home and the living members of the family etc. In many places of Slavic world a considerate head of family would prepare his own death-clothes and the coffin (and sometimes also for the wife and the eldest son) beforehand. It was a custom with Northern Russians to present to a relative or a close friend with a coffin made by oneself, and such present was highly valued and was thankfully accepted with no prejudice at all (ЛЮГИНОВ 1993: 123). Wishes of «good» death (as well as wishes of good harvest, cattle increase, house-hold prosperity) were an adopted speech stereotype and constituted the basis of the positive verbal-formula in the system of traditional well-wishing. The estimation of a death as «good» or «bad» was one of the main concerns of the ethnic society, as death was never looked upon as a strictly family event: it was considered that the general well-being of the village depended on the utmost realization of all the standard regulations concerning the situation of dying and burial.

So what, according to the folk beliefs, is «good» death? In short, the following characteristics of this notion are essential: the death must be «one's own» (i.e. natural, easy, not violent); it must happened at «one's own» time (i.e. at an appropriate age); in «one's own» place and among «one's» relatives, and then all the customs accepted in «one's own» society should be observed during the burial.

The definition of «good» death, as linguists have proved, is present in the very word *смерть*. According to etymological data, the Slavic root \**сѣ-мьртѣ* should be correlated with Old-Indian *su-* meaning 'one's own, beneficent, good' and Indo-European *mrt* 'death' (Фасмер 1971, т.3: 686).

So, according to Slavic beliefs, «one's own» death is non-violent death, happened at an old age, when man's potential of vitality is exhausted. The Russian expression *избыть свой век* means 'to fully expend one's vital force allotted by destiny'. The deceased by such normal death were considered to safely pass to another world and become respected ancestors, while people *не изжившие своего века на земле* stay

after their death as an active harmful force which intruded in the world of the living people at an inopportune time. It is essential that, according to folk beliefs, lifetime as a certain amount of vital force is distributed between all the members of the community, so the deceased «до срока» (i.e. before his own time) is, due to his unexhausted vital force, dangerous for the living; however, a person who lives to a great age is harmful too, because he - as Russians used to say - *заедает чужой век (или зажился, живет не свой век etc.)* (Седакова 1990: 55).

The ultimate border of age for a human life was considered to come with old age, when productive force, as well as ability to labour, was exhausted, with the signs of old age, white hair and infirmity. Sometimes a change of one's height served as a criterion of such border: it was believed that before death one grew shorter.

Besides defining the death as non-violent (natural), it's taking account of special calendar or day-time as «good for dying». For example, autumn and winter, the great yearly holidays were considered to be the most appropriated season for the old people to die. At that time, they said, the border between this and «the other» world was open; and during the month such was the «good» period of the waning moon; and during the day-night time - the night.

«Good» (or «one's own») death was also correlated with the idea about «one's own» space of dying: any death outside home was considered «not one's own». Polish ethnographers working in the Podlyasye district (Polish - Byelorussian border) noted peasant's fear of the town hospital inspired by the apprehension to die there (out of home). So relatives tried to bring home the hopelessly ill in order to let them die in «their own place» (Drabik 1994: 16). According to Byelorussian beliefs, such people who died beyond home or village borders should not be pray at home but the funeral repast should be held at the place of burial (i.e. the deceased out of home be a sudden death should be buried at the place of the death - Federowski 1897: 337).

To die in «one's own» place also meant to die in the property selected space, which was specially actualized in the situation of a lasting agony: a dying person unable to part with life for a long time, was transported to make his agony easier, into the floor, the straw, sometimes - into «the red corner» (*красный угол*) under the icons or, vice versa, nearer to the exit, to the threshold or to the stove. If a person died in «his own» place, then normally it happened in the midst of «one's own» relatives who were obliged to observe the regulations of behaviour accompanying death: lighting the candle, bidding the farewell to the relatives, bringing the neighbours at odds with the dying person so that they could forgive each other etc. Violation of a number of rules by those present could cause difficult death of the relative: such could be premature (before final death) bewailing, an ungranted wish of the dying person, an unsettled quarrel or debt etc. Connections with living people that had not been finally broken were believed to prevent the person from easy parting with life. The actions of those present had to make the soul's transition to the other world easier, as well as to take obstacles out of its way: silence during agony was strictly observed, it was forbidden to make noise and cry loudly, *чтобы не сбить душу с пути* (so that the soul does not lose its route), not to tarry it in the earthly world; they tried to avoid mentioning the dying per-

son's name, used to satisfy all his wishes, so that he does not go off to the other world with an ungranted wish; to make one's agony easier (according to folk explanation - *чтобы пронестись душу*, i.e. «to let the soul though»), they used to unfasten the clothes, open the windows, the door, the damper of the stove, drill a hole in the ceiling, raise the tie-beam, knock out some roof-planks.

In folk mythology concepts of «good» and «bad» death are closely connected with the division of the defunct into *чистых, праведных* («clean, righteous») and *нечистых, вредоносных* («un-clean, harmful» - in D. K. Zelenin's terms - *заложных*) deceased. According to general Slavic beliefs, the «un-clean» deceased cannot finally pass into the other world, cause harm to the living people, remaining in the earthly space, become «walking» deceased, vampires, demonic beings (ЗЕЛЕНИН 1911: 354-424). That's why such harmful effects of a «bad» death had to be neutralize by special ritual actions. For example, the Slavs widely observed the prohibition to bury «un-clean» deceased in the village cemetery; they had to be buried in «no man's land» (i.e. belonging to neither of the neighbouring villages), neglected land or swamp. Among the customs that had to prevent «walking deceased», there should be pointed out such ones, the meaning of which is to make the dead body unable to move: they were buried without footwear or with tied legs; sinews under their knees were cut; hells were pricked; the whole body was tied with red thread. Other magic actions served the same end: they put a scythe or a sickle into the neck of the harmful deceased or they placed sharp metal instruments; the body was pierced through with an aspen stake; the grave was laden over with a heavy log or a stone; turning coals were spread on the grave, a fire of aspen wood was made on the grave etc.

However, the measures of the defense from the «walking deceased» were not restricted to the methods of symbolic threat and aggression acts; observation of the customs, according to which the deceased had to be given the part of earthly welfare, they had not received during their lifetime, was deemed to be not less effective. Thus, the tradition common for all the Slaves to organize a symbolic wedding for unmarried young deceased brought about introduction of some wedding ritual elements into the funeral rites (they made wreaths for the deceased, a wedding free was decorated, wedding songs were performed, a symbolic «bridegroom» or «bride» for the deceased was selected from those present etc.). Unique data have been registered in Mikhailovgradsky strict in Bulgaria about a quite recent real wedding (at the church or at home but with certain participation of a priest) of a deceased to a stone or a tree, i.e. to objects symbolizing the spouse. While burying an unmarried young man, they used to put a stone tied with a woman's kerchief to the left side of him and while burying a young girl they used to place a stone with a cap on it to the right side. Other variants of the custom are wedding a young man to a stone and a young girl to a bramble branch. The folk explanations of the custom are: «the unmarried deceased - either a young man or a girl - must be married at least to a stone, otherwise he will not be able to pass to the other world (ГАРНИЗОВ 1991: 249).

Taking into account the motif of giving the deceased his proper part of all the earthly welfare was the most stable pivot of the ancient burial ritual, then it's clear that

it was as important to provide the deceased with a spouse by means of a symbolic wedding, as to give him a «home» - coffin, food, clothes, household objects etc.

The presented data show that the most archaic concepts about «good» and «bad» death were correlated with the idea of biological death coinciding with the end of «one's own life term», while further relationship between the living and the dead (*clean* and *un-clean*) depended on the proper observation of the funeral and remembrance rites, the most essential one being provision of the deceased with all the things that were necessary for him.

So, according to Slavic folk beliefs, the category of harmful «un-clean» deceased, consists of: 1) those who died of «not his own» death; 2) those who didn't break finally before his death relationship with the living (i.e. not having received their own «part» - a name, a christening ceremony, a spouse, a certain things, absolution, proper funeral and leave-taking etc.); 3) those who had been in contact with the evil spirits during their lives (sorcerers, witches, people with «double souls»). It is most essential for the sphere of concepts that people of the traditional culture not so much feared the fact of death as the «revival» of the deceased. Superstitions concerning such harmful deceased who cannot finally pass into another world, turn out to be nearly the most stable part of the Slavic mythological system.

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The first step in the development of a new drug is the selection of a suitable chemical structure. This is done by the chemist, who is often aided by the physicist and the biologist. The chemist's task is to synthesize a large number of compounds, and the biologist's task is to test these compounds for their biological activity. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The second step is the selection of a suitable animal for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The third step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The fourth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The fifth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The sixth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The seventh step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The eighth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The ninth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

The tenth step is the selection of a suitable human for testing. This is done by the biologist, who is often aided by the chemist and the physicist. The biologist's task is to determine the toxicity of the compounds, and the chemist's task is to determine the pharmacological activity of the compounds. The physicist's task is to determine the physical properties of the compounds, such as their melting point, boiling point, and refractive index.

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# TALKING ABOUT THE "OTHER WORLD". "OUR" CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND "MY" HUMAN EXPERIENCE

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51

## IZVLEČEK

### **Razprava o "drugem svetu". "Naši" konceptualni modeli in "moje" človeške izkušnje**

Avtorica bo v članku pisala o "drugem svetu" iz dveh zornih kotov. Prvi zorni kot se nanaša na skupno dojetje (v lokalni skupnosti) in pojmovanje prostora, strukture in prebivalcev "drugega sveta", kot tudi na odnose med njegovimi prebivalci in tistimi iz "našega sveta". Pogled iz drugega zornega kota se bo prav tako nanašal na iste ideje, vendar iz osebnega vidika. V drugem delu članka bo avtorica analizirala nekatere biografske zgodbe, ki govorijo o srečanjih z "drugo stranjo". Interpretirala bo primere dveh vrst takšnih zgodb:

- a) zgodb o poti na "drugi svet" v budnosti in spanju;
- b) zgodb o sanjah, kjer nekdo iz "drugega sveta" pride povedat, kaj je tam videl.

Očitno je, da človeška bitja želijo reproducirati stare ideje in podobe, da bi humanizirala prostorske strukture in jih približala svojemu načinu dojetja in čustvom. Na ta način osmišljajo prostor. "Senzibilen prostor" je lahko vtisjen v specifične kulturne fenomene in je lahko povezan z osebno usodo.

**Ključne besede:** verovanja, "drugi svet", čudeži, zgodbe, izkušnje

**Key words:** beliefs, "the world beyond", miracles, stories, experiences

What we designate as notions, beliefs, concepts or images in folklore is part and parcel of the conceptual model of this type of culture. However, a fundamental specificity of the model is the fact that its basic ideas are not formulated in any particular way and that they have no derivative written correlates that are products of the culture itself. These ideas underlie the numerous folklore phenomena and the mechanisms through which they operate. They have various faces and assume diverse appearances, insofar as they are shaped by different types of cultural situations. Their primary meaning always goes together with a host of additional meanings required by the people, who use them in one case or another.

The research concepts of folklore beliefs, notions and images are the outcome of an analytical folklore structure, created by comparing and generalising invariant cultural

forms. This is done as a part of the endeavour to describe theoretically the folklore conceptual model and to grasp the recurrent, i.e. the typical in the reasoning and behaviour of the individual, who carries the folklore culture. And from a particular point of time onwards a paradox, maybe a natural one, occurs: the link with that individual is severed, and the object of the culture that is observed and analysed is alienated from its subject.

That is how we acquired numerous descriptions of "the world beyond", classified as "inherited knowledge" or "traditional ideas", which can be most generally qualified as "reflecting" both the idea of the horizontal division of the world into two parts ("here" and "there") and its vertical division into three parts ("here", "up" and "down"). Moreover, it can be said that "the upper world" (Paradise) and "the lower world" (Hell), combined in the generic idea of "the world beyond", are inhabited by the souls of deceased people, by various demonic characters, as well as by saints, angels, God and Satan. They are partially, yet elaborately described in different folklore texts: stories, legends, songs, etc. They are projected in ritual practices and painted on diverse objects.

In an attempt "to impart a human face" to the folklore analysis, I am willing to seek the projection of the world "beyond" - in a specific type of texts - those known as **biographic narratives**. I have been driven by the following specific motives: on the one hand, to seek the dimensions of the human presence in the concrete presentation of definite cultural conceptions, and, on the other hand, to view their marginality in the context of cultures of varying orders. For they are topical even nowadays, when folklore culture is no more the dominant type of a culture and they can still be heard in our contemporary cultural surroundings.

Biographical narratives per se are "texts, where the link between the entities and objects of folklore culture seems to be most immediately and clearly manifested. Moreover, they are valuable both with the information on the cultural processes and phenomena they carry and with the representation of the specific culture carriers - as narrators and/or characters in these stories".<sup>1</sup> They constitute a real-life story, which is a product of the respective type of a culture, yet they seem to highlight its specific characteristics externally.

What are the major peculiarities of the biographic narratives recounting stories about "the world beyond"?

These peculiarities can be derived from **the specificity of the event that is narrated:**

- a. a narrative about a visit (dreamt about or real) to the "world beyond", or
- b. a narrative about a meeting (meetings) (again dreamt about or real) represented as a personal experience.

It becomes immediately clear that we are talking about an event of a peculiar dual nature. On the one hand, it is unusual (and in some cases perceived as a miracle)<sup>2</sup>, and on

<sup>1</sup> Elechinova, M. The Autobiographical Accounts as a Self-Representation (Avtobiografichniyat Razkaz kato Samopredstavjane) - In: Journal of Bulgarian Folklore, 1994, N 6, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Georgieva, A. When God was walking the Earth (Kogato Gospod Hodeshe po Zemjata), Sofia, 1993, pp. 13-14.

the other hand, it is a fact in someone's biography, a part of someone's fate in life. This seems to explain the existence of numerous dual characteristics of this type of narratives.

We can therefore regard this type of stories as texts with intertwining "inherited knowledge (acquired through education in the community culture)" and "personal experience" (gained through its individual rationalisation in the context of the unique human destiny), elements of the conceptual model and the ideas generalising the individual life-time experience of the respective narrator. It is also possible to trace the individual history of the phenomenon that is being described within the specifically selected strategy of self-presentation of the personality.<sup>3</sup> The narrative is both a sign and human presence, insofar as it refers us to the more general ideas, allowing its adequate understanding, and at the same time it involves us in the process of their personality socialisation. It can use both the language of symbols and the language of everyday life in order to make "the world beyond" both comprehensible and accessible to the listener in sensory and imagery terms.

Summing it up, the event that is recounted is both a miracle and personal experience. And this also determines the specificity of the way in which it is discussed.

I shall dwell on two types of biographic narratives dealing with the "world beyond":

1. Narratives about transfers to "the world to come" - either in a dream or in one's waking hours.

2. Narratives, where someone "from out there" comes to recount what he saw.

At that I shall focus less on the very description of the "next world" and more on the effects of the occurrence on the person and the community they belong to.

Perhaps it is important to begin by noting that most often the first type of stories cannot be told to everybody. A singular event frequently involves singular personalities. I use "singular personalities" to mean people of extraordinary talents and skills. These abilities of theirs distinguish them from the other members of the community, but at the same time they constitute a significant means for maintaining the community integrity. For the participants in most of the transfer narratives are those called "living saints"<sup>4</sup> sorceresses, magicians, fortune-tellers, etc. The "living saints" are often healers and clairvoyants as well, but they are even more than that - they are more directly bound up with the religious doctrines and the miracles related to their lives and activities and they have their correlates in the passions of most of the Christian saints<sup>5</sup>. The consequences of the transportation to "the world beyond" are very important both for the community and for the individual person. On the one hand, the narrative reinforces certain knowledge about the "the world to come" acquired by them and confirms or modifies the rules of the relationship with it. On the other

<sup>3</sup> Elchinova, M. Op. cit. pp. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Zmirlijeva V., P. Ivanov, St. Stojna from the Village of Sushica (Sushishkata svetica Sojna) - In: Journal of Bulgarian Folklore, 1990, N 3, pp. 75-95.

<sup>5</sup> This is especially of Christians because the Muslim versions of the same phenomena are a little different.



hand, the belief in what has been experienced and the awareness of its significance affect considerably the life of the person taking part in this singular event. Quite often the transfer itself is the way in which they acquire or reinforce their magic healing power; at the moment of the transfer a specific contact with the personal patron saint is created or confirmed.

Here are some instances of concrete transfer stories:

**Example 1:**

*God endows a man with a healing talent by transferring him to "the next world"*

54 In his young years a now old man once "died" and ever since he has been casting spells. This is how it happened:

He died and his soul ascended. While he was up there, he saw how a priest was summoned, how his body was laid in a coffin and how his wife lamented for him. And all the time he lay motionless in the coffin. There were a lot of flowers in the coffin. Candles were lit for him and people came along to eat and drink for the peace of his soul. Meanwhile his soul went to Heaven. There was a lot of light and young children in white clothing there. Then Christ came up to him and told him to go back to the earth for He would endow him with the gift to cure people of "any pain". The old man followed his advice and went back. And as he rose in the coffin, everybody was scared, but when he told them what had happened, he won their deep respect and they came over to him from all kinds of places to ask his advice.<sup>6</sup>

**Example 2:**

*Saint Spas endows a woman with the power to cure people by transferring her to "the world beyond"*

An old woman already knew a lot of incantations that she had learnt from two sorceresses - one of them came from her native village, and the other one from her husband's village. But she had not put her skills to practice yet.

Once, as she fell asleep, she dreamt of a high ladder. She started climbing it. There was fog on both sides of her. As she reached the highest point, she suddenly saw intensive light and St. Spas appeared before her. He told her that it was Paradise, but that it was not yet the right time for her to go there. He instructed her to go down again, because he would endow her with a "power" and from that day onwards she would be able to cure people. She came back and, indeed, as she woke up she felt that she could apply her knowledge. She believes that the power helps her work magic - "I have already brought death to three people, but I shall bring death to all of them, for they hate me!" She thinks that St. Spas and St. Mina are her patrons and makes a personal vow on their days. She kneads ceremonial bread and gives out pieces of it believing that this will bring her success. Moreover, in her view, St. Spas is not Jesus Christ but some other saint, while St. Mina is a female saint.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Todorova-Pirgova, I. *Magie Rituals (Bajanija i Magii)*, Monograph research and described rituals, is being printed.

<sup>7</sup> Todorova-Pirgova, I. *Op. cit.*

**Example 3:**

*Acquisition of a talent and a possibility to see "the world beyond" bestowed by Allah and the angels*

The gift can be conferred on you both when you are asleep and when you are awake. The angels come. If you look this way, and if you have read the Koran or other things a lot, you will see something - like an animal or a human being. If you know a lot, if you believe in Allah and if you have a good heart, something comes here, out of the wall. As you turn back and look over your right shoulder, you will see it. It shows if the person will recover from the illness or not. It shows everything to you.

(What is it you see?) An angel. But it is not Jebrail (Gabriel). Some other angel, sent to you by Allah. It comes and says to you, "I am so-and-so. You are a faithful person. I shall be helping you. You believe in Allah. If you are in trouble, prey to me and I will come." You remember what it looks like and then you know. And you do whatever it tells you. It whispers things to you, but only you can hear them. It can be seen as a shadow on the wall and a voice can be heard. And whatever it says, you tell to the person that has come to you - about a disease, or about something that will happen to them, about everything. Good or bad. If it is bad, it says, "Don't tell fortune to this one." If it will not work, it tells me that I should not try to heal the person at all. There are some people that come to me to hear about their fortune (the old man tells everybody's fortune according to the Koran); but others say: "Forget about it, they are lying to you. Don't go there." It tells you. You know immediately. And you do not tell anything to such a person, and you do not cure them. It appears like this, when matters are more important. Not every time. If it is about trifles, it doesn't come. These are subtle things, very subtle things that cannot be done by everybody. It says, for example, that you should not tell a person the day of their death. You know, but you do not tell...

They can appear when you are awake, too. Most often it shows up as a human being. It looks like a human being and it tells you: "You will do this and that. If you have great difficulties, you will call me" (How will you call it?). With a prayer and it will come immediately, it will come right away. Even if it is away, at the other end of the world, it comes. It is a spirit. As you call it, it immediately comes out of the wall. Like now, you are looking at this sick person, aren't you?! And you cannot understand what he has. You say a prayer to it. You look aside, and you can see it in the wall. And it tells you. The shadow comes out and only you can see it. The others cannot. You ask it nothing, because it already knows what you are calling it for and it tells you.

If the believer is an imam, a nice, kind-hearted imam, he can call it in the mosque. It immediately appears on the wall. It can come out of any wall and say what it needs to say.

(And can the believer go to "the world beyond" while alive? - I. T.) The person can sometimes be taken there by the angels while asleep. If he believes strongly and he is a man of Allah, this is possible. They show it to him as a picture - it is very beautiful, a real miracle, just to look on and wonder... There was someone here, who was telling how he went there and what a wonder it was - greenery, waters, beauty ... and light all over ... So

one can go there, but then he comes back, for the right time has not yet come for him. But this is not something that anybody can do. It is ... well, it is not for everybody ...<sup>8</sup>

#### **Example 4:**

*Acquisition of a healing gift bestowed by Allah and a glimpse at the “world to come” in a dream*

She saw the actions as her grandma performed them. She is the sixth generation of sorceresses in her family, but the prayer was told to her by Allah himself in her sleep. He appeared to her one night, wearing a white shirt and a black mantle, he stood there, all wrapped up in something green. He told her that from that night onwards she could cast lead in the form of bullets to cure frightened people and tell fortunes over beans.

Prior to that moment she had problems with her eyes and she frequently fell asleep unexpectedly. Then, after her very first case of lead casting, her unexpected dozing off vanished, and later on, gradually, after each new person, for whom she cast lead, her eyes improved. Allah appeared to her when she was 50.

She happened to see what was out there just once. She could not remember who had taken her there, but she was asleep and as she woke up suddenly, she found herself at a very beautiful spot. There were beautiful people in white clothes and a lot of greenery around her. She realised she was in Paradise and she thought she had died and she had gone there for good but she woke up in her bed. She became aware that Allah only showed it to her and then brought her back, because she had more days to spend on Earth. She believes that Allah cannot be addressed by just anybody with the request to show them Paradise but only selected people can do so. Allah chooses them by himself. It depends on the will of Allah rather than on the will of people.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Example 5:**

*A visit to Paradise by reverend Stoina*

“As the nun fainted, they say she went to Paradise, where God is. It was a lot of people there. Big tables. There was a lot to eat and drink before them, and those who had done evil things were looking on at the end of the table and there was nothing in front of them.”<sup>10</sup>

The narratives about dreams related to the topic under review also reinforce the inherited knowledge and the community-shared notions and beliefs. However, they also provide an opportunity for a secondary interpretation, which can lead to a change in the details of certain types of ritual practices. To put it differently, this type of narratives are one of the sources of variance in local ritual tradition. In this case reference can be made most generally to:

- dreams related to “the world beyond” which consolidate knowledge or ritual practices and

<sup>8</sup> Todorova-Pirgova, I. Op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Todorova-Pirgova, I. Op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Izmirlieva V., P. Ivanov, Op. cit, p. 80.

- dreams, related to "the world beyond", which change some elements of knowledge or ritual practices.

Examples of the first type of dreams:

**Example 6:**

*Giving out clothes during a funeral for the wedding of a lass and a lad in "the world to come"*

A boy died and his mother dreamt that her son instructed her to find bridal clothes and decorations. Then she was to go to a certain village and take them there, because there was a bride for him there. "A bride will come over to me", he said. The mother did so. As she reached the end of the village, mentioned by her son, she saw that a lass had died and that her funeral was on that same day. The mother left the finery for her, because she realised that the lass and her son were going to get married in the world beyond. That is why her son had instructed her to bring them.<sup>11</sup>

**Example 7:**

*The news about baptising always reaches "the world beyond"*

Now, an officer had a girl. And the girl died and they were about to bury her. But the officer fell asleep and dreamt that he went to the "other" world. And he reached a garden. It was a thorny garden and not a very pretty one. Many girls played there and he asked them: "Hey, haven't you seen my girl play here? Isn't she with you?" And they replied: "We are the girls that haven't been baptised, and those that have been baptised are over there, in the more beautiful garden." And he went on and on in his dream and he reached that garden. And he saw his girl there. And he asked her: "Why are you here, my girl, if you are not baptised? You are not baptised, are you? Yet you are here." And she said: "Daddy, I am baptised. Granny had me baptised and she put my baptismal certificate in the trunk, on the bottom of Granny's trunk. Go there, lift the lid and you will find it." And he came back, and he went up to the trunk and opened it and found the certificate on its bottom. Yet, before that he thought that his child was not baptised. And then he had another child and he had it immediately baptised.<sup>12</sup>

**Example 8:**

*A dream about "the world beyond", which shows why at memorial services food and drinks should be given not to relatives, but only to aliens.*

Now, the girl of my sister-in-law died. She was three. And as we give out food and drinks and clothes on the 40<sup>th</sup> day, after 6 months, after a year, and after a year and a half... my sister-in-law also served food and drinks. But whatever she gave out, she served it to her relatives. She gave clothes to the cousin of the dead girl, because the two children were of the same age. So far, so good. But one day her neighbour had a dream. She dreamt about my mother-in-law (she is also dead), who told her, "Parashke-

<sup>11</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, recorded in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria (hereinafter rec.) in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

<sup>12</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, recorded in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria (hereinafter rec.) in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

va, go and tell Pena (my sister-in-law) to open the gate because I cannot enter their home. I went to their house and I knocked and I knocked but nobody opened up. I cannot go in. Tell her that Kolcheto goes about half naked, that all she wears is a pair of torn trousers." Thus she had this dream for two days and on the third one she went to the woman and told her what she had dreamt. But she said: "But I did give out clothes." And the third night she had the same dream in the same way, and as my mother-in-law came, the woman told her: "Well, she gave out clothes for Kolcheto, why does she go about half naked and in torn clothing?" And my mother-in-law told her: "She gave them for her, but she gave them out to a relative and they do not reach her here. Let her give out clothing quickly, for Kolcheto goes about half naked and feels cold." And ... I don't know if she gave them out later or not ... I don't know.<sup>13</sup>

Examples of the second type of dreams:

**Example 9:**

*Pomana (a ritual involving giving out food, drinks and objects for the dead) can be given out until 5 p.m.*

My grandmother used to say that pomana is given out only until noon. And everybody tries to do so - to give out everything till noon. But now I know that it can be done later - till 5 p.m. For this is what my father said. I dreamt about him as he died. My father came to me in my dream and he said: "Rahelo, you don't have to hurry, because the Chief, that is God, calls us and gives us pomanas at 5 o'clock, it is at 5 o'clock that he gathers us to give us the pomanas. Whatever arrives till that time, he gives it to us." Whatever you give out, it immediately gets there (in the world beyond). So... Because my father told me so and ...<sup>14</sup>

**Example 10:**

*Why are clothes given out on St. Peter's Day and not at Rousalya*

A woman's father visited her in her dreams. He had died in hospital merely in his underwear. And she dreamt that he was sitting in the world beyond with nothing on but his underwear. He was sitting under a tree and his clothes were at his feet. "Why do you sit like this, why don't you wear the clothes I gave you during the pomana?" "Well, you gave me clothes but that was at Rousalya, and Rousalya goes about and kicks them at my feet. I cannot wear them and all the time Rousalya kicks them like this, like this. Why didn't you give them to me on St. Peter's Day, for on St. Peter's Day St. Peter and St. Paul take us to the red apple and they dress us and then they give us the clothes from pomana." So, you get it, don't you? Clothes should not be given out at Rousalya, but only on St. Peter's Day, so that the person can wear them. Because Rousalya kicks them, while St. Peter and St. Paul already give these clothes to be worn.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, rec. in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

<sup>14</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, I, rec. in Gumzovo, Vidin region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdačić.

<sup>15</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, I, rec. in Gumzovo, Vidin region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdačić.

Both types of narratives (about transfers and about dreams) refer to the "world beyond", but their emphasis is different. In both cases the effects influence both individual and community being. The life of the individual man is changed (particularly in the cases of newly acquired talents and skills), but the destiny of the people, who benefit from them also changes. The impact on local culture is manifested both in the possibility for additional explanations and interpretations and in the change of the elements of the tradition in accordance with the newly acquired "direct" knowledge "from above".

In all cases, however, what is known as "a belief in the world beyond" is personified and related to one's life and fate. This fact sustains the viability of the belief and enables us to assess its significance for human thinking and behaviour since ancient times. The belief becomes an element of the personality culture and a regulator of the everyday and ritual behaviour. It is encompassed in the individual views about the world through its relationship with the personal biography.

The event that is recounted is not only important for the lives of the participants in it, but in a certain sense it distinguishes them from the community and in this case we observe how the community-shared views are reinforced by shifting the emphasis to individual experience and through it. Thus the self-presentation of the personality takes place through certain opposition to the community.

Thus the participation in the exceptional event links the individual with the community through the shared notion, yet, it separates him from it through the unique personal experience.

These two different accents balance up the personality/community dichotomy and convert the narratives under consideration into a natural semantic bridge linking cultures of various types. That is why we also find such narratives in the context of the modern urban cultural environment - they are once again vivid, effective and meeting the old human need to peep in the world "beyond". In a sense, even nowadays the participants in the events are extraordinary people - people, who are believed to have acquired peculiar talents and skills "from above".

An extremely illustrative example is that of the modern urban dwellers with extraordinary sensory skills, who often recount their experience with the door to "what lies beyond" that was set ajar: what they saw there and how this sight influenced their further healing or clairvoyant practices. Naturally the descriptions of the "next world" differ from those narrated in traditional rural culture but the narrative situation and the underlying semantic orientation are quite similar. For the principal ideas - the idea of space divisible in terms of meaning and axiology, the idea of life after death, the idea of a contact with the non-men "from out there" - remain unchanged. Words differ but their meaning is transformed only as much as it should be in order to be in harmony with the specificity of the culture in whose context these narratives emerge and exist.

Here are two examples as an illustration:

**Example 11:***A visit to the "world beyond" with a spiritual leader*

"My Leader, for example, was born during the "Golden Age", you may have heard about it ... It was the very first age during which people lived on the Earth. And it lasted for many, many years - many more than any other one that followed. And one day he took me there to see how people lived in his time, when he himself was a man like us. Currently they are all just energy substances but at that time they were people - like me and you. (How did he take you there? - I. T.) Well, it was very interesting. One afternoon, as I was sitting and thinking about some problems of mine, I heard his voice telling me that he wanted to take me for a walk. And all of a sudden I felt as if I was asleep and dreaming. It was a mental journey, you understand, don't you? (And what did you see there? - I. T.) Oh, many things. How can I describe it to you?! First and foremost, everything was lit up. Very intensive light. And people, coming towards me. They were all kind of lit up and tall, dressed in white clothes. And most of them were smiling at me. I somehow felt that they were happy to see me. And I still remember this feeling of happiness. A man and a woman came to meet me - later on he explained to me that they were his parents. They took me for a walk in some gardens but they did not talk to me. Everything was green and there were those wonderful flowers. There were some varieties that I had never seen in my life. They are probably extinct. I saw no houses, but probably they have some. We walked along a path along a river but there was not much time, because I had to go back."<sup>16</sup>

**Example 12:***Descriptions of the single Space, where the human world is but a small part.*

There are planets, such as the Earth, but there are also astral, mental and etheric planets. Astral planets turn around us and rotate in the direction from the Earth to the Sun. The souls of our dead dwell there. Mental and etheric planets are located on a higher energy level. We constitute heavy energy, while they constitute lighter, finer energy ... The planet Earth is alive, it is a living organism and it is also struggling to climb to the higher mental level. When our intelligence is upgraded and our energy becomes lighter, we shall help it move up ... Space has its centre and a periphery. We are located in the external coat, but it is also in the form of a spiral and we are in the first curves. The purest and most supreme energy is in the Centre, in the smallest curves - that is God - God the Father and God the Son."<sup>17</sup> - "The whole world consists of four Universes, each Universe is made up of 41 Galaxies, and each Galaxy comprises billions of planets and suns ... Everything is governed by the Big Mind - God."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Todorova-Pirgova, I., "Golden Age" in the Human History ("Zlatniyat vek v choveshkata istorija") - In: Journal of Arts, 1996, N 4, p. 26

<sup>17</sup> Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, II (interview with the same person of extraordinary sensory abilities - Petranka Mariyanova Petrova - born in 1949, trade - zootechnics) recorded (hereinafter rec.) in 1994 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdacic.

<sup>18</sup> A letter to the Editorial Office of the "Psycho Plus" newspaper from 1994.

- "Since last year I came to know several extra-terrestrial civilisations. It took place by way of telepathy ... There are 12 levels in the Universe, and our knowledge reaches as far as the fourth one."<sup>19</sup>

- "I dreamt that I was standing in front of the entire Universe. It is like an enormous colour circle, it vanishes in the distance and pulsates ..."<sup>20</sup>

- "The Mother Planet is a living organism belonging to the common living Universe. It breathes, it gets energy and information from the Mother Universe." And "the Soul of the Earth is located in its centre and it is about 32 meters big. This is a shaft of energy of approximately the same size as that of the archangels, with just a few different characteristics. The Soul of the Earth has its own tasks, as well as any other creation of God ..."<sup>21</sup>

Obviously it will take a while before men can reconcile himself with a description of spatial structures that is indiscernible from a Newtonian perspective and in the meantime they will continue to reproduce the old images and ideas by means of which they make it more human and bring it closer to their perceptions; to make it a part of local cultural manifestations and to link it to important moments of their own personal fate.

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#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

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<sup>19</sup> P. Dimitrova. *The Supernatural (Svruhestestvenoto)*. Sofia 1992 (a letter from Russe), p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> P. Dimitrova. *The Supernatural (Svruhestestvenoto)*. Sofia 1992 (a letter from Stara Zagora), p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> A letter to the Editorial Office of the "Psycho Plus" newspaper from 1993 and "Seed from Universe knowledge" (Recorded by M. Jovanović and M. Reić). Belgrade 1993, issue #1, p. 88.





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# NAGROBNI NAPISI NA SLOVENSКИH POKOPALIŠČIH

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Marija Stanonik

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**Ključne besede:** Slovenija, smrt, pokopališča, nagrobni napisi, slovenska literatura

## Uvod

Senca smrti spremlja človeka, odkar se zaveda svojega življenja. Na diahroni osi je dokaz za to najstarejša znana pesnitev človeške civilizacije - sumerski ep o Gilgamešu, ki je nastal predvidoma okoli leta 2000 pred Kristusovim rojstvom v Mezopotamiji in katerega glavna tema je smrt: Vladar Gilgameš izgubi zvestega prijatelja Engiduja, ki je bil v najboljših letih, in tega ne more sprejeti. Beži v daljnje kraje in celo na oni svet gre povpraševat po skrivnosti življenja in smrti. Zve pa le to: ...*Neizbežna je bridka smrt.*<sup>1</sup> Toda napis - ali ga smemo šteti za najzgodnejši nagrobni napis? - na eni od egiptovskih piramid iz 3. tisočletja pred Kristusom zagotavlja: *Spiš, / da se zopet zbudiš, / umrješ, / da živiš.*<sup>2</sup> Enako pomenljive besede, ki jih lahko obrne vsak tudi nase, je dal že za življenja napisati na svoj nagrobnik koroški duhovnik v Meiseldingenu:

\* 1906 incipit mori z rojstvom je (sem) začel umirati

† ? incipit vivere s smrtjo je (sem) začel živeti<sup>3</sup>.

Ta latinski napis iz sodobnosti je lepa iztočnica za opozorilo na rimske nagrobne z latinskimi napisi, ki tudi na slovenskih tleh dokazujejo, če drugega ne, da so lahko pomemben vir za preučevanje nekdanjih prebivalcev in njihovih kultur v tem prostoru.<sup>4</sup> Nagrobni napis škofu Gaudenciju v tedanjem Poetoviu (Ptuj) priča, da "so tudi naši kraji poznali krče mladega krščanstva... Pesnik Gaudencijevega nagrobnega napisa namreč prosi pokojnega škofa, naj ne pozabi moliti, da bi obvaroval svojo čredo

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<sup>1</sup> Anton Feinig, *Neizbežna je bridka smrt, Nagrobni napisi, Celovec-Dunaj-Ljubljana 1997*, 9. Ep o Gilgamešu (Sivi kondor V), Ljubljana 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Anton Trstenjak, *Umrješ, da živiš*, Celje 1993, 101-107. M.R., *Umrješ, da živiš*. Knjiga '93/6, Ljubljana 1993, 131.

<sup>3</sup> A. Trstenjak, n. d., 154.

<sup>4</sup> Iva Curk, *Rimljani na Slovenskem*, Ljubljana 1976, 11, 42.

vernih pred grabežljivim levom, odpadom od vere, kot to razlagajo poznavalci”.<sup>5</sup> To je že obdobje, blizu papežu Damazu, ki med papeži iz 4. stoletja še posebej izstopa zaradi odločilnega prispevka k češččenju krščanskih mučencev, saj je zanje med drugim pisal nagrobne napise (epitafe). Čeprav so nekateri verzi okorni, mu ne gre odrekati pesniške nadarjenosti. “Njegov prijatelj Filokal je prav za klesanje teh napisov oblikoval novo pisavo, ki ohranja monumentalnost stare kvadratne kapitale in dodaja nevsiljivo ornamentiko”.<sup>6</sup>

## I. Nagrobni napisi v slovenski publicistiki

V slovenskem kulturnem prostoru so, po dosedanjem védenju, prvo pozornost slovenskim nagrobnim napisom začeli namenjati sredi 19. stoletja, z nastankom možnosti njihovega objavjanja. Kmetijske in rokodelske novice imajo časovno prednost,<sup>7</sup> vendar pa kmalu težišče njihovih objav prevzame Zgodnja Danica. Ni težko razumeti, zakaj. Ta prvi verski slovenski časopis je od leta 1849 dalje v ne zmeraj enakomernih presledkih v rubriki *Nagrobni napisi* popolnoma anonimno priobčeval za to specifično pesniško vrsto ustrezne verze. Vendar se zdi, da ne gre za zapise s terena, to je za prepise z nagrobnikov, ampak za koncept uredništva, ki je tudi po tej poti skušalo približati bralcem neizbežno resnico prepletenosti življenja in smrti. Kljub določenim razločkom v sporočilu in obliki posameznih epitafov ni mogoče reči, ali je v rubriki sodelovalo več avtorjev ali imajo zasluge zanj posamezniki.<sup>8</sup> Cenjen avtor tovrstnih napisov je moral biti Matevž Frelih (Lozice na Vipavskem 1828, umrl kot dekan v Trebnjem 1892), saj so izšli skupaj z drugimi njegovimi prigodnimi pesmimi tudi v posebni knjižici leta 1854 in še tretjič v popravljenem ponatisu leta 1886.<sup>9</sup> Zanesljivo je v letu svoje smrti, morda v slutnji njenega bližanja in deloma tudi v duhu svojega časa, zlagal nagrobnice Matevž Lotrič (Železniki, 1840-1864), ki je umrl še istega leta, kot je bil posvečen v duhovnika.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Iva Curk, n. d., 89. V bogatem arheološkem gradivu ptujskih najdišč pa se lahko seznanimo tudi z grškim napisom, za katerega sklepajo, da je pripadal grobu krščanskega mučenca, verjetno iz časa vladanja Diokleciana in Maksimijana. I. Curk, n. d. 61, 89.

<sup>6</sup> Zgodnjekrščanska latinska poezija. Prevedel in komentarje napisal Miran Špelič, Ljubljana 1997, 85. Iz istega obdobja, leta 344, se je ohranil nagrobni napis, ki je kakor molitev za pokojnega: *Bog vseh duhov in vsake stvari, / ki si premagal smrt, / ki si dal življenje svetu, / nakloni pokoj duši mojega očeta Sinesa. / Naj bo blizu Abrahama, Izaka in Jakoba / v deželi luči in počitka, / kjer ni več trpljenja, bolečine in solza. / Odpusti mu vsak greh, / ki ga je storil v besedah, dejanjih ali mislih, / ker si dober in prijatelj ljudi. / Ti edini si Bog, na tebi ni nobenega greha, tvoja pravičnost je večna. / Gospod, tvoja beseda je resnica. / Nakloni pokoj duši mojega očeta Sinesa, / ti, ki si pokoj, življenje in vstajenje. / Slava tebi, Oče, Sin in Sveti Duh. / Amen.* Miran Špelič, Nagrobni napis, Družina 47, 1. november 1998, št. 43, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Prim. Nagrobni napisi, Kmetijske in rokodelske novice V/1847, 181; IX/1851, 185.

<sup>8</sup> Prim. Zgodnja Danica II/1849, 352; III/1850, 25; VIII/1855, 144 152, 164, 192, 202; IX/1856, 20, 198. XXXVIII/1885, 182, 236.

<sup>9</sup> Josip Marn, Jezičnik XXX, 1892, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Karel Glaser, Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva III, 1896, 183.

Primeri iz Zgodnje Danice s podnaslovom *Na vsaki grob.*

*Kmalo bodeš tud med nami,  
Morde ravno v moji jami;  
Zdaj cveteče truplo tvoje  
Namestilo bode moje.<sup>11</sup>  
Ti, ki tukaj se sprehajaš  
In po grobih tu postajaš,  
Truplo moje tû počiva,  
Duša tam plačilo vživa;  
Kličem milo s temne jame:  
Moli, o prijatelj, za-me!<sup>12</sup>*

*Preden moje vse košice  
Bodo zopet prekopali,  
Bo obledelo tvoje lice,  
In mem mene  
Bodo tebe  
Znabit tukaj pokopali.<sup>13</sup>*

*Človek, glej gomilo mojo!  
Kar sim jest, boš skorej ti,  
In za vso ošabnost svojo  
Boš zadobil pest persti.<sup>14</sup>*

*Gledaš semterje krog sebe,  
Išesh kdo de tu alj tam leži;  
Sliši, kaj iz groba kličem ti:  
"Danes mene, juter tebe".*

*Če želiš, de truplo tvoje  
Vstane v časti sodnji dan,  
Ne pozabi duše svoje,  
Delaj za-njo neugnan.<sup>15</sup>*

*Človek, glej! rebrovje moje,  
Skorej, skorej bo strohnelo,  
Namestilo ga bo tvoje,  
Zdaj cveteče, kmal pa velo.<sup>16</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 32, 9. veličiga serpana 1855, 136.

<sup>12</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 36, 6. kimovca 1855, 152.

<sup>13</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 39, 27. kimovca 1855, 164.

<sup>14</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 45, V Ljubljani 8. listopada 1855, 192.

<sup>15</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 47, V Ljubljani, 22. listopada 1855, 202.

<sup>16</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj IX, list 6, Ljubljana 20. sušca 1856, 56.

Kaj pomeni pojasnilo *Za vsak grob*, se poučimo iz primerov, kjer je podnaslov za-  
menjan z drugim, npr. *Na grob mladenčca*.

*Lej, o človek! tako truplo moje,  
Še clo mlado, skorej bo strohnelo;  
Spomni se, de tudi truplo tvoje,  
Pred ko misliš, bode ocvetelo.*<sup>17</sup>

*Na grob device.  
Si ponižna rožica cvetela  
Tu na zemlji le za Jezusa,  
Zdaj pa novo pesem bodeš pela  
Kot devica v družbi Jagnjeta.*<sup>18</sup>

Občasno so jih objavljali tudi drugi časopisi (Slovanski svet<sup>19</sup>), revije (Dom in svet<sup>20</sup>) in koledarji (Drobtinice,<sup>21</sup> Mohorjev koledar<sup>22</sup>). V ta okvir sodijo tudi številni zapisi iz časa druge svetovne vojne.<sup>23</sup>

## II. Nagrobni napisi v slovenski literarni kulturi

Ta problematika bi zaslužila samostojno poglavje, saj bi se ji bilo treba približati z več vidikov. Njihova funkcija je mnogostranska.

a) Izvrševalca Glavarjeve oporoke sta dala nad grobom Petra Pavla Glavarja iz Komende v kamen vklesati v latinščini besede, ki se v prevodu glasijo: *“Ubog! / Pridite, pogledjte! / pa tudi žalujte! / Pod kamnitim pokrovom počiva v miru / Peter Pavel Glavar, / izredni stvariteljski smrtnik. / K življenju bo vstal ob glasu angelske trombe!”*<sup>24</sup> Še preden je Jakob Aljaž prišel na Dovje, je dal zapisati svoji materi na spomenik: *Večna luč naj jim sveti, srčno ste nas vi ljubili, / dobra mati bili ste, / vam hvaležno smo točili / vročih solzic jagode. / Ko trobenta zabučí, / videli se bomo vsi.*<sup>25</sup> Že na prvi pogled opazimo, da oba zapisa vsebujeta motiv “angelskih tromb” / trobent iz svetopisemskega Razodetja. Naslednji napis se je že izločil iz te klasične tradicije in se trudi naštetí vse zasluge pokojnega v smislu realističnega pogleda na svet: *Tukaj počivajo / prečastiti gospod zlatomašnik / Dr / Jožef Muršec-Živkov, / bivši profesor v Gradcu, / konsistorijalni*

<sup>17</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 33, 16. veličiga serpana 1855, 140.

<sup>18</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj VIII, list 33, 16. veličiga serpana 1855, 140.

<sup>19</sup> Slovanski svet VI/1893, 236.

<sup>20</sup> Dom in svet 25/1912, 195.

<sup>21</sup> Drobtinice 1854, 127, 128; 1859-60, 173 sl.

<sup>22</sup> Mohorjev koledar za leto 1953, 175.

<sup>23</sup> Prim. Marija Stanonik, Iz kaosa kozmos, Ljubljana 1995, 172-180.

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Sivec, In večno bodo cvetele lipe. Celje 1991, 213.

<sup>25</sup> Navaja Ivan Sivec, Triglavski kralj, Družina 38, 13. marca 1994, št. 11, 13.

*svetovalec sekov. in lavant. škofije, / roj. 1. sušca 1807 v Bišu, / umrli 25. vinotoka 1895 v Gradcu. / Bili so pobožen in izgleden / duhovnik, odličen slovenski / rodoljub in pisatelj, ter / velikodušen dobredelnik / svojim sorodnikom in / župniji sv. Bolfanka. / Ljubi Bog bodi jim povračnik / v nebesih!*<sup>26</sup>

b) Da nagrobni napis nikakor ni zanemarljiva, ampak v slovenski zavesti stalno navzoča pesniška vrsta, dokazujejo France Prešeren (*Grobni napisi*: Matiji Čopu, Antonu Linhartu, Francetu Julianiju, Ovsenekovima dečkoma, Juriju Kalanu;<sup>27</sup> *Grabschrift für Emil Korytko*<sup>28</sup>), Anton Medved (prve objavljene v Domu in svetu<sup>29</sup>), Alojz Gradnik (Pojoča kri<sup>30</sup>), Ciril Kosmač.<sup>31</sup> Ta problematika je bila na robu zanimanja Josipa Vidmarja, ki se je sicer prvi soočil z "mrtvaškim plesom", to je motivom smrti sploh v slovenski poeziji,<sup>32</sup> ker je nagrobni napis praviloma izrecno prigodno literarno dejanje. 67

c) Močan značaj in zrelo osebnost dokazujejo možje, ki si napišejo nagrobni napis zase kar sami. Od kod dobivajo nagib za tako odločitev, pove dejstvo, da gre, vsaj v doslej znanih primerih vedno za duhovnike. Za Matijo Kastelca (1620-1688) morda ne bi mogli trditi, da se je poleg nabožnega slovstva ukvarjal tudi s stavbarstvom, če si ne bi sam na nagrobnik napisal "sciens architecturam" (vešč arhitekture).<sup>33</sup> Mikloš Küzmič (1737-1804), prekmurski katoliški pisatelj<sup>34</sup>, je ravnal enako. V slovenskem prevodu se v latinščini ohranjen nagrobni napis, ki si ga je sam sestavil, glasi: *Tu ležim kot prah zemljé, / žitek moj končan je že. / V Dolnjih Slavečih sem se rodil / in za Miklóša krščen bil. / So Küzmič mi priimek dali / in v Ivanovcih me pokopali. / Pravičnega Sodnika preiskavo / sem prestal, prejel razsodbo pravo. / Ti ki bereš črke, / vdolbene v kamen, / moli zame, da me Bog očisti. Amen.*<sup>35</sup> Franc Kogej (1884-1938), pokopan v grobnici šentviških (Šentvid nad Ljubljano) duhovnikov, je svojo duhovno oporoko želel imeti napisano na nagrobnem spomeniku: *"Kar sem učil vas. zvesto držite, / lepo živite / in za svojega kateheta molite!"*<sup>36</sup> Tudi Ksaver Meško (1874-1964) si je sam pripravil napis za svoj nagrobnik: *Na grob pa križ lesen mi zasadite, / naj vera vam v žiljenju bo. / le mnogokrat se vanj ozrite, / ker kaže pot vam v nebo. / Uvene roža, a sveti križ ostane, / žiljenje mine, a ostane duša! / Zato, otroci, le moli zame, / ko grob zelen mi že zaraste ruša.*<sup>37</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Jože Pavlič. *Vklesani spomin*. Družina 39 (29. okt. 1995), št. 43, 16.

<sup>27</sup> France Prešeren. *Pesnitve in pisma*. Ljubljana 1962, 130-131.

<sup>28</sup> France Prešeren. *Pesnitve in pisma*. Ljubljana 1962, 171.

<sup>29</sup> *Leksikon Slovenska književnost*. Ljubljana 1996, 289.

<sup>30</sup> Alojz Gradnik. *Pojoča kri*. Ljubljana 1944, 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> Silvo Fatur. *Ljudje in kraji ob Pivki*. Postojna 1975, 304-305.

<sup>32</sup> Josip Vidmar. *Mrtvaški ples*. Ljubljana 1983.

<sup>33</sup> Ivo Pirkovič. *O nastanku žitnega kozolca*. Slovenski etnograf XVI-XVII, Ljubljana 1946, 303.

<sup>34</sup> Vsa leta svojega duhovniškega življenja je prebival v starem lesenem župnijskem hramu v samotnem Ivanovskem dolu pod bregom Sv. Benedikta v Kančevcih. Tam, v cerkvi sv. Benedikta, tudi počiva. Jožef Smej, *Družina* 38 (1994), št. 14, 12.

<sup>35</sup> Jožef Smej, *Družina* 38 (1994), št. 14, 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Župnija Ljubljana-Šentvid*. 900 let. Ljubljana 1991, 145.

<sup>37</sup> Viktor Levovnik. *V Meškovih Selah*. *Rodna gruda* 40, julij 1993, 14.

Tak napis bi utegnil sestaviti tudi pesnik Joža Lovrenčič, vendar o tem ni nikakršnih podatkov, razen besedila samega: *Moli zame / v upanju križa, / ki naju zbliža / onstran jame. / Moli zame!*<sup>38</sup> *In kadar spet bukve zagore / in kadar spet gabri zažare / bodo iz mene žareli. // Žar - šum in hlad - vse iz mene / pesem, cvet livad - vse iz mene / vse iz mene mrtvega...*<sup>39</sup> Ali je Stanko Majcen oblikoval napis na način vložnice svojemu sinu, ki je bil izginil leta 1945, ali je imel pred očmi sebe, iz vira ni razvidno. To bi lahko ugotovili na podlagi datuma nastanka besedila. Krščansko pojmovanje posmrtnih prihodnosti je tu nadomestilo estetsko doživljanje panteističnega krogotoka.

Obstaja izročilo, da si je tudi France Prešeren (1800-1849) zase v kranjskem obdobju ob neki priložnosti improviziral navihane verze za napis na svojem grobu: *Tukaj počiva Franc Prešeren, / nejeveren in vendar veren.*<sup>40</sup> Drobna besedna igra svetovnonazorsko meri na agnosticizem, a kot šegavi domislici ji lahko postavimo ob bok Partljičev "žalostno komedijo" iz naših dni *Na svidenje nad zvezdami*: "Humorno bridke so scene pri Tozdu Pogrebnik; prizadevanje, da bi iz njega naredili 'najmodernejše samoupravno podjetje, družbenopolitično široko odprto vsem občanom'. Odpraviti napise, ki 'izražajo religiozno naravnost našega naroda', napis 'na svidenje nad zvezdami', je 'mistika, vera v posmrtno življenje', zahteva pa napis v slogu: 'Tu počiva Valerija, spreminja se v materija!'"<sup>41</sup>

### III. Nagrobni napisi kot vir za različne zgodovinske panoge

Najprej so zbudili pozornost slovenski nagrobni napisi na koroških pokopališčih. Od Strojne in Št. Danijela nad Prevaljami do Pečnice pri Baškem jezeru jih je iz obdobja med 1853 do 1909 zbral in v treh presledkih objavil Ksaver Meško.<sup>42</sup> To je spodbudilo Ivana Grafenauerja, da se je naklonjeno pomudil ob njih: "Ob vodilnih umetnikih iz Koroške Slovenije tudi preproste umetnosti koroških ljudskih pesnikov in bukovníkov ne smemo pozabiti... Priče naravnega pesemskega daru, nežnih in slikovito izraženih misli, so mnogi izmed napisov na grobnih spomenikih, kamnitih in lesenih."<sup>43</sup> Najlepši rezultat te prizadevnosti je prva samostojna knjiga slovenskih nagrobni napisov, ki jo je pripravil Anton Feinig.<sup>44</sup> V njej je otetih pozabe tristo (296) koroških nagrobni napisov, ki jih je začel zbirati že v začetku šestdesetih let.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Miran Mihelič, 'Jaz bi rad rož rudečih' Ob 50-letnici obsodbe dr. Jože Lovrenčiča iz Kreda, Dom 31 (1996), št. 12, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Jože Zadavec, 'Tje bomo naši pot', Ljubljana 1988, 105-106.

<sup>40</sup> Boris Paternu, France Prešeren in njegovo pesniško delo, Ljubljana 1976, 34. Francé Stelè, Donesek k spominu na Prešerna, Dom in svet 1930, 309.

<sup>41</sup> Tone Partljič, 'In kadar spet bukve zagore in kadar spet gabri zažare', Delo, Književni listi, 9. 12. 1993, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Ksaver Meško, Koledar Mohorjeve družbe 1910, 72; 1911, 26-29; 1921, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, Slovensko slovstvo na Koroškem, živ člen vseslovenskega slovstva, Literarnozgodovinski spisi, Ljubljana 1980, 517.

<sup>44</sup> Anton Feinig, Nagrobni napisi od Šentlenarta do Golšova, Celovec 1997.

<sup>45</sup> A. Feinig, n. d., 7.

Prav je, da avtor ob tem na zamolči pešanja in sramovanja slovenske narodne prepoznavnosti: "Na žalost je na naših koroških pokopališčih vedno manj slovenskih napisov, še bolj redki pa postajajo verzi. Stari napisi so že obledeli in se slabo vidijo, nekateri so že nečitljivi, ker jih nihče ne obnovi več. Na novih nagrobnih kamnih pa so napisana največkrat le še imena umrlih in letnice rojstva in smrti, slovenskih rajmov pa je zelo zelo malo. Opažam velik strah pred vsako slovensko besedo, celo pred črko!, da ne bi izdala *prikrito narodnost*. To je za nas seveda velika škoda. Polagoma bodo izbrisane še vse zadnje sledi, celo na kraju našega zadnjega počitka. Ti zbrani nagrobni napisi - verzi naj bi odprli koroškimi Slovencem oči, da bi spoznali, kakšna pomembna kulturna dragocenost so bili in so ti rajmi."<sup>46</sup>

V smislu koncentričnih krogov začenjamo njihovo predstavitev na zunanjem oboju, v slovenskem zamejstvu. Poleg pietetne funkcije, ki jo nagrobni napisi v prvi vrsti opravljajo, imajo v tem prostoru še veliko veljavnejšo, družbeno razsežnost, ki se jo dá lepo razbrati iz kritične Feinigove tožbe nad njihovim izginjanjem. Nagrobni napis duhovniku v Ukvah govori sam zase, da je bila v 19. stoletju slovenščina v Kanalski dolini običajni jezik sporazumevanja: *Gospod Jožef Škarbina / rojeni v Ločah 10. nov. 1821. Umerli 29. sept. 1879. Fajmošter v Ukvah 13 let, / Bili so svoji čedi zvest pastir, / mladini skrbljiv učenik, za božjo / čast ves unet, zatorej nam nepozabljen.*<sup>47</sup> Na nagrobniku koroškega župnika Vinka Poljanca, ki je mučeniške smrti umrl leta 1938, napis na spomeniku kratko pove, kdo je bil pokojni in kaj je pomenil koroškimi Slovencem:

*Bil je skrben dušni pastir!  
- Značaj kakor čisto zlato!  
- Božje ljubezni nositelj!  
Narodu modri voditelj!*<sup>48</sup>

Morda se bo v tujem svetu, kjer niti ni (bilo) pogojev za rezko tekmovalnost, njihova pričevalnost lažje upirala zobu časa kakor v našem zamejstvu, kjer konkurenčnost dveh ali treh subjektov za življenjski prostor neizprosno briše kulturo šibkejšega, čemur smo neposredne priče. Na krajih, kamor so se v takšni ali drugačni stiski zatekli naši ljudje, bodo morda ostali nemi pomniki vztrajnosti in žilavosti, upa in obupa. Nekoč bodo na njihovi podlagi odkrivali, kje vse so (bile) po starem ali novem svetu raztresene naselbine slovenskih izseljencev: "Pokrajina, suha in posuta s skalami, sredi nje pokopališče. Zrak je čist, obrisi zarje natančno ločijo zemljo od nebes... In v daljavi mogočna Aconcagua z večnim belim snegom. Na tem koščku ameriške zemlje, pod najvišjo goro Novega sveta, počiva prvi izseljenski duhovnik med rojaki v Argentini, Jože Kastelic. Sin slovenske zemlje ter ljubitelj gora, neumorni dušni pastir svojih rojakov, razpršenih po širjavah Novega sveta. Ljubezen do gorskih višin ga je gnala na Aconcagua, kjer je za vedno zaspal sredi viharja v letu 1940. Verzi na kamnitem stebru, ki so mu ga 'hvaležni rojaki' postavili na grob, ga predstavijo:

<sup>46</sup> Anton Feinig, Uvodna beseda, Nagrobni napisi od Šentlenarta do Golšova, Celovec 1997, 73.

<sup>47</sup> Dorica Makuc, Ukljanski župniki, Rodna gruda 37, št. 1, 1990, 20.

<sup>48</sup> I. M. Spominska prireditel, Pred 50 leti je mučeniške smrti umrl na Koroškem župnik Vinko Poljanec, Družina 37 (1988), št. 35, 2.



*V miru počivaj slovenske zemlje sin,  
vneti ljubitelj visokih planin.  
Narodu bil si vodnik do večnih višin.<sup>49</sup>*

V kamen vklesani napisi (ni nujno, da so ravno v verzih) so toliko bolj neprecenljiv vir za različne zgodovinske panoge, kolikor starejši so. Lepo priložnost za dokaz te trditve daje naslednji primer. "Med potjo s pokopališča se mi oko ustavi še na lepem starinskem spomeniku, kjer piše: Tu počiva naš dobri oče Peter Zdravec - Amerikanec, častni član pariške Akademije znanosti, posestnik in mlinar v Loperšicah.

*Roj. 1. VII. 1850, umrl 29. VII. 1936.  
,Na božje poti rad si romal,  
ni ti težka bila pot,  
končno k Bogu si priromal  
svojo zadnjo božjo pot.'<sup>50</sup>*

Pa smo tam, sem dejal. Na majhnem skritem, humskem pokopališču počivajo posmrtni ostanki velikega moža, ki ga nihče več ne omenja, človeka, ki je mnogo prispeval k naši prehrani, ki je izumil posebno moko, hrano dojenčkov in starčkov. Zaslužil si je spomenik v Ormožu, ne samo tistega, ki so mu ga postavili hvaležni otroci na humskem pokopališču...<sup>51</sup>

#### IV. Zamisel o zbiranju slovenskih nagrobnih napisov

Prva misel o zbiranju nagrobnih napisov se je porodila še za časa študija ob nekem potovanju iz Kranjske gore čez Vršič v Soško dolino. Ustavili smo se v Logu pod Mangrtom in tedaj sem postala pozorna na številne imenitne nagrobne napise na pokopališču zraven avtobusne postaje. Leta in leta sem čutila dolžnost, da bi jih morala iti zapisat, toda ko sem se ob priložnosti, spet na vožnji z avtobusom, tam pomudila, sem razočarano ugotovila, da sem prepozna. Večino nagrobnikov so zamenjali in na novih

<sup>49</sup> Irene Mislej, Ob 60-letnici Duhovnega življenja, Mohorjevo koledar 1994, Celje 1993, 124.

<sup>50</sup> Slovenski biografski leksikon, 14. zvezek, 1986, 740 piše o njem: Zdravec Peter, mlinar in izumitelj, roj. 1. avg. 1850 v Loperšicah tesarju Jožefu in Margareti, r. Lukman, ter u. 29. jul. 1936 (pok. v Humu pri Ormožu). Po osnovni šoli v Humu se je izučil za mlinarja v Središču ob Dravi in delal po večjih mlinških obratih na Štajerskem. Od mladosti se je zanimal za mehaniko, zlasti za mlinske naprave in stroje. V želji, da bi se seznanil z najnovejšo mlinsko tehniko, je 1885 odpotoval v ZDA, kjer je ostal do 1893. Najprej je delal na kmetiji, nato v San Antoniu (Teksas) v umetnem mlinu, kjer je bil zadnji dve leti obratovodja. V prostem času je študiral strok, literaturo. Skonstruiral je sito za moko (flour separator) in pogon za večji vetrni mlin (primeren za Holandijo). Še med bivanjem v Ameriki je kupil v bližini svojega doma v Loperšicah mlin z malim posestvom, kjer je po vrnitvi mlinaril do smrti (prijel se ga je vzdevek Amerikanec). Z nasveti je pomagal okoliškim mlinarjem in podpiral solarje rodnega kraja. Za uspešne inovacije in praktične izboljšave v mlinski tehniki mu je Academie parisienne des inventeurs industrielles et exposants podelila diplomu z zlato medaljo in ga imenovala za častnega člana.

<sup>51</sup> Rado Kukovec, S Huma po "štikeh" v Ormož, Mohorjevo koledar 1992, Celje 1991, 89-90.

je le tu in tam vklesan še kak zapis. Če so že mene opisane zamenjave trpko presenetile, kako lahko zadenejo šele neposredno prizadete. "...Namesto križa stoji na grobu razkošen spomenik, na katerem piše: Tu počiva Franc Lešničar. To je mož moje sestre Miceke, ki je umrl pred kratkim. Sestra mu je postavila spomenik na dedkovem in babičinem grobu, na spomeniku pa ni našla prostora za njuno ime. Žalostno požrem slino, ki se mi je ustavila v grlu, in rečem: 'Ne razumem, ne razumem! Zakaj? Zakaj? Kako je mogla?' In potrj zapuščam materin grob, ki ga ni več. Z mislijo na dedeka in babico, ki nimata več spomenika in bosta zato ostala le v mojem srcu... se vračam..."<sup>52</sup> Vedno več takih doživetij narekuje, da je treba pohiteti. Za tukajšnje priložnost je mogoče podati le neke vrste medfazno poročilo. S pomočjo nekaterih sodelavk<sup>53</sup> je bilo doslej pregledanih dvainštirideset slovenskih pokopališč<sup>54</sup> in tako zbranih blizu 900 napisov. Če zraven prištejemo še že objavljene iz omenjene knjige, ki vsebuje slovenske napise s Koroške v Avstriji, je ta čas evidentiranih 1187 nagrobnih napisov. Tako število že omogoča nakazati prve obrise njihovih posebnosti.

### a) Nagrobni napisi iz 19. stoletja

Prvo lepo presenečenje se navezuje na diahrono perspektivo. Kar nekaj napisov je še mogoče najti iz 19. stoletja. Zasluga za to gre praksi, da so nekdaj nagrobnike uglednih mož po določenem obdobju vzdavali na zunanjo stran cerkvenih sten. Praviloma gre za nagrobne napise duhovnikom. Zato so še toliko bolj dragoceni primeri, kot je ta iz Šentlovenca na Dolenjskem: *Tukej počivata, in perčakujeta / gorustajine MATIJA SUPANČIČ / iz Korenitke, 73 let star, / vmerl v letu 1845 - in njegova / žena JRA, na gorenjskim / rojena PEGAM, stara 75 let, / vmerla v letu 1848 - / Bog bodi jima milaztu, / daj jima večin mir in pokoj / in večna ljuč jima sveti.*<sup>55</sup>

### b) Nagrobni napisi otrokom

Najbolj pretresljivi so napisi globoko žalujočih staršev za svojimi prezgodaj umrlimi otroki. Starejši napisi zanje se navezujejo na staro vero, da nedolžni otroci postanejo po smrti angelčki. Še France Prešeren se je oprl nanjo, a jo zvočno in vizualno in gestikulacijsko razgibal: *Jasni so in srečni b'li / njih' življenja kratki dni. / Glas zasliš'ta: 'Prid'te k meni, / majhni vi, nezadolženi!' / Duše njij'ne sta vesele / repetničice razpele. - / Oča, matere očesa / mókre gledajo v nebesa.*<sup>56</sup> Kaže, da je ta ljubka metaforika spodbujala dokaj močan pesniški navdih, kakor dokazujeta naslednja primera. Prvi za

<sup>52</sup> R. Kukovec, S Huma, n. d., 89-90.

<sup>53</sup> Breda Karner (Hlevni Vrh, Ledine, Medvedje Brdo, Nova Oselica, Rovte, Stara Oselica, Vrh Svetih Treh kraljev, Zavratec, 128 nagrobnih napisov), Marta Koren (Škrile pri Danah, Špitalič, 2), Zdenka Primožič (Lipica pri Škofji Loki, Reteče, Stara Loka, Škofja Loka, 230 nagrobnih napisov), Ema in Andreja Sešek (Dobrepolje, dvoje pokopališč, 98 napisov), nekaj študentk (Maribor, Gornja Radgona, 19 napisov).

<sup>54</sup> Po abecedi: Breznica na Gorenjskem, Čušnjice nad Blagovico, Črna na Koroškem, Dravlje, Leskovicva in Poljanski dolini, Ljubno na Gorenjskem, Hrenovice, Jezersko, Komenda, Luče, Mekinjce pri Kamniku, Mohličce na Koroškem, Nova vas v Istri, Postojna, Sela pri Kamniku, Sveta Gora (Skalnica), Solčava, Stranje pri Kamniku, Šentgotard pri Trojanah, Trémun, Tunjice, Zaplana, Zasavska Sveta Gora.

<sup>55</sup> Jože Pavlič, *Vklesani spomin*, Družina 39 (29. okt. 1995), št. 43, 16.

<sup>56</sup> F. Prešeren, *Ovsenekovima dečkoma*, *Pesnitve in pisma*, Ljubljana 1962, 130.

dečka: *Bil sem angelček pri vas doma, / še lepši sem angel v naročju / večnega Boga.*<sup>57</sup> In drugi za deklico: *Še mala v cvetju mladih let / pustila si ta revni svet. // Zdaj v raju z angelci vesela / Bogu boš večno Hvalo pela.*<sup>58</sup> Pogosto je prebrati: *Sladko spančkaj, Sladko spavaj*, vendar sintagmi kljub temu ne delujeta klišejsko.

### e) Nagrobni napisi mladim

Ti napisi so po svoje še bolj otožni kakor napisi otro(č)kom, saj se njihovi najbližji ne morejo več tolažiti z njihovo angelsko transformacijo, poleg tega pa so se tudi čustveno že bolj navezali nanje. Tu drži, kakor je dejala stara žena iz Solčave, ki je ostala sama: "Pravijo, da je najhujše svojo kri pokopavat",<sup>59</sup> namreč - svojega otroka. Vendar je tudi tu, kronološko gledano, zaznati precejšnje spremembe v težišču sporočila. Napis iz prve polovice 20. stoletja napeljuje, se zdi, na razočaranje zaradi izločitve mladeniča iz vaške skupnosti in rodovnega nasledstva: *Bil velik si očetov up - / in fantov pogreša te četa, / Prej družbe in društva vnet član, / uživaj nebesa zdaj sveta. / Postavil žalostni oče.*<sup>60</sup> Sredi stoletja je aktualna metafora "cvet mladosti", ki je znana tudi iz drugih lirskih vrst: *V cvetju mladosti / zapustil si svet, / v raju nebeškem / se vidimo spet.*<sup>61</sup> Konec sedemdesetih let je resignacija položena v usta pokojnega: *Zbogom vam in mladosti, / ki sem jo preživel med vami.*<sup>62</sup> Zamisel o posmrtnem življenju je ali zatajena ali pa je več ni.

### č) Nagrobni napisi ponesrečenim

V tej skupini se ločita dve skupini ponesrečencev: planinci in žrtve prometnih nesreč. Na primer: *Tukaj počiva / žrtev Kamniških / planin / RUDI PEČAR / \* 22. 4. 1912 † 2. 9. 1930 // Tebi RUDI sveti raj, / nam pa Bog tolažbo daj. // Prijatelji prijatelju.*<sup>63</sup> Naslednje besedilo je lep primer prepletanja metaforike "cveta", znanega iz razdelka o mladosti, in gora: *Ta gomila mlad pod sabo / skriva cvet omahnil v gorah / sredi si najlepših let.*<sup>64</sup> Iz standardnih okvirov izstopa napis, ki v primerjavi z drugimi deluje naravnost romaneskno: *V triglavskem pogorju izzvenel / tvoj korak, gore so zadušile / tvoj poslednji krik, a nam, / ki smo ljubili te, iz dneva / v dan raste v neskončnost / tvoj dragi lik.*<sup>65</sup> Naslednja dva napisa delujeta kot ubesedene risbe na tablah oz. znamenjih, ki so zaznamovala kraj nesreče. Gre za sorazmerno prozaični sporočili, ki ju obkroža čustvo le na robu. *Kolesa avtomobila / so me odtrgala od vas, / ne žalujte dragi za menoj, / saj sinko je še vedno vaš.*<sup>66</sup> *Kruti topol te je ubil - / ljubezen moja pogubil. / Irena.*<sup>67</sup>

<sup>57</sup> A. Feinig, n. d., 7.

<sup>58</sup> Krista Gabriel \* 2. 6. 1960 † 15. 9. 1966, Št. Jakob v Rožu. Zapisala M. Stanonik, 2. 4. 1978.

<sup>59</sup> Terenski podatek, Solčava, 22. julija 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Sela nad Kamnikom, Francetu Resniku, \*1903, † 1926. Umril kot vojak v Skopju.

<sup>61</sup> Leskovicca, \*1926-1950.

<sup>62</sup> Dravlje, \*1960-1979.

<sup>63</sup> Jože Pavlič, Vkllesani spomin, Družina 39 (29. okt. 1995), št. 43, 16.

<sup>64</sup> Dravlje, \*1964, †1982.

<sup>65</sup> Breznica pri Vrbi na Gorenjskem, † 1968, † 1969.

<sup>66</sup> Dravlje, \*1942, † 1986.

<sup>67</sup> Dravlje, Očka Janez Zajc, \*1938 - † 1965.

**d) Nagrobni napisi, ki omogočajo šalo**

Za konec še dva napisa, ki dovoljujeta zdravilen na/smeh: *Tukaj je en hladen grobek, / kjer počiva Mici Bobek, / milo kliče iz temne jame: / O, prijatelj, moli zame!*<sup>68</sup> *Draži mož / Počivaj v miru, / dokler se spet / ne snideva.*<sup>69</sup> Prvi primer povzroča vedrino zaradi prikupne rime prvega dvostišja: grobek - Bobek. Kakor da bi se kdo res hotel poigrati s pomanjševalničnim priimkom. Za drugi napis (mi) lokacija ni znana, zato tudi ni mogoče jamčiti za zanesljivost njegovega obstoja, vendar je dokaj verjeten. Prvi hip ni z napisom nič narobe, a pri skrbnejšem branju se zavemo dvoumnosti formule. Smeh, četudi skozi solze, je vedno dobrodošel.

Prva analiza zbranega gradiva narekuje nadaljnjo obravnavo na ravni njegove duhovne sporočilnosti, duševnega zdravljenja, kulturnega dokumenta, in celo vrsto oblikovnih vprašanj, kot so časovna pogojenost stilemov, žanrski problemi, problemi stereotipov in folklorizacije.

<sup>68</sup> Stožice, napis je obstajal še v letih po drugi svetovni vojni. Zapisal po spominu Mirko Ramovš, ISN, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, 10. 10. 1988.

<sup>69</sup> Sinja Zemljic, ISN, ZRC SAZU, in Ana Lavrič, Inštitut za umetnostno zgodovino Franceta Steleta, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, 28. 2. 1992.

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# EPITAPHS IN SLOVENE CEMETERIES

Marija Stanonik

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**Key words:** Slovenia, death, cemetery, epitaphs, Slovene literature

## Introduction

Man has lived in the shadow of death since he became aware of himself and life. Diachronically, evidence is provided by the oldest known poem of human civilisation - the Sumerian epic about Gilgamesh which presumably dates to around 2000 BC in Mesopotamia and which central theme is death: King Gilgamesh, whose loyal friend Enkidu dies in the prime of his life, refuses to accept the loss. He flees to faraway places and even to the other world to inquire about the secret of life and death. The only answer he gets is: *There is no escape from bitter death.*<sup>1</sup> But the inscription on one of Egypt's pyramids from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC - we may well deem it to be the earliest epitaph in history! - assures us: *You live, to wake up again, / you die, to live again.*<sup>2</sup> A Carinthian priest from Meiseldingen had the following similarly meaningful words which everyone can apply to himself written on his tombstone while he was still alive:

\* *1906 incipit mori - Upon birth he (I) started to die*

† *incipit vivere - Upon death he (I) started to live*<sup>3</sup>.

This Modern-Age Latin inscription is an adequate starting-point for drawing attention to the Latin inscriptions which, if nothing else, in Slovenia too prove that they can be an important source for the study of the inhabitants and their cultures in this area in the past.<sup>4</sup> The epitaph dedicated to Bishop Gaudentius from the then Poetovio (present-day Ptuj) witnesses that "here too, early Christianity experienced convul-

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<sup>1</sup> Anton Feinig, *Neizbežna je bridka smrt, Nagrobni napisi, Celovec-Dunaj-Ljubljana 1997*, 9. Ep o Gilgamešu (Sivi kondor V), Ljubljana 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Anton Trstenjak, *Umrješ, da živiš, Celje 1993*, 101-107. M. R., *Umrješ, da živiš*. Volume '93/6, Ljubljana 1993, 131.

<sup>3</sup> A. Trstenjak, *op. cit.*, 154.

<sup>4</sup> Iva Curk, *Rimljani na Slovenskem, Ljubljana 1976*, 11, 42.

sions... The author of Gaudentius' epitaph indeed begs the deceased Bishop not to forget to pray and to protect his flock of believers against the greedy lion, that is against apostasy as the metaphor is explained by experts".<sup>5</sup> This is indeed a period close to that of Pope Damasus who stands out particularly among the popes of the 4<sup>th</sup> century because of his decisive contribution to the worship of Christian martyrs, among others by writing tombstone inscriptions or epitaphs for them. Though some of his verses are rather unpolished, they reveal a certain talent for poetry. "His friend Philocalus invented a new script for carving these inscriptions which preserves the monumental character of the old square capitals and adds an unobtrusive ornament to them."<sup>6</sup>

## I. Epitaphs in Slovene journalism

Judging from our present knowledge attention was first given to Slovene epitaphs in the Slovene cultural area in the mid-19 century, that is when it became possible to publish them. *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (*Peasant and Crafts News*) are certainly the first,<sup>7</sup> but the focus soon shifted to epitaphs published in *Zgodnja Danica*, and this is not hard to understand. This first religious newspaper in Slovene published from 1849 onwards printed in not always equal intervals and under the heading *Epitaphs* completely anonymously appropriate verses which were quite representative of this specific line of poetry. It appears, however, that they are not field notes, that is lines copied from tombstones, but an editorial concept which in this way too endeavoured to familiarise the readers with the inevitable truth that life and death are interconnected. In spite of certain minor differences contained in the messages and in the forms of individual epitaphs we cannot establish whether the section was written by several authors or the fruit of (subsequent) individuals.<sup>8</sup> A distinguished author of these inscriptions must have been Matevž Frelih (Lozice, Vipava Valley, 1828, died as deacon in Trebnje in 1892) since they were published together with his other occasional poetry in a special booklet in 1854 and in a third revised reprint in 1886.<sup>9</sup> What is known with certainty is that in the year of his death, perhaps as a premonition of his own death,

<sup>5</sup> Iva Curk, op. cit., 89. The rich archaeological material from the Ptuj sites also yielded a Greek inscription which is thought to belong to the grave of a Christian martyr, presumably from the reign of Diocletian or Maximian. I. Curk, op. cit. 61, 89.

<sup>6</sup> Zgodnjekrščanska latinska poezija. Prevedel in komentarje napisal Miran Špelič, Ljubljana 1997, 85. From the same period (344) an epitaph has survived that sounds like a prayer for the deceased: *God of all spirits and all things / You who defeated death / who gave life to the world / bequeath peace to the soul of my father Sines. / Let him be close to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob / in the land of light and rest, / where there is no more suffering, nor pain nor tears. / Forgive him all the sins which he committed in words, deeds or thought, / for You are good and a friend of people. / You are the only God, there is no sin on You, Your justice is eternal. / Lord, Your word is the truth. / Give peace to the soul of my father Sines, / You, who are peace, life and the resurrection. / Blessed be the, Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. / Amen.* Miran Špelič, Nagrobni napis, Družina 47, 1. november 1998, no. 43, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Epitaphs, *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* V/1847, 181; IX/1851, 185.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. *Zgodnja Danica* II/1849, 352; III/1850, 25; VIII/1855, 144, 152, 164, 192, 202; IX/1856, 20, 198. XXXVIII/1885, 182, 236.

<sup>9</sup> Josip Marn, *Jezičnik* XXX, 1892, 12.

but also in the spirit of the time, he wrote the epitaph for Matevž Lotrič (Železniki, 1840-1864), who died in the year of his ordination to the priesthood.<sup>10</sup>

Some examples from *Zgodnja Danica* subtitled *for any grave*.

*Soon among us you will be,  
Right here in my grave maybe;  
Your body now so fine,  
Will then replace mine.*<sup>11</sup>

*You who walk around  
From grave to grave bound,  
My body rests in this yard,  
While my soul enjoys its reward;  
I beg you from the dark grave  
Let your prayers help me save!*<sup>12</sup>

*Before they will rebury  
These little bones of mine,  
Your face will turn pale,  
And next to me  
A grave will be,  
that will be all thine.*<sup>13</sup>

*Look, in this mound I hide,  
What I am now, soon you will be,  
And for all your pride,  
Dust is all there shall be for thee.*<sup>14</sup>

*You look around to see,  
Who lies here, who there, you seek;  
Listen to what from the grave I speak:  
“Today me, tomorrow thee.”*

*If you want your body to rise  
And honour Judgement Day,  
Do not forget you soul, be wise,  
Work for it and pray.*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Karel Glaser. *Zgodovina Slovenskega slovstva* III, 1896, 183.

<sup>11</sup> *Zgodnja Danica*, tečaj VIII, list 32, 9. veliciga serpana 1855, 136.

<sup>12</sup> *Zgodnja Danica*, tečaj VIII, list 36, 6. kimovca 1855, 152.

<sup>13</sup> *Zgodnja Danica*, tečaj VIII, list 39, 27. kimovca 1855, 164.

<sup>14</sup> *Zgodnja Danica*, tečaj VIII, list 45, V Ljubljani 8. listopada 1855, 192.

<sup>15</sup> *Zgodnja Danica*, tečaj VIII, list 47, V Ljubljani 22. listopada 1855, 202.

*Look here, this carcass of mine,  
Soon, so soon will decline,  
And yours, still in the prime,  
Will take its place in no time*<sup>16</sup>.

What is meant by “for any grave” is explained by the examples in which the subtitle reads “for the graves of the young”.

*Look here, this body of mine,  
so young, will soon decline.  
Remember, that your body's song  
Will fade out ere long.*<sup>17</sup>

*For a virgin's grave*

*As a humble flower you were blooming,  
Here on Earth as Jesus' pride.  
Now a new song you will be singing,  
As a virgin at the Lamb's side.*<sup>18</sup>

Epitaphs were published occasionally also by other newspapers (*Slovanski svet*<sup>19</sup>, the magazine *Dom in svet*<sup>20</sup>) and in calendars (*Drobtinice*,<sup>21</sup> *Mohorjev koledar*<sup>22</sup>). To this group also belong the numerous records from the Second World War.<sup>23</sup>

## II. Epitaphs in Slovene literary culture

The issue would merit a chapter of its own as it would have to be approached from several angles. The epitaphs have indeed many different functions.

a) The executors of the will of Peter Pavel Glavar from Komenda had a Latin inscription carved in his tombstone which reads translated: “*Poor people! / Come and watch! / and mourn too! / Under this stone cover rests in peace / Peter Pavel Glavar, / an exceptional, creative mortal. / He will rise to live again when the angels' trombones will resound!*”<sup>24</sup> Before he moved to Dovje Jakob Aljaž had the following inscription made

<sup>16</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj IX, list 6, Ljubljana 20. sušca 1856, 56.

<sup>17</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj IX, list 33, 16. veličiga serpana 1855, 140.

<sup>18</sup> Zgodnja Danica, tečaj IX, list 33, 16. veličiga serpana 1855, 140.

<sup>19</sup> Slovanski svet VI/1893, 236.

<sup>20</sup> Dom in svet 25/1912, 195.

<sup>21</sup> Drobtinice 1854, 127, 128; 1859-60, 173 pp.

<sup>22</sup> Mohorjev koledar za leto 1953, 175.

<sup>23</sup> Cp. Marija Stanonik, Iz kaosa kozmos, Ljubljana 1995, 172-180.

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Sivec, In večno bodo cvetele lipe. Celje 1991, 213.



on his mother's tombstone: *May the eternal light your path, you who loved us all so dearly, / a good mother you have been, / and in gratitude we shed / hot tears. / When the trumpet resounds, / we shall all meet again.*<sup>25</sup> It is, of course, obvious right away that both inscriptions contains the same motif from the Book of Revelation - the angels' trombones/trumpet. The next inscription we turn to already diverges from this classical tradition and strives to enumerate all the deceased's merits in the manner of a realistic view of the world: *Here rests / Dr. Jožef Muršec-Živkov, / 50 years a priest/ former professor in Graz, / consistory counsellor of the Seckau and Lavant Deaconry, / born March 1 1807 in Biš, / died October 25, 1895 in Graz. // He was a pious and exemplary / priest, an eminent Slovene / patriot and writer and / a generous benefactor / to his relatives and / to the parish of St Bolfank.// Dear Lord, reward him in heaven.*<sup>26</sup>

b) That epitaphs are far from being a insignificant line of poetry, but instead something that is continuously present in Slovene consciousness, is more than substantiated by the great poets France Prešeren (epitaphs dedicated to Matija Čop, Anton Linhart, France Juliani, the Ovsenek boys, Jurij Kalan;<sup>27</sup> and *Grabschrift für Emil Korytko*<sup>28</sup>), Anton Medved (the first ones to be published in the magazine *Dom in svet*<sup>29</sup>), Alojz Gradnik (*Pojoča kri*<sup>30</sup>), and by writer Ciril Kosmač.<sup>31</sup> The topic was also of marginal interest to Josip Vidmar, who was actually the first to tackle the "Dance of death" that is the motif of death in general in Slovene poetry.<sup>32</sup> Epitaphs are indeed as a rule explicitly literary products.

c) People who write their own epitaph must be endowed with a strong character and a mature personality. What drives them to it is evident from the fact that at least all cases known to date concern priests. We would hardly have known that Matija Kastelec (1620-1688) occupied himself beside with devout literature also with architecture, if it wasn't for his tombstone with the inscription "sciens architecturam" ("*knowledgeable on architecture*").<sup>33</sup> Mikloš Küzmič (1737-1804), a Catholic writer from Prekmurje,<sup>34</sup> acted in the same way. The Slovene translation of the Latin epitaph he composed for himself reads: *As the dust of the earth here I lie, / my life has gone by. / In Dolnji Slaveči I was born / Miklós the name to be worn. / Küzmič was the surname I got, / and a grave in Ivanovci my ultimate lot. / A righteous Judge tried me / and a proper verdict issued He, / You who read these letters, / carved in stone, / pray that God may cleanse me of my sins.*

<sup>25</sup> Navaja Ivan Sivec, Triglavski kralj, Družina 38, 13. marca 1994, no. 11, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Jože Pavlič, Vkllesani spomin, Družina 39 (29. okt. 1995), no. 43, 16.

<sup>27</sup> France Prešeren, Pesnitve in pisma, Ljubljana 1962, 130-131.

<sup>28</sup> France Prešeren, Pesnitve in pisma, Ljubljana 1962, 171.

<sup>29</sup> Leksikon Slovenske književnost, Ljubljana 1996, 289.

<sup>30</sup> Alojz Gradnik, Pojroča kri, Ljubljana 1944, 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> Silvo Fatur, Ljudje in kraji ob Pivki, Postojna 1975, 304-305.

<sup>32</sup> Josip Vidmar, Mrtvaški ples, Ljubljana 1983.

<sup>33</sup> Ivo Pirkovič, O nastanku žitnega kozolca, Slovenski etnograf XVI-XVII, Ljubljana 1946, 303.

<sup>34</sup> During his entire career as a priest he dwelled in the old wooden parish temple of solitary Ivanovski dol, Sv. Benedikt, Kančevci. It is there, in the church of St. Benedikt, that he rests. Jožef Smej, Družina 38 (1994), no. 14, 12.

*Amen.*<sup>35</sup> Franc Kogej (1884-1938), buried in the vault of the Šentvid priests specified in his last will that he wanted the following inscription on his tombstone: "What I have taught you, adhere to faithfully, / live your life truthfully / and pray for your catechist carefully!"<sup>36</sup> Ksaver Meško (1874-1964) too formulated the epitaph for his tombstone himself: "Plant a wooden cross on my grave, / let faith lighten your every day, / turn to it when you need to be brave / to heaven it will show you the way. / A flower withers, but the holy cross stays, / life passes, but the soul never! / Therefore, children, pray for me always / for green sods will cover my grave forever."<sup>37</sup>

Poet Joža Lovrenčič may have composed a similar inscription, but there is no actual evidence to prove this, except for the preserved text: "Pray for me / in the hope of the cross / which brings together me and thee / beyond the grave's loss. / Pray for me!"<sup>38</sup> And when the beeches will blossom once more / and their crowns radiate as never before / they will shine out of me . // Their shine, rustle and shade will all grow out of me / the song and flower of the mead - will come out of me, all out of my dead self...<sup>39</sup> Whether Stanko Majcen composed the inscription in the form of a lyrical poem for his son who disappeared in 1945 or whether he had in mind his own person, is not evident from the source. This might, however, be established on the base of the date the text was written. The Christian conception of life after death is here replaced by an aesthetic experience of a pantheistic cycle.

The legend has it that during his stay in Kranj France Prešeren (1800-1849) improvised on a certain occasion the following roguish verses for the inscription on his grave: *France Prešeren rests here / in disbelief/as a believer / in grief.*<sup>40</sup> This miniature ideological pun points towards agnosticism, but as a pun we can compare it with *See you beyond the stars*, Partljič's contemporary "sorrowful comedy": "Humorous and bitter are the scenes in the state undertakers; the efforts of its staff to make it 'the most modern self-governing company, socially and politically open to all citizens'. Replacing 'inscriptions which reveal the religious nature of our people', with 'see you beyond the stars'; replacing 'the mystic belief in life after death' with an inscription in the manner of 'Hear me John Natter, I'm changing into matter.'<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Jožef Smej, *Družina* 38 (1994), no. 14, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Župnija Ljubjana-Šentvid, 900 let, Ljubljana 1991, 145.

<sup>37</sup> Viktor Levovnik, *V Meškovih Selah*, *Rodna gruda* 40, julij 1993, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Miran Mihelič, 'Jaz bi rad rož rudečih' *Ob 50-letnici obsodbe dr. Jože Lovrenčiča iz Kreda*, *Dom* 31 (1996), no. 12, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Jože Zadavec, 'Tje bomo naši pot', Ljubljana 1988, 105-106.

<sup>40</sup> Boris Paternu, *France Prešeren in njegovo pesniško delo*, Ljubljana 1976, 34. Francè Stelè, *Donesek k spominu na Prešerna*, *Dom in svet* 1930, 309.

<sup>41</sup> Tone Partljič, 'In kadar spet bukve zagore in kadar spet gabri zažare', *Delo*, *Književni listi*, 9. 12. 1993, 7.

### III. Epitaphs as a source for various historical disciplines

The first to attract attention were the Slovene epitaphs in Carinthian cemeteries. Ksaver Meško collected them from Strojna and St. Danijel near Prevalje to Pečnica on Faaker See between 1853 and 1909 and published them in three sequels.<sup>42</sup> This stimulated Ivan Grafenauer to reflect on these epitaphs with some affection: "Beside the leading artists from Slovene Carinthia we should not forget about the simple artistic endeavours of Carinthian folk poets and writers... Many inscriptions on tombs in wood or stone bear witness to their natural gift for poetry, for reflections expressed gently and charmingly."<sup>43</sup> The ripest fruit of these endeavours is the first independent book of Slovene epitaphs edited by Anton Feinig.<sup>44</sup> Nearly 300 (to be exact: 296) Carinthian epitaphs gathered from the early 1860s onwards were saved from oblivion.<sup>45</sup>

The author has the courage not to ignore the weakening of an overt Slovene national identity and the shame accompanying it: "Unfortunately, there are increasingly less Slovene epitaphs to be found in cemeteries, and verses are even rarer. Old inscriptions are fading and hardly visible, some are quite illegible because nobody takes care of them. On new tombstones most often only the names of the deceased are written and their years of birth and death, but there are very few Slovene rhymes. In my eyes this is caused by a great fear of any Slovene word or even Slovene letter, fear to betray one's concealed nationality. This is of course very detrimental to our cause. Gradually, the last traces will be erased, even at the place of our ultimate rest. These collected epitaphs and verses should open the eyes of the Carinthian Slovenes and tell them how important and culturally precious these rhymes were and continue to be."<sup>46</sup>

In a sense of concentric circles we shall start the presentation of these epitaphs on the outer fringe or perimeter, that is with the autochthonous Slovenes across the borders. Beside their primary pious function they harbour a much more significant, social dimension in this area which is quite obvious from Feinig's critical complaint about their gradual disappearing. The epitaph for of a priest in Ukve tells us quite clearly that Slovene was the lingua franca of Val Canale in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Reverend *Jožef Škarbina / born in Loče, Nov. 10, 1821. Died Sept, 29, 1879. Priest in Ukve for 13 years, / He was a faithful shepherd to his flock, / a caring teacher to the young / full of zeal in God's honour, and we shall never forget him.*<sup>47</sup> On the tombstone of Carinthian parish priest Vinko Poljanec, who died as a martyr in 1938, the inscription tells us succinctly who the deceased was and what he meant to the Carinthian Slovenes:

<sup>42</sup> Ksaver Meško, *Koledar Mohorjeve družbe* 1910, 72; 1911, 26-29; 1921, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, *Slovensko slovstvo na Koroškem, živ člen vseslovenskega slovstva, Literarnozgodovinski spisi*, Ljubljana 1980, 517.

<sup>44</sup> Anton Feinig, *Nagrobni napisi od Šentlenarta do Golšova*, Celovec 1997.

<sup>45</sup> A. Feinig, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Anton Feinig, *Uvodna beseda, Nagrobni napisi od Šentlenarta do Golšova*, Celovec 1997, 7-8.

<sup>47</sup> Dorica Makuc, *Ukljanski župniki, Rodna gruda* 37, no. 1, 1990, 20.

*He was a concerned pastor!  
 - A nature as pure a gold!  
 - A messenger of God's love!  
 A wise leader of the people!<sup>48</sup>*

In distant countries where conditions to compete with other nations are (and were) non-existent, the message of these words will withstand the test of time better as with our fellow Slovenes across the borders, where the struggle of two or three nations for lebensraum ruthlessly erases the culturally weaker nation - a development we continue to witness. In faraway places where Slovenes found refuge from various ordeals these epitaphs remain tacit reminders of our perseverance and tenacity, of hope and despair. Some time in the future they will provide the basis for a study where in the Old and in the New World scattered settlements of Slovene emigrants existed: "A arid landscape dotted with rocks, in the middle of it a cemetery. The air is pure, the contours of red dawn sharply separate earth and sky. In the distance looms the mighty Aconcagua, covered by eternal white snow. In this little piece of American land, at the foot of the highest mountain of the New World, rests the first emigrant priest among our fellow Slovenes in Argentine, Jože Kastelic. He was born on Slovene soil and a fervent lover of the mountains, tireless pastor of his fellow Slovenes, scattered across the expanses of the New World. His love for the high mountains drove him up the Aconcagua, where he passed away in the middle of a storm in 1940. The verses on the stone pillar which his "grateful compatriots" erected for him, present him with these words:

*Rest in peace, you who on Slovene soil were born,  
 of the high mountains you were lovelorn.  
 You have led your people to eternal morn.<sup>49</sup>*

Inscriptions carved in stone do not necessarily have to be verses: the older they are, the more precious as sources for several historical disciplines. An excellent example upholding this claim is the following: "On my way to the exit of the cemetery I beheld a beautiful old tombstone with the inscription: "Here rests our good father Peter Zadavec - an American, honorary member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, landlord and miller in Loperšice.

*Born 1. VII. 1850, died 29. VII. 1936.  
 , You loved to go on a pilgrimage,  
 no road was too hard for you, ,  
 and now you have made the final pilgrimage  
 to be with the Lord all through.<sup>50</sup>*

<sup>48</sup> I. M. Spominška prireditelj, Družina 37 (1988), no. 35, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Irene Mislej, Ob 60-letnici Duhovnega življenja, Mohorjevo koledar 1994, Celje 1993, 124.

<sup>50</sup> Slovenski biografski leksikon, volume 14, 1986, 740 (Slovene Biographic Lexicon): Zadavec Peter, miller and inventor, born August 1, 1850 in Loperšice, son of carpenter Jožef and Margareta, née Lukman, died on July 29,

This is what's it all about, I thought. In this small, hidden cemetery in the village of Hum rest the mortal remains of a great man, who nobody ever mentions any more, someone who contributed to the improvement of our nutrition because he invented a special kind of flour for baby food and for the elderly. He really deserves a monument in Ormož, not just the one grateful children erected for him in the Hum cemetery...<sup>51</sup>

#### IV. The idea about collecting Slovene epitaphs

The idea of collecting epitaphs came to my mind for the first time while I was still a student and on a journey which took me from Kranjska gora across the Vršič mountain pass into the Soča Valley. We stopped in Log pod Mangrt and my attention was drawn by the numerous splendid epitaphs in the cemetery beside the bus station. For many years afterwards I felt the urge to go back there and write them down, but when on another occasion, travelling by bus once more, I revisited the village, I was very disappointed to see that it was already too late. Most of the tombstones had been replaced and of the new ones only a handful carry inscriptions. If it was hard for me to accept these changes, how could they not have affected those immediately involved?. "...Instead of a cross there is luxurious tombstone on the grave now with the inscription: Here rests Franc Lešničar. The husband of my sister Micika who died recently. My sister had a tombstone for him put on the grave of grandmother and grandfather but there was no room for their names on them. I felt a tightening of my throat that did not go away and heard myself say: 'I don't understand, I don't understand! Why? Why was this necessary? How could she?' Struck with grief I leave the grave of my mother, that is not there any more. I think of granny and grandfather who are without a tombstone now and will therefore live on only in my heart ... while I'm on my way home ..."<sup>52</sup> There are increasingly more similar experiences which urge us to hurry. In the context of this article only an intermediate report can be provided. With the assistance of several collaborators<sup>53</sup> forty-two Slovene cemeteries have been visited<sup>54</sup>, yielding a total of approximately 900 inscriptions. If we add these to those

1936 (buried in Hum near Ormož). After finishing primary school Zadavec learned the trade of a miller in Središče ob Dravi and worked in several mills in Štajerska. As a youth he was already attracted by mechanics, especially by milling devices and machines. Driven by the wish to learn about the latest milling techniques he left for the USA in 1885 and stayed there until 1893. He first worked on a farm, then in San Antonio (Texas) in a mill which ran the last two years of his stay in America. In his free time he studied the relevant specialist literature. Zadavec constructed a flour separator and an engine for big windmills (suitable for Holland). While still in America he bought close to his home in Lopersiče a mill and a small property, and worked as a miller after his return and until his death (his nickname was "the American"). He helped many local millers with advice and supported students of his native village. His successful innovations and practical improvements of milling techniques earned him the diploma with gold medal of the Academie parisienne des inventeurs industrielles et exposants, whose honorary member he also became.

<sup>51</sup> Rado Kukovec, S Huma po "štikeh" v Ormož, Mohorjev koledar 1992, Celje 1991, 89-90.

<sup>52</sup> R. Kukovec, S Huma, op. cit., 89-90.

<sup>53</sup> Breda Karner (Hlevni Vrh, Ledine, Medvedje Brdo, Nova Oselica, Rovte, Stara Oselica, Vrh Svetih Treh kraljev, Zavratac, 128 epitaphs), Marta Koren (Škrile pri Danah, Špitalič, 2), Zdenka Primožič (Lipica pri Škofji Loki, Reteče, Stara Loka, Škofja Loka, 230 epitaphs), Ema and Andreja Seveček (Dobrepolje, two cemeteries, 98 inscriptions), students (Maribor, Gornja Radgona, 19 inscriptions).

<sup>54</sup> In alphabetic order: Breznica na Gorenjskem, Česnjice nad Blagovico, Črna na Koroškem, Dravlje, Leskoviča v Poljanski dolini, Ljubno na Gorenjskem, Hrenovice, Jezersko, Komenda, Luče, Mekinje pri Kamniku, Mohličice

already published in the above mentioned book which contains Slovene inscriptions from Carinthia in Austria, we get a total of 1187 recorded epitaphs. A quantity which already allows us to indicate some first particularities.

### a) 19<sup>th</sup> century epitaphs

The first encouraging surprise is connected with the diachronic perspective. Quite some epitaphs from the 19<sup>th</sup> century have survived as a result of the practice that after a certain period the tombstones of eminent people were built into the outer church walls. They usually involve epitaphs for priests. Even more precious are examples like those from Šentlovrenc in Dolenjsko: *Here rests, waiting for the resurrection MATIJA SUPANČIČ / from Korenitha, 73 years old, / who died in 1845 - and his wife / JERA born in Gorenjsko / rojena PEGAM, 75 years old / died in 1948 - / May God have mercy upon them, / give them eternal peace and quiet / and let the eternal light shine on them.*<sup>55</sup>

### b) Epitaphs for children

The most heart-rendering are the epitaphs of mourning parents for children who died prematurely. Older epitaphs still refer to the ancient belief that after their death innocent children become angels. Even France Prešeren referred to it but in a vivid, sonorous and dynamic way: *Bright it was and gay / their life's brief stay. / They heard a voice: Come to me / you little ones, of sin free! / Their souls celebrated, and their wings spread elated. - / Their father and mother's eyes, now in tears see them in paradise.*<sup>56</sup> It appears that this lovely metaphors instigated a quite effective poetic inspiration of the kind we find in the following two examples. The first one is for a boy: *I was a little angle while at home / now a greater angel I am under the Lord's dome.*<sup>57</sup> The second one is for a girl: *In the prime of your life / you left this world full of strife. // Now with the angels in paradise your voice you raise / to sing the Lord's eternal praise.*<sup>58</sup> A recurrent verse is: *Sleep gently, sleep gently*, but the syntagm never has the effect of a cliché

### c) Epitaphs to youths

These inscriptions are even more melancholic as those to little children since their parents cannot console themselves with the idea that their children became little angels, and also because emotionally they had become much more attached to them. There are no better words to illustrate this than those of an elderly woman from Solčava who was left behind alone: "They say the worst that can happen to you is to bury your own blood and flesh",<sup>59</sup> - your own child. But here, too, and viewed chronologically, substantial differences show as to where the emphasis of the message lies. An in-

na Koroškem, Nova vas v Istri, Postojna, Sela pri Kamniku, Sveta Gora (Skalnica), Solčava, Stranje pri Kamniku, Šentgotard pri Trojanah, Trčmun, Tunjice, Zaplana, Zasavska Sveta Gora.

<sup>55</sup> Jože Pavlič, *Vklesani spomin, Družina* 39 (29. okt. 1995), no. 43, 16.

<sup>56</sup> F. Prešeren, *Ovsenekovima dečkoma, Pesnitve in pisma, Ljubljana* 1962, 130.

<sup>57</sup> A. Feinig, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Krista Gabriel \* 2. 6. 1960 † 15. 9. 1966, Št. Jakob v Rožu. *Zapisala M. Stanonik*, 2. 4. 1978.

<sup>59</sup> Field note, Solčava, July 22, 1995.

scription from the 20<sup>th</sup> century's first half suggests frustration because a youth was torn out of the village community and the family succession: *Your father had placed his hopes on you and we, your friends, will all miss you, / Before, you were an eager member of the community and our society, / now enjoy the heavens of the world. / Your mourning father.*<sup>60</sup> In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the metaphor "in the prime of youth", that is also known from other lyrical verses is quite common: *In the prime of youth / you left this world, / in heavenly paradise we shall meet in truth.*<sup>61</sup> In the late 1970s resignation is voiced by the deceased: *Farewell to you and to my youth, / which I spent among you.*<sup>62</sup> The idea of life after death is either suppressed or it is not present any more.

#### 84 ě) Epitaphs to victims of accidents

This group is divided into two subgroups of victims: mountain climbers and victims of traffic accidents. For instance: *Here rests / a victim of the Kamnik mountains / RUDI PEČAR / \* 22. 4. 1912 † 2. 9. 1930 // For you, RUDI, holy paradise, / to us may God give consolation. // Your friends.*<sup>63</sup> The following text is an excellent example of blending the metaphor of the "prime of youth" as we know it from the section on youths and that of mountains: *This mound a young / flower hides, fallen in the mountains / in the prime of his tides.*<sup>64</sup> Far from the standard clichés is an inscription which compared with the others is frankly Gothic: *In the Triglav mountain range / your steps faded for ever, / the mountains suffocated your last scream, / and to us who loved you as ever / from day to day your sweet face / turns into an eternal dream.*<sup>65</sup> The following two inscriptions have the effect of putting into words the drawings on the signs which mark the place of an accident. They are rather prosaic messages with some marginal emotion. *The wheels of a car / have taken me away from you, / do not mourn for me, I shall be your son all through.*<sup>66</sup> *Killed by a poplar so cruelly, my love for you is dead truly. / Irena.*<sup>67</sup>

#### d) Epitaphs which allow for a joke

To end this section here are two inscriptions which may produce a hearty smile or laughter. *Here in this chilly little grave, rests Mici the Brave, / and from the darkness she calls: / Dear friends, pray for me until the Lord recalls!*<sup>68</sup> *Dear husband, rest in peace until we meet again.*<sup>69</sup> The first one causes merriment because of the charming rhyme

<sup>60</sup> Sela nad Kamnikom, Francetu Resniku, \*1903, † 1926. Died as a soldier in Skopje.

<sup>61</sup> Leskovica, \*1926-1950.

<sup>62</sup> Dravlje, \*1960-1979.

<sup>63</sup> Jože Pavlič, *Vklesani spomin, Družina* 39 (October 29, 1995), no. 43, 16.

<sup>64</sup> Dravlje, \*1964, †1982.

<sup>65</sup> Breznica pri Vrbi na Gorenjskem, † 1968, † 1969.

<sup>66</sup> Dravlje, \*1942, † 1986.

<sup>67</sup> Dravlje, Očka Janez Zajc, \*1938 - † 1965.

<sup>68</sup> Stožice, the inscription was still there in the years after the Second World War. Recorded as remembered by Mirko Ramoš, ISN, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, 10. 10. 1988.

<sup>69</sup> Sinja Zemljica, ISN, ZRC SAZU, and Ana Lavrič, France Stele Institute of Art History, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, 28. 2. 1992.

(in Slovene: grobek (little grave) - Bobek). As if someone really wanted to make a pun with the diminutive surname. The location of the second inscription is not known (to me), and I cannot guarantee that it really exists, though it is quite likely genuine. At first sight there is nothing particular about the inscription, but on second thought we become aware of the formulation's ambiguity. Laughter, even when mixed with tears, is always welcome.

A first analysis of the collected material suggests further treatment on the level of several aspects: their spiritual messages, mental healing, as cultural documents and, further, a whole range of issues regarding form: period-determined styles, genre issues, stereotype issues and folklorisation.

### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Marija Stanonik, dr., docentka, višja znanstvena sodelavka na Inštitutu za slovensko narodopisje pri ZRC Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti. Osrednji področji njenega delovanja sta teorija in zgodovina slovenske slovstvene folklorne in nekatere teme iz slovenske etnologije in literarne zgodovine. Je urednica zbirke *Glasovi*, v okviru katere je doslej izšlo čez 4000 slovenskih folklornih pripovedi. Objavila je več monografij in nekaj sto člankov.

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# THE CONCEPT OF DEATH IN THE FOLK CULTURE OF MACEDONIANS

Ljupčo S. Risteski

87

## IZVLEČEK

### **Koncept smrti v makedonski ljudski kulturi**

*To proučevanje bo dopolnilo vedenje o smrti v ljudski kulturi. Smrt člana skupnosti pomeni nevarnost in krizo za družino in širšo socialno in obredno skupnost – vas. Je tudi vzrok dejanskih in temeljnih sprememb v družinski strukturi in v odnosih vaše skupnosti, zato lahko katastrofalno vpliva na njuno integriteto. V tem primeru smo obravnavali smrt kot najpomembnejši vzrok za prekinitev obstoječe harmonije in strukture odnosov v svetu. Obredne dejavnosti dajejo možnost realizacije novega kozmosa ali pa uveljavitev novih odnosov. Če upoštevamo, da smrt in umiranje ne pomenita le biološkega konca živih dejavnosti za tradicionalno skupnost, temveč sta tudi kulturna fenomena, nam analiza obeh ne omogoča le ugotavljanja in odkrivanja individualne psihologije, temveč še mnogo pomembnejših socialnih, religioznih in mitičnih vsebin, ki so bistveni segmenti strukture legendarnega koncepta sveta v tradicionalnih strukturah.*

**Ključne besede:** posmrtno šege, Makedonija, ljudska kultura, ljudske uprizoritve in verovanja o smrti in umiranju, “sunljiva umrla oseba”, “nečista umrla oseba”, “čista umrla oseba”

**Key-words:** Posthumous ceremonial complex, Macedonia, traditional culture, folk presentations and beliefs about death and dying, “suspicious deceased person”, “impure deceased person”, “pure deceased person”

The exceptionally rich empirical materials of the traditional cultures, especially those from the Balkans, indicate existence of a constructed system which presents a model of the World on which all variations and ways of people's behaviour have been based. For the researchers of these, the so-called, folk-traditional cultures, a primary task is to discover that conception, which is a unique possibility for its adequate understanding and interpretation of human activities connected with its mythic past, its religious idea and its ritual activities. Human activities consist of permanent repetition of mythic archetypes, which have in their basis always brought the myth about the prime creation of the World.<sup>1</sup> Living space, according to the traditional understanding of the

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<sup>1</sup> Mirča Elijade, *Sveto i profano*, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, Novi Sad, 1986, 66. M. Elijade, *Mitot za več-  
noto zavrčane : Arhetipi i povtorenie*, Hristo Botev, Sofija 1994, 48.

conception, has been the centre of the Cosmos. Traditional views of Macedonians about the conception of the World indicate presentations of three cosmic worlds: "our" world settled by human beings, called "The Middle Land"; beyond the "our" world lies "The Upper Land" and below "our" "The Under Land".<sup>2</sup>

According to that tradition, people's World is an archetype or projection of God's World and the World of Deities. Everything that happens in the Middle Land presents only a projection or pattern of the World of Deities, and all people's activities are a projection of deities' activities. Human activities in "our" World present the eternal aspires through the ritual repetition of archetype beginnings to simulate the primordial act of the World creation.

88

According to the folk tradition, these three Worlds have been arranged vertically and divided among themselves by strong boundaries. Characteristics of the Upper and the Under Land are very similar and, very often, mutually connected, making an eternal circle in the Cosmos.

## **The Structure of the Mythic World and Possibilities for its Disturbing**

According to the mythic rules of the World's arrangement in the traditional culture, everything functions very good up to the moment when, for some reasons the World order and the patterns of all forms of behaviour are disturbed. Generally, this happens when some factors, in the frame of social and ritual community, cause a situation which leads to replacement or elimination of the established boundaries among the mythic Worlds, putting that way the whole social community in a very dangerous situation. In such a situation, the community reacts immediately, organising intensive magic and ritual activities in order to restore the World, its harmony and to mark again the boundaries among the Worlds.

## **Death - the Appearance of the Chaos**

According to traditional beliefs, the process of existence is eternal but every alive being is subjected to the process of dying. The process of dying is comprehended as a moment or a process of transformation of energy and its transferring from one to the other cosmic world. According to the people's beliefs, the energy - the essence - the soul is never lost, but it passes over into other levels. People's "leaving" from the world of the alive has been considered as the most frightful and, at the same time, the most important act for the community of the alive, because death of a member of the community means irreparable loss - his leaving into the other World.

<sup>2</sup> Ljupčo S. Risteski, *Posmrtni obredni kompleks u tradicijskoj kulturi Marijova*, Belgrade University, 1997 (manuscript).

This means that death has been the most important cause of Cosmos disturbance. Death causes radical changes into the structure of cosmic organisation, making a state of Chaos in the relations of the community, which can reflect catastrophically on its future integrity and development. In that sense, the social and ritual community takes on very rich and complex magic and ritual activities in order to restore the harmony. From an aspect of the Macedonian folk, there are more polysignificant comprehensions of death as a demonic being, or it is imagined as a state or more precisely, as a phase in which the essential principle - the soul - finally leaves the human body.

## Death and Diseases as Demonic Beings

Death and its numerous variants - diseases, according to the folk beliefs, are the basic causes of the soul leaving the human body. There are many ideas about death as a demonic being, which is very "thirsty" for people's life. The most frequent are presentations in which death has been presented as "a woman, a black woman" or metamorphosed as the demonic being, disease: plague (chuma) - as a woman with her chthonic attributes: distaff (furka), her deadly voice, her note book and presentations of demonic beings: fairy (samovila), (senishte), fever (treska) etc.<sup>3</sup>

*... my dear sister, very bad disease caught you,  
(milna sestra shto loshi bolki te vatija)*

or

*five years, my brother, with disease you were fighting...  
(pet godini, brate so bolka se boreshe)<sup>4</sup> ...*

In Christian forms of beliefs and folk genres as stories, legends etc. - St. Archangel Michael has a role of guide of people's souls.

## Death as a Particular State or Phase of Final Soul Separation from the Human Body

An important part of the survived information recorded during our field research point out to the people's idea about death as a dream, a great, long and eternal dream. These kinds of presentations of death, according to the opinions of many ethnologists, are related to the traditional understanding of sleeping, or more precisely, the process of dreaming as a situation very close to death and very dangerous for living people. While the body of the sleeper is resting, his soul in dream, remains active and liberates itself moving out of the human body.

<sup>3</sup> *Narodna demonologija na Makedoncite*, T. Vražinovski, collaborators V. Karadžoski, L. Risteski, L. Simoska, MM-ISK, Skopje-Prilep 1996, 53-55.

<sup>4</sup> Archive of Institute of Old Slavic Culture - Prilep (AIOSC), Inv. No. K - 56/1996. Inform. Petkana Rimcheva, born in 1943 in the village of Vitolishta, region of Mariovo. Recorded on February 17, 1996 in the village of Vitolishta, Mariovo.

But, duration of this free movement is limited, because the prolonged soul wandering can be very dangerous and causes death.

According to the above mentioned information, the numerous prohibitions and system of taboos connected with the sleeping people and their surrounding become very clear. The soul can wander somewhere without coming back, failing to find the body in which it has been settled or to find some other body or other subject. Dreaming is a state in which human body stays quiet, with apparently low intensity of the signs of life, with liberated soul in a process of movement, causing a situation in which the body is very close to death. Comparing these situations, people connect actual dying with a state of sleeping, but sleeping as a kind of eternal and great dream from which nobody has ever awoke.

## **The Process of Cosmisation of the Chaos**

Community as an autonomous entity has a tendency, in a shortest possible time, to eliminate the cases of destruction, to protect the rest of its members and to reestablish the previous relations and harmony.

### **1. Rituals for Liberation of the Community from the Dead Member**

In the case of death, the most important task of the community is to neutralize the effects of the dead person or to minimize them as much as possible. This can be achieved by a complete isolation of the dead person and of those who had direct contacts with him. People who have an intermediary contact with the dead person, always take many preventive actions which do not allow expansion of death. They visit the dead person with garlic on the hands and ancles with a piece of stone or some thorn in their mouths, defending themselves and other members of the community. Considering that this kind of isolation can not be effective for a long period, the community buries the dead person.

### **2. The Magic Separation of Good from Bad and Protection from Danger**

The status of a dead person in the community, especially to the moment of his burial, has a variety of meanings and implicates many activities which clearly determine relations of the alive to the dead person of the community. At the beginning, the most important thing is to set clear boundaries between the contaminated zone in which the dead person lived and is still present, and the space of the alive. After that, the community starts with the process of separation of two very important principles: good and bad, life and death, fruitfulness and sterility.

Everything that was used in the funeral ceremony, or found in the surrounding of a dead person is contaminated and dangerous for the alive. Because of that, all requisites containing the magic infection ought to be separated and thrown out of the reach of the alive. Mostly, these requisites have been buried together with the dead person or they pass through a range of lustrative phases in order to bring them into a normal situation for everyday use. This approach can be noticed through all the ritual activities:

separation of the clothes of the dead person; water in which the dead person "was bathed", his comb, razor, measure for his grave, etc. Biers on which the dead person was carried to the cemetery are either buried or left near the grave, marked as something which can not be returned back into the community.

The rope with which the deceased was buried was at first thrown on the ground in order to neutralise its magic effects, and even after "it had been dragged by legs along the ground", some members of the house-hold would have taken it. Objects with a great importance for life and existence of the community must be separated completely and never be put in use among the alive. (The sickle put over the stomach of the dead person and used in the rituals of magic cutting, was never again used by the community in its original purpose: as a basic tool in harvest.) Some things, tools and parts from the deceased, however, are left among the alive, to be used for the aims of black magic (kerchiefs with which the mouth, arms or legs were tied; ritual small breads through which someone could be seen, etc.)

There are many ritual activities for further protection from the dead. "*The dead water*" in which the dead person was bathed, is poured out on places where the alive can not make a direct contact with it. Water from jugs in the whole village must be poured out, too, and replaced by fresh water. In these ritual actions, people must be very careful not to disturb the purity of water. For this reason, all woman from the village go to the water source together, being afraid to meet the others who go to the water after them, and who might intercept and contaminate the fresh water again.

The most important separations between life and death, between good and bad, are realised at home, before the burial of the dead person. These ritual activities of separation are usually carried out by the so called "mesaria" (a woman who is the most important ritual actor during the funeral ceremony and after). In these moments, she stands in the space signed as "domestic", near the "breads", and because of that all her activities are aimed to protect the fruitful power of the bread, the grain, and the live stock. In that occasion, "the mesaria" kneads the ritual breads called "bulinja", which should sign the new boundaries at the level of fruitfulness between the two opposite categories: life and death.

In kneading the ritual breads on the dead person's right hand, the first bread symbolises the principle of death, the evil and "mesaria" puts it into the dead person's armpit. The other bread remains at home as a symbol of the principle of bread fertility and welfare of the house. In order to preserve the welfare of the house, from the breads devoted for the funeral ceremony, "mesaria" takes one bread back to the house and one "is sent" to the shepherds and live stock. Once the breads were taken out of the house, there is a ritual prohibition for their returning into the house since they are considered as possible agents of death. Cutting the linen by which the dead was covered, "the mesaria" leaves a part of it tied on the right "leg" of the box for kneading bread, in order to preserve the fruitful power of the dead and transmit it to the household. In a case the fire was burning in the moment when somebody died, people take care of it not to extinguish it, it is a symbol of life and welfare. In the same time, the relatives of the dead take care that noone of the visitors takes the fire for himself.

When the people come back from the funeral, they use different roads, believing that the dead's soul or his mortal influence does not know how to come back to the living. In some cases, people cross the river, connotating passing into the space of the alive. After coming back, the participants of the funeral procession pass across the water and fire. After funeral ceremony, the participants come back in the house of the deceased, passing through a process of individual lustration prevents from the eventual magic infection of death. They lustrate themselves by washing and throwing embers on their hands.

During the funeral ceremony, close relatives of the dead person remain under some green and fruitful tree in the cemetery, preserving the life and fertility. That place, the housewife ungirding her apron or the belt, takes the alive members of her family under her magic protection. The ritual activities, however, show that not every object connected with the deceased has the meaning of danger and harmfulness. The deceased person who was, until recently, alive member of the community, especially if he was known as a good host, keeps his characteristics even after death. The positive and good attributes have a special importance for the community of alive. Because of that, the community makes efforts to keep and use these attributes for itself.

### 3. The Black Hen in the Grave

If two persons of the same family die in a short period, the traditional community takes another very important magic and ritual activity. Believing that the two died persons will draw the third person, during the funeral of the second one people bury black hen - "let it be the third". People believe that this action will influence the establishing of the magic completeness of number - three. Actions related to the selection and killing or, more exactly, suffocating the hen, point out to the archaic motive of sacrificing to the cause of death or as an act of calling deities - protectors of the community, to show mercy on them. The hen should be black or dark coloured and should not be slaughtered but suffocated, covered in some vessel.

In traditional conception of the community, a decisive importance has the categorical separation of deceased persons according to their features: "pure", "suspicious" and "impure deceased person".<sup>5</sup> It's according to these ideas that the whole ritual and magic activity of the community was structured. The community ritual and social activities have always been directed to making a successful and complete distance from the dead person, separating his good values from the bad ones, and his sending off into the community of dead ancestors wherefrom he can successfully and fruitfully act upon the community of living persons. Only the category "pure deceased person" (persons who passed through a complete ritual complex and were successfully included into the community of dead), has a great importance for the community. It can only be achieved if the community completed the whole ritual complex needed by the "dead person in passing", or by "the suspicious deceased person" and provided all necessities for their transfer into the category of

<sup>5</sup> Valentina Vaseva, Zadušnicata kato obredna dejavnost, *Etnografski problemi na narodnata duhovna kultura*, tom 3, Sofija 1994, 154-155.

“pure deceased person”. And the opposite, “the suspicious deceased person” becomes “impure deceased person”, very harmful for the community.

All community's efforts have been directed to preserve the complete integrity of the dead person and to prevent some bad ghosts or evil spirit to settle in its body. These demonic beings can make the dead person very harmful for the community and stop his final passing into the World of death. Then, there are many situations which permanently cause Chaos, destruction and disturbing of the harmonic relations in the Nature. In such situation “the suspicious dead person” appears dead person whose soul has been metamorphosed in the evil spirit, permanently staying among the living and doing many harmful actions to them. According to the above mentioned, we shall precise which categories of dead persons can become “suspicious” or “impure dead persons”:

- Dead persons predisposed by boring to become vampires and karakondozols.
- Dead persons with undefined social status: bachelors, maidens and unnamed new born child.
- Dead persons who died and were buried out of the usual patterns of ritual behaviour.

After somebody's death, the community undertakes a lot of magic and ritual activities that, at first, should prevent the “suspicious deceased person” to pass successfully into “impure deceased person”. The most important protective measures against becoming a vampire are: keeping the animals not to jump across the dead body; watching that something not given across the deceased and complete realisation of the ritual process.

In some regions of Macedonia, in Mariovo, for example, the most important protection against becoming a vampire is the so called “*magic hacking of the dead person*” (*zasekuvanje*). After the body of the dead person would be dressed, the most important ritual actor - “mesaria” - would realise the magic hatching. Through the ritual threading, the “mesaria” hits beside the dead person's head and legs from right to the left with a sickle or an axe, pronouncing the magic formula with a very strong symbolic meaning: “Prefer thou an outlaw or a cut? Go thee with health.” (“*Odmet sakash ali odsek sakash. Odi mi so zdravje*”)<sup>6</sup> or “Go after God and Virgin Mary and not after Satan and Satanes” (“*Da odish po Boga i Bogorodica, a ne po Soton i Satonica*”).<sup>7</sup>

If the community considers that there are some possibilities for the dead person to become a vampire (if he was very sinful or if he died “unseen” - nobody saw him at the moment of dying), than people stab in his left foot hawthorn or mostly they prick him with a needle into the stomach (navel), believing that the bad influences of these spirits were finally neutralised. In some villages in the region of Mariovo, they use real hacking with knife on the breast or at part of the body near the heart. There are numerous folk narrations referring to vampires, and to the difficulties about their excluding from the community. Namely, in spite of preventive measures, it happens very often, somebody that becomes a vampire and moves continuously among the living, especially in the house where he lived before. His coming back to his own household was

<sup>6</sup> AIOSC, Inv. No. K - 52/1995. Inform. Kata Shipinkaroska, born in 1919 in the village of Gradeshnica, region of Mariovo. Recorded on September 29, 1995 in the village of Gradeshnica, Mariovo.

<sup>7</sup> AIOSC, Inv. No. K - 40/1995. Inform. Velika Koleska, born in 1923 in the village of Veprehani, region of Mariovo. Recorded on September 13, 1995 in Prilep.



mostly very harmful: he broke the vessels, poured out the water, threw the food on the floor, let the animals out of the stables, etc.

Many events were narrated in which the vampire continued his sexual contacts with his wife, and as a result of these contacts a very unusual child was born, well known in the tradition of Macedonians as *a vampire or vampire's son*. Vampire's son possesses special features which enables the community to use him as the most important destroyer of vampires. "Carrying the vampire to another place" - has been the widespread magic measure for the community protection. This ritual action means "carrying the vampire" out of the actual or symbolic boundaries of the village. It was practiced, very often to carry the vampire across the water (river) or across the village landmark with an aim not to come back.

Very often, people carry the vampire, lying to him that they will go to the wedding in the neighbouring village, taking with them some wine and bread. After crossing the village border or river, people leave the wine and bread somewhere, saying to the vampire that he must stay and wait there because they must go back to the village. People believe that vampire can not come back alone across the river or the village border. The more reliable way of exterminating the vampire is the act of his ritual killing. Ritual killing of the vampire is done only by the above mentioned vampire's son, because he is the only one who can see the vampire and kill him. On the place where the vampire was killed, blood - "blood - as a meatmold" usually appears, threaten after that with hot water "not to become alive again".

The dead new-born infants, unbaptised persons, unmarried and suicide persons belong to the category of "suspicious deceased persons". If the community does not undertake all the necessary ritual and magic activities, members of this category have all prerequisites to become "impure deceased persons", and after the phase of unsuccessful passing into the community of dead ancestors, they would stay among the living persons in a form of various demonic beings: *navi*, *fares (samovili)*. Staying in the world of living creatures, this category of "suspicious deceased person" and the demonic beings referring to this category, permanently, disturb the harmony or bring closer the boundaries between the two opposite Worlds. Thereby, people's community becomes marginal and because of that there are many folk beliefs about their harmful effects but also about various modes for neutralisation of their influences.

*Navi* are mythic demonic beings originating from the unbaptized dead new-born child. They do not succeed to pass the phase of "suspicious deceased person" and become "impure spirits" attacking women who have just given birth in the first 40 days of parturition. Because of these harmful influences, the community organises fictive baptising of the child while it is ill or after its dead. Traditional common law does not allow the new-born children to stay nameless for a longer period. This period symbolises a lack of their personal identity, as well as their ritual not belonging to the community. Only after baptising they become members of the community, having full rights, being therefore harmless for the living persons. Many times, the act of baptising is not enough. As "unconfirmed" members of the community, their bodies are often buried in places called "unknown graves". Realising this kind of ritual action, the community, attempts to erase the child's nonconfirmed identity protecting thereby it's living members.

The category of socially unconfirmed and uncompleted unmarried persons belongs to the category of "suspicious deceased person", too. Because of its lack of social differentiation and completeness, the community attempts to make symbolic and ritual establishment of their social integrity organising a special ritual called posthumous wedding or eternal wedding,<sup>8</sup> in order to satisfy preliminary conditions, so that the "new dead person" could successfully overcome the phase of passing.

*"... When I went into (the other World), I saw a girl and a boy staying in front of the door (of the World of the death).*

*I asked them:*

*- 'Why were you staying there alone?'*

*- 'Because we had done our death by ourselves. And because of that, they did not allow us to went into. We were staying here...'*

*("... Ama koa vlegu (vo Onoj svet - na son. Zab. Lj. R.) jas, edno chupe i edno mashko promeneti stoeja na vratata (pred vlezot na svetot na mrtvite. Zab. Lj.R.) I jas mu vela:*

*- 'Oti vie taka sami stojte?'*

*- 'Oti nie sami si napravvme smrt. Ne né pushtajat dva vlezime. Ovde si sedime nije. Si stoeme.'")<sup>9</sup>*

It is believed that drowned persons have devoted themselves to the devil and their souls wonder among the living causing damages to the community. According to the folk beliefs, drowned persons possess the power of water and the power of the hail. *"The hail comes back with the drowned's soul. It comes back with him". (Gradot, ko tche vrne so umreniot se vratcha. So toj shto se udavil. Se vratcha so umreniot).*<sup>10</sup> Because of that, an old woman or a man, with knife in the hands, threaten all drowned persons from the village, to change the direction of the hail clouds.

*"... to the high mountains and dense forests,*

*where the axe does not cut,*

*where the sickle does not reap,*

*where the threshing floor does not stretch..."*

*("... visoki planini, gusti gori,*

*kaj sho sekira ne sechi,*

*kaj sho srp ne zhnje,*

*kaj sho gumno ne e rastureno...")<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> V. Garnizov, *Smrt = svatba*. Balgarskija folklor v slavjanskata i balkanskata kulturna tradicija, t. 8, BAN, Sofija 1991, 248; M. Barjaktarović, *Posmrtna ili naknadna svadba*, Glasnik Cetinskog Muzeja, t. V, Cetinje 1972, 263-272.

<sup>9</sup> AIOSC, Inv. No. K - 41/1995. Inform. Menka Mitreska, born in 1924 in the village of Dunje, region of Mariovo. In 1949 she got married in the village of Chanishte and since 1970 she has lived in Prilep. Recorded on November 13, 1995 in Prilep.

<sup>10</sup> AIOSC, Inv. No. K - 50/1995. Inform. Velika Mitreska, born in 1934 in the village of Bzovitch, region of Mariovo. In 1955 she got married in the village of Chanishte. Recorded on November 28, 1995 in the village of Chanishte, Mariovo.

<sup>11</sup> AIOSC, Inv. No. K - 50/1995. Inform. Velika Mitreska, born in 1934 in the village of Bzovitch, region of Mariovo. In 1955 she got married in the village of Chanishte. Recorded on September 28, 1995 in the village of Chanishte, Mariovo.

In the same time, the soul of the drowned person appears as a very useful mediator with the water (especially the rain), in a case of rainless period. Then, maidens from the village take a stone from the drowner's grave and throw it down into some well or spring calling therewith the rain to fall. This means that drowned persons have a function of bearers of mythic water and fertility. In that sense, the essence of the rituals carried out through the posthumous complex, reflects the people's efforts:

- to ensure complete elimination of the effects of dead person;
- supply all necessary conditions for undisturbed and final passing of the "new dead person" into the World of the death. This process lasts through a period of one-year intensive ritual activities;
- to ensure final entering and including the new dead person into the other, eternal, community of dead ancestors, structured according to the system of relationships.

## Rituals for Providing successful Passing into the World of the Death

The community of alive, permanently and cyclically, tries to support dead persons in the World of the Death. According to the folk idea, there are mutual relations between these Worlds, and the community of living expects support by the community of its dead ancestors.

In the frames of this folk concept of death, when somebody dies, the community attempts to "become free" of the dead person, but, in the same time, to provide him with all necessities for successful passing into the other world, the world of dead ancestors.

In that sense, the posthumous ritual complex presents a mechanism of symbolic regulation among the systems and their mutual relations. According to the principles of folk tradition, the community takes an intensive ritual activity in a period of one year with an aim to "lead" the dead person in the World of the Death. After this period, the intensity of ritual activities decreases and the community starts with cyclic and permanent providing of all necessities for the dead ancestors. The community supposes that the deceased person has been successfully adapted into the community of death.

## Revision of the Process of Cosmisation of the World

After the period of three, five, seven or nine years from the inhumation, in some regions of Macedonia, the community organises ritual "exhumation" of the graves until the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the wider Balkans region, this custom has been well known among the people as "repeated inhumation", or "digging the graves". In ethnological studies, this custom is known as "repeated or double digging of the graves".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Kuzman A. Šapkarev, *Izbrani dela, : Običaji, obredi, nosii*, tom 4, Mislja, Skopje, 1976, 96, 101-102; T. Đorđević, *Naš narodni život : Nekoliki samrtni običaji u Južnih Slovena*, tom 4, Prosveta, Beograd, 1984, 244-246; T. Đorđević, *Dvostruko sahranjivanje*, Glasnik Skopskog Naučnog Društva, knj. III, Odeljenje društvenih nauka 1, Skoplje,

Having in mind the basic ideas of the traditional culture of Macedonians, the process of exhumation of the graves had a very important meaning in the establishing the "real" situation of the process of passing of a dead person into the community of the death. Because of this, we shall analyse the ritual exhumation and repeated inhumation as a revision act of the process of the world cosmisation. The ritual community wants to follow the process of passing and to revise the possible "deviations" of the "suspicious dead persons". The process of passing ought to be under the community's supervision.

Revisions of the process of cosmisation are often very concrete. The "control" exhumation is done in order to be sure about the real situation of the dead person. There are numerous beliefs about the success in the process of passing into the community of dead ancestors. It is believed that this success would be greater if the deceased person "comes to light again" or "see the sunlight once again". Many times, in the graves of persons died of tuberculosis, people used to bury a bottle of red wine which was used when some of the close relatives got ill with same disease. However, this wine could be used only if the community was sure that the process of passing into the World of Death had been completed successfully.

After exhumation, the ritual actors make an actual revision of the state of a dead person, checking his body, the colour of his bones, etc. If the bones kept their white colour, social and ritual community is satisfied, believing that it succeeded to organise the ritual cycle completely, overcoming the dangerous period of "suspicious deceased person". Sometimes, however, the revisions after digging of the graves show that the process of passing of the dead person into the community of ancestors does not always follow the custom rules. It happens that some of the dead persons "become alive" or "become a vampire". In these cases, the community repeats the ritual complex, trying to find the basic causes for prolonging the suspicious period for death. We mentioned numerous exhumations and repeated inhumations in order to destroy the vampires or similar demonic beings.

Finishing this presentation, we can conclude that comprehension of Death as a cultural and anthropological phenomenon on the basis of empirical materials of traditional cultures, enables us to understand the whole ritual complex, ideas and beliefs related to death. Discovering the structure, contents, functions and meanings of this phenomenon in the traditional cultures we will be able to comprehend the wider mythic concept of cosmic arrangement and its functioning.

1928, 347-348; M. Barjaktarović, *Dvostruko sahranjivanje*, Glasnik Zemaljakog Muzeja u Sarajevu, n.s. Etnologija, tom XXIX, Sarajevo, 1974; M. Jovanović, *Ponovo ili dvostruko sahranjivanje*, Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta, IX - X, (1960-1961), SANU, Beograd, 1961, 212-218; B. Jovanović, *Srpska knjiga mrtvih: Tanatologije I*, Gradina, Niš 1992, 193-194; G. Lozanova, *Običajnat "vtoro pogrebenie" u Bălgarije - sădăržanie i funkcii*, Bălgarska Etnografija, Godina II, Kniga 3, BAN, Sofija, 1991, 52-57.

## BESEDA O AVTORJU

Ljupčo S. Risteski, mag., je dodiplomski študij vpisal v šolskem letu 1989/90 na Oddelku za etnologijo in antropologijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Beogradu. Podiplomski študij je nadaljeval od leta 1994 do 1997 na isti univerzi iz smeri socio-kulturna antropologija. Leta 1997 je magistriral s temo "Posmrtni šege v tradicionalni kulturi v Mariovem" (specifična etnična regija v Makedoniji). Od leta 1994 do 1998 je delal na Inštitutu za staroslovanske kulture kot asistent raziskovalec. Od leta 1998 je zaposlen kot asistent na Oddelku za etnologijo na Fakulteti za naravoslovje in matematiko Univerze "Svetega Cirila in Metoda" v Skopju. Njegovi raziskovalni interesi: makedonska, balkanska in slovanska mitologija, ljudska verovanja in obredi. Objavil je štiri monografije in šest člankov.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ljupčo S. Risteski, M. A., in 1989/90 school year enrolled at Belgrade University at the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology. From 1994 to 1997 he studied the post-graduates' studies of socio-cultural anthropology at the same University. In 1997 he graduated with the theme "Posthumous ceremonial complex in the traditional culture of Mariovo" - (specific ethno region in Macedonia). From 1994 to 1998 he worked at the Institute of Old Slavic Culture, as an assistant-researcher. From 1998 he works as an assistant at the Department of Ethnology, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University "SS. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. The researcher's interests: Macedonian, Balkan and Slavic mythologies, folk religions and rituals. He published four monographs and six papers.



STAIRS IN NOVEL FURNISH THE TRADITION OF THE  
 INDEPENDENT STATE OF SOUTH

THE SOUTH AND THE WEST - A RE-EVALUATION

by J. H. HARRIS, University of Queensland

THE WEST

The author's thesis is that the West is a myth, a fiction, a construct of the imagination. He argues that the West is a product of the American dream, a dream of a better life, a dream of a new world. He traces the roots of the West to the American Revolution, to the American Westward Expansion, to the American Civil War, to the American Industrial Revolution, to the American Frontier, to the American West. He argues that the West is a myth, a fiction, a construct of the imagination. He argues that the West is a product of the American dream, a dream of a better life, a dream of a new world. He traces the roots of the West to the American Revolution, to the American Westward Expansion, to the American Civil War, to the American Industrial Revolution, to the American Frontier, to the American West.

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Helena Ložar-Podlogar

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**Ključne besede:** Slovenija, pogrebne šege, smrt, verovanje, pogreb, drugi pokop

Življenjska pot povezuje dve med seboj odvisni skrajnosti – rojstvo in smrt. Že ob rojstvu – še več, že ob spočetju vsako živo bitje stopi na pot smrti, torej je življenje že tudi umiranje. Med tema skrajnostma vstopa človek v posamezna življenjska obdobja, na katera lahko bolj ali manj sam vpliva, so odvisna od njegove volje, tako npr. izbira šole, poklica, zakonskega stanu. Posamezne življenjske stopnje pa pomenijo vedno znova prehode v nove skupnosti soljudi in prav v teh prehodih je človek videl negotovosti, tveganja, nevarnosti za tistega, ki je spremenil svoj življenjski stan. Iz take miselnosti so nastale različne šege obrambnega (apotropejskega) značaja. Ker pa vsaka izmed treh glavnih življenjskih stopenj vpliva tudi na širšo okolico, na družino, fantovske, dekliske, vaške skupnosti, se t.i. šege prehoda, »rites de passage«, ki imajo apotropejski značaj, vedno prepletajo tudi s šegami slovesa in s šegami sprejema.

Za človeka, ki veruje v posmrtno življenje, pomeni smrt le prehod v družbo rajnih, vstop v neko boljše, večno življenje. Tisti pa, ki vanj ne veruje, vidi v smrti konec, ki se mu zdi nesprejemljiv. Zato tudi on, še bolj pa njegova okolica, išče tolažbe in se oklepa včasih istega upanja, da je dosegel polnost življenja, da je ustvaril nekaj, kar bo spominjalo na to, da je živel. Verjetno v svoji podzavesti vsak človek veruje v neko višjo silo, ki ima moč nad življenjem in smrtjo; morda ga pred smrtjo le prešine dvom, da obstaja tudi po smrti neko, sicer drugačno življenje, v katerega mora vstopiti pripravljen. Čaka pa ga prehod, v katerem so ljudje slutili mnoge nevarnosti za rajnega in za ljudi, ki jih je zapustil. In prav pri šegah ob smrti, ki so na slovenskem podeželju najbolj ohranile svojo prvotno obliko, si strah in slovo podajata roke. Na eni strani srečujemo strah pred mrličem in pred njegovo možno vrnitvijo, ki bi lahko imela zle posledice za domače in okolico, na drugi strani pa veliko spoštovanje do njega, saj bo po smrti dobil moč nad živimi, postal bo njihov priprošnjik, posrednik med njimi in Bogom. Tako srečamo pri šegah ob smrti in pogrebu prvine, ki sicer izvirajo iz davne preteklosti in je njihov prvotni pomen pozabljen ali pa ga danes drugače razlagajo, ki pa so vendarle ostale kot trdno zasidrana navada. O mnogih nam pripovedujejo stara pisna poročila, o njih poročajo



ljudje na terenu, mnogo tega lahko še danes sami doživljamo, opazujemo v vsakodnev-  
nih komunikacijah. Preseneča nas, kako je še živo tisto, kar tako radi imenujemo  
»vraževerje«, pri tem pa se ne moremo otresti občutka, da ljudje v moč dejanj resnično  
verjamejo, morda prav zato, ker se zdi smrt nekaj tako dokončnega, težko sprejemljive-  
ga in vendar neizogibnega. Velik del šeg ob smrti in umiranju se nanaša na verovanja v  
duhove, demone (vse to naj bi bile duše umrlih) in vse so obrnjene k misli na obrambo  
pred njihovim zlim vplivom. Najprimernejše sredstvo je molitev tistih, ki stojijo ob smrti  
ni postelji. Zanimivo je, da poleg pravih molitev za umirajoče ne poznamo nobenih  
drugih čarobnih formul (npr. zagovorov), kakor jih poznajo ob drugih priložnostih (ob  
porodu ali nekaterih boleznih). V navadi so očenaš, rožni venec, križev pot in sedem  
resnic. Obrambno moč pa pripisujejo zakramentalom: blagoslovljeni vodi in sveči  
(prižgejo jo ob bolnikovem vzgljavju), rožnemu vencu, križcem z relikvijami, ki so jih  
prinesli z božje poti.

Ne bomo se ustavljali in razčlenjevali posamezne šege ob smrti, ob umiranju, tren-  
tutku smrti, pogrebu in osmini, čeprav je ljudem slovenskega podeželja še zelo pomem-  
ben ustaljen potek dogajanj. Izbrala sem le nekaj tistega, kar se zdi, da je v tem vedno  
bolj modernem, higiensko urejenem in praktičnem svetu najbolj ogroženo – to pa so  
šege, ki so od nekdaj povezovalе družino, sosedstvo, vaško skupnost.

Da je nekdo hudo bolan, ljudje na vasi hitro izvedo: manj ga obiskujejo v bolnišni-  
ci, če pa leži doma, čutijo kot dolžnost, da pri njem posedijo. Ko zaslutijo, da se mu  
bliža zadnja ura, se zbere vsa družina, prijatelji in sosedge, da ne bi umrl zapuščen, da  
bi pokazali, da mu odpuščajo vse zamere, kar naj bi tudi pomenilo, da mu lajšajo smrt.

In vendar že v Stoletni pratiki 1801–1900 pisec svari: *»Če je bolnik močno slab, se  
ne smejo obiskovavci brez posebne potrebe k njemu pušati, kateri bi pred njim čenčali, ne-  
slane pogovore imeli, in ga glušili: ... obilni obiskovalci so mu le bolj v nadležnost, kakor  
v polajšanje.... v tesni stani se zrak ... kmalo spridi in skazi, in na bolnika močno  
vdarja, de težko diha in nekako nepokojnost v sebi občuti, ktera se na vsim njegovim živo-  
tu razodeva.«* Svetuje tudi, da se *»morajo taki iz hiše spraviti, kateri s svojim jokam ...  
umirajočim nadlego in nepokoj delajo.«*

Trenutkom umiranja ljudje od nekdaj prisojajo največji pomen za mir bolnikove (in  
ne nazadnje tudi svoje) duše. Podzavestno je pri ljudeh vedno prisotna misel na drama-  
tičen boj Boga in njegovih pomočnikov svetnikov in angelov na eni in hudobo na drugi  
strani. Zato je razumljivo, da umirajočega v tem težkem trenutku in nevarnosti polnem  
položaju ne pustijo samega. K hudo bolnemu pokličejo duhovnika, da ga previdi, mazili  
in mu prinese *»sveto popotnico«*. V ta namen je imela še v prvi polovici tega stoletja vsaka  
hiša vedno pripravljene prte, križ, dva svečnika, posodo za žegnano vodo in eno za olje.  
Vse to je morala k hiši prinesiti že nevesta s svojo balo (nevesta mora misliti tako na rojstvo  
otroka kakor tudi na svojo in svojih domačih zadnjo uro) in je bilo spravljeno kot nekak-  
šen *»memento mori«* – opomin, da smrt prej ali slej obišče vsako hišo.

V času baroka je bilo nošenje svete popotnice podobno procesiji Rešnjega Telesa: ob  
odhodu iz cerkve so zvonili, duhovnik je hodil pod *»nebom«*, dva moža sta nosila banderi,  
dva sta poleg stopala z baklami, eden je nosil luč, drugi je zvončkljal. Ljudje, ki so srečali  
ali opazili ta spreved, so ob poteh, pred hišami ali na polju poklekli. Ta baročna scena se

seveda ni mogla obdržati, toda na deželi je še vedno v navadi, da nosi duhovnik sveto popotnico oblečen v koretelj s štolo, pred njim pa stopa mežnar z lučjo in zvončkom. Ljudje še vedno ali pokleknejo ali se vsaj pokrižajo, moški pa se odkrijejo. Da so sosedje v mislih spremljali bolnika, dokazuje, da so se (ponekod pa se še) že prej zbrali pred vaškim znamenjem ali ob vhodu v vas in skupaj pospremili duhovnika do hiše umirajočega. Zakrament maziljenja nudi Cerkev svojim vernikom že od prvih začetkov krščanstva. Do visokega srednjega veka je bil poudarek predvsem na prošnji in upanju za ozdravitev in šele pozneje je odpuščanje grehov dobilo svojo težo. Maziljenje se je tedaj imenovalo »*poslednje olje*« – to pa je bilo pravzaprav obremenjeno s slutnjo, da ni upanja na zdravje, da je to, kar še nudi Cerkev na tem svetu, tisto »poslednje«, ki izraža dokončnost, konec. To je psihično slabo vplivalo na bolnika, ki je še pri zavesti. Uradna Cerkev je želela to premostiti in je poslednje olje preimenovala v »*bolniško maziljenje*«.

Smrt v fari naznanja mrtvaško zvonjenje. *Navček* ali *cinclenkl cingla*, zapoje, ali, kakor pravijo, premolkne enkrat, dvakrat ali trikrat, na Dolenjskem dva ali tri *štikelce* ali *štuke* zvoni. V posameznih farah, vendar ne povsod enako, že po tem, kolikokrat zvon premolkne, sklepano, ali je umrl moški, ženska ali otrok. Tam, kjer so imeli več zvonov, za moškega zvonijo s ta velikim, za žensko s ta srednjim, za otrokom pa s ta malim zvonom.

Ko bolnik izdihne, mu najprej zatisnejo oči. To je znak spoštovanja do umrlega, hkrati pa tudi obrambno dejanje, ki naj bi izviralo iz strahu pred mrličevim »*hudim pogledom*« – še danes pravijo da bo, če mrlič gleda (ali pa če se smehlja), kmalu še nekdo umrl. To je sicer s krščanskim umevanjem smrti težko utemeljiti. Težko se je odločiti tudi, ali gre tu za predkrščansko verovanje ali pa samo za morebitne slabe izkušnje, ko je ob kaki nalezljivi bolezni, epidemiji umrlo več ljudi drug za drugim. Vsekakor so se taka verovanja pojavljala po epidemiji kuge, ki ji je sledilo nekaj posebnih ravnanj oz. dejanj. Mrtvim so začeli skrbno zatiskati oči in zapirati usta, poskrbeli so tudi, da je bilo vse, kar bi lahko imelo zvezo z živimi, odmaknjeno od ust rajnega (npr. uvezena imena, monogrami na rjuhi, blazini, sposojeni mrtvaški prt, prtčiči, obleka itd.). Sledila pa so še druga varnostna dejanja: zbuditi je treba živino (predvsem, če je umrl gospodar), premešati žito, da ne bi izgubilo kaljivosti, odpreti okno, pomesti smeti (duša naj ima prosto pot), izliti vodo iz posod, na Gorenjskem in Dolenjskem rjuho, na kateri je bolnik umrl, takoj namočiti in jo neožeto obesiti (kolikor kapljic je odteklo z rjuhe, toliko duš so rešili), še danes takoj zagrnejo ogledalo, da iz njega ne bi odsevala mrliška bledica, in ustavijo uro, saj se je rajnemu iztekla čas, zato naj se ne muči s štetjem ur in minut, ko bo moral zapustiti domačo hišo. Danes je razlaga seveda drugačna kot nekoč: kropivcem ni treba vpraševati, kdaj je umrl, saj ustavljena ura vse pove. Predvsem pa je treba pogasiti ogenj v peči: ogenj je namreč živa stvar, prasketanje gorečega lesa pa je slišati tako, kakor da jočejo verne duše v vicah. In tudi to ima predvsem praktičen pomen: rajni največkrat leži na parah doma, v t.i. hiši, torej v prostoru, kjer je kmečka peč. Soba, v kateri je *naparan*, pa mora biti hladna, da od mrliča prezgodaj ne pride zadah. Ker pa v peči ne kurijo, seveda tudi ne morejo peči kruha, s katerim postrežejo vsem, ki pridejo kropit. Tako se je ustalila navada, da kruh in pogače iz medsebojne pomoči spečejo sosedje.

Prvo delo, ki ga store potem, ko nekdo umre, je, da ga umijejo (ne le iz higienskih razlogov, marveč zaradi starega verovanja, da se ne bi hodil nazaj umivat) in oblečejo v obleko, ki so si jo včasih ljudje za smrt hranili vse življenje (pogosto je bila to celo poročna obleka). Mnogokje je še navada (seveda, če človek umre doma), da to delo opravijo zgolj sosedge, saj se domači mrtvega niso smeli dotakniti. Takim sosedom na Gorenjskem pravijo »mrtvi sosedge« in jih tako ločijo od tistih, s katerimi so v botrinji, ki velja včasih celo za več kot sorodstvo. Vendar pa počasi tudi ta navada izginja in vse pogosteje rajnega, če seveda umre doma, preoblečejo kar domači sami. (... »Včasih smo pa vsi sosedge hiteli umit, preobleč, poribat, pare naredit, smo bolj skup držal, sedaj je pa vsak zase ... «). To je že prva sprememba, ki nastaja v današnjem svetu: tistega, ki umre v bolnišnici, domov pripeljejo in krsti, pogosto kar v mrtvaško vežico, če jo fara že ima: s tem pa odpade vrsta šeg. Ljudje, ki še dajo kaj na stare navade, se tega zavedajo in včasih pred smrtjo vzamejo bolnika iz bolnišnice, češ »da bo umrl doma«. Ko pride čas, jim sosedge pomagajo pripraviti mrtvaški oder, ki mu splošno pravijo pare; mrliča torej položijo na pare, na pravico, na skolke. Pokojni leži na mrtvaškem odru sredi hiše, vendar tako, da je z nogami obrnjen proti hišnim vratom. Sklenjene roke mu ovijejo z rožnim vencem, na mizico pred pare postavijo med dve goreči sveči križ, predenj pa skodelico z blagoslovljeno vodo ali soljo in kropilno vejico, oljko, pušpan, brinje, redkeje smrekovo vejico. Ob mrtvaški oder postavijo klopi, da domači in tudi kropilci pri rajnem lahko malo posedijo, predvsem pa so klopi in stoli v sobi za nočno *vahtanje*, bedenje pri mrliču.

Sorodnikom in znancem naznanijo smrt domači sami, k pogrebu pa so некоč, ponekod pa še danes, od vasi do vasi, od hiše do hiše vabili ali, kakor pravijo, »na pogreb velevati« ali »ukazali« posebni mrtvaški *vabovci* ali znanilci. Starejši moški ali ženska, navadno tisti, ki bo ves čas čul pri mrliču, gre naznanit smrt k sosedom in jih hkrati povabi k pogrebu in k *vahtanju* ali *žebranju* (Koroška). Stara navada je namreč bila, da so prišli na pogreb le tisti sovaščani, ki so bili povabljeni. Če je umrl gospodar ali gospodinja, so velevali na pogreb pri sosedih iz vsake hiše po dvema, če pa otrok, pa po enem. *Vabovec*, ki je v hišo stopil z besedami »K pogrebu sem prišel velevat«, je v dar dobil nekaj prosa, kaše ali moke, kos kruha, pozneje že tudi denar. Čeprav danes skoraj ne velevajo več, pa gre iz vsake hiše vsaj eden na pogreb, kropit pa po nepisanem pravilu vsak, ki je pokojnega poznal; če so bili sosedge med seboj v zameri, v jezi, se v večini tedaj pobotajo. Celó ob zelo hudi zameri, ko na pogreb niso šli, so prišli vsaj kropit.

Pri pokojnem čuje noč in dan posebej najeti čuvar ali čuvarica in za to dobi denar ali kakšen kos pokojnikove obleke. Taki ženi pravijo na Notranjskem, da je »na lučci«, in ker se vsakemu z »*bohlonaj*« zahvali, ji na Dolenjskem pravijo »žena za *bohlonaj*«. Na podeželju največ hodijo kropit zvečer, ko imajo več časa in potem pri mrliču ostanejo pozno v noč ter pri njem čujejo. V Beli krajini so na *varki*, Gorenjci gredo mrliča *vahtat* ali *varvat*, na Štajerskem gredo k njemu *bedet*, Korošci pa *žebrat* (molit), Dolenjci gredo celo »*bel kruh jest*«, sicer pa pravijo bedenju »*mrtvaško vasovanje*« ali nočno vasovanje pri mrliču. Najprej za umrlega in za duše v vîah, predvsem za *tiste*, »*ki brez miru okrog letajo*«, kakor pravijo, molijo, potem pojejo cerkvene in mrliške pesmi (obsmrtnice). Razpoloženje sčasoma postane vedro, pripovedujejo zgodbe, tudi strašljive, se igrajo razne igre (najraje take s kaznimi) in skoraj pozabijo, da so ob mrliču. Ljudsko izročilo namen nočnega vaso-

vanja pri mrliču le slabo pojasnjuje. Ena izmed razlag je, da se tako tisti, ki čujejo ob mrtvaškem odru, sami zavarujejo pred smrtjo, kajti po prastari šegi, ki je vse do danes še niso povsem opustili, mora biti človek na mrliškem vasovanju dobre volje, poleg molitev in žalostnih pesmi pa se oglašajo tudi vesele, mrliški vasovalci se tudi šalijo. Veselo razpoloženje naj bi človeka zavarovalo pred smrtjo, o kateri so verovali, da je zlasti ponoči, ko človeka premaguje spanec, nalezljiva. Ker pa so imele ljudske šege navadno več namenov, so razpoloženje razlagali tudi s tem, da morajo rajnega razvedriti, ker bi bil sicer užaljen, če bi se njegovi sorodniki in znanci z žalostjo ločili od njega.

Domači morajo vse kropilce in mrtvaške vasovalce pogostiti: prinesejo žganje in bel kruh. Le-ta je moral biti za kropilce še pred drugo vojno pri vsaki hiši, če drugače ne, ga je revnejšim »eno peko« (okoli 6 hlebcev) prinesel premožnejši sosed. Kruh so vzeli vsi, mnogi pa ga niso pojedli, ampak so ga nesli domov otrokom. Tako pokojni še zadnjikrat pogosti vse sorodnike, znance, posebno pa siromake in berače in še zadnjikrat pokaže svojo gostoljubnost. Tu se pokaže tesna miselna povezanost med revnimi dušami v vicah in med reveži na zemlji. S podpiranjem revnih se lahko pridobi za sluge za lastno dušo ali za duše sorodnikov. Pogostitev kropilcev se je obdržala še do današnjega časa, tudi tam, kjer rajni leži v mrliški vežici. Arhitekt, ki pozna in sledi navadam ljudi, predvidi tudi ob vežici majhno čajno kuhinjo, kamor domači prinesejo pijačo, kruh in pecivo in v kateri skuhamo čaj, kavo ali vino, da lahko kropilce pogostijo in da se pozimi tudi sami lahko pogrejejo, saj tudi v vežici mrtvega ne pustijo samega. Ni pa več nočnega vasovanja pri mrliču, saj vežico zvečer navadno zaklenejo, po mnenju nekaterih prezgodaj, saj ljudje, ki imajo delo na polju, lahko pridejo kropit šele zvečer. Mrliške vežice sprejemajo zelo različno: starejši, ki še bivajo v svojih starih hišah, radi vidijo, da pokojni leži doma, da so ob njem, da vse poteka po ustaljenem redu po starih navadah. Za mlajše, ki žive že v novejših, modernih hišah, pomeni dejstvo, da ob pokopališču še ni vežice, resen problem, ki ga želijo s samoprispevki in lastnim delom čimprej rešiti.

Mrliča pokopljejo navadno tretji dan. Še v začetku tega stoletja so grob izkopalni sosedje ali pa tisti vaščani, ki so nosili tudi krsto. Orodje so prinesli s seboj ali pa so ga vzeli iz nekdanje *totenkamre*, mrtvašnice, v kateri so nekoč ležali le brezdomci. Pozneje so to navado začeli opuščati in je jamo izkopal kar grobar, včasih cerkovnik, ki je bil tudi grobar. Držati pa se je moral predpisov, kdaj sme stari grob ponovno odkopati za novega mrliča. Na Koroškem je še vedno navada, da kramp in lopato v obliki križa položijo čez izkopano jamo. Pogrebci, pogrebniki so bili še do nedavnega sosedje, vaščani, prijatelji, ki jih je pogosto pokojni že prej naprosil ali določil ali pa so to storili domači po njegovi smrti. Biti pogrebnik je veljalo za čast, naprošeni je užival spoštovanje in naklonjenost in ne pomnijo, da bi to kdo odklonil. Še danes pa morajo pogrebci poznati vsa nepisana pravila in se jih držati. Najprej je pomembno, kako rajnega nesejo iz domače hiše, saj je to prehod od doma v grob in je treba pri tem upoštevati vse šege prehoda, ločitve in slovesa. Z nogami ga nesejo naprej, s krsto prekrizajo vse prage, kar naj velja kot njegovo slovo, po starih verovanjih pa tako ne bi našel prave poti, če bi se po naključju vrnil. Ob vaškem znamenju, križu, krsto položijo na tla. Najstarejši pogrebec se v imenu umrlega poslovi ter prosi odpuščanja za krivice, ki jih je morebiti komu naredil, ter vsem zagotovi, da jim tudi sam odpušča, in prosi, naj zanj molijo. Križu pra-

vijo tudi »kerlež«, kar pride iz »kyrie eleison« – Gospod usmili se – to ime izvira prav iz te šege. Ne samo, da se je ta šega na deželi ohranila vse do danes, še več, redno smo ji priča tudi na obrobju slovenskih mest, npr. v vaseh pod Šmarno goro, celo v Šentvidu, torej v Ljubljani. Tudi v cerkev (na deželi so skoraj redno pogrebi z mašo, po njej pa je *ofer*) nesejo mrtvega z nogami naprej, niso pa več istega mnenja glede tega, kako ga morajo nesti iz cerkve: eni trdijo, da je krsto treba obrniti, da gre tudi z nogami ven, zopet drugi pa trdijo, da mora ves čas gledati na oltar, saj »nihče Bogu ne obrne hrbta«. Zato se morajo pogrebniiki o tem prej dogovoriti. Dolžnost pogrebniikov je bila, da so prinesli krsto, nosili pokojnika (vozili so ga le, če je bila domača hiša zelo daleč od farnega pokopališča; za vozom pa je po ljudski veri treba iti po kolesnicah, ne iskati bližnjic in se ne ozirati, sicer bo kmalu nov mrlič v hiši) in ga tudi zagreblji. Praviloma so bili štirje, redkeje šest. Dobro je bilo, da so bili enake rasti, saj se je teža tako enakomerno porazdelila. Oblečeni so bili v boljše obleko, po možnosti črno, na rokavih so imeli žalne trakove, za poročene črne, za samske bele. Trakove, ki so jih vedno pripravili pokojnikovi domači, so imeli na zunanji strani. Ko so nosila (*trage*) preložili na drugo ramo, so predstavili tudi trak. Po pogrebu so trakove sneli in jih vrgli v grob na krsto. Ta navada se je v drugačni obliki na Dolenjskem ohranila vse do danes. Črn trak z državne zastave, ki jo nosijo na čelu vsakega pogrebnega spreveda, prav tako snamejo in ga vržejo v grob.

Posebno skrb za umrlega nam kažejo tudi šege in navade, ki se odvijajo po pogrebu doma ali na pokopališču. Tisti, ki niso šli na pogreb, so doma pospravili mrtvaški oder, odprli vsa okna, razmetali stole, vrgli rjuhe in mrtvaške prte v vodo in morda celo sežgali žimnico. Ker so verovali, da mora vsak umrli prvo noč stražiti vse mrtve na pokopališču, zanj po pogrebu najprej zmolijo, predvsem zato, da ga to prvo noč ne bi bilo strah. Še danes pa se drže stare šege pogostitve sedmi ali osmi dan po pogrebu. To gostijo imenujejo sedmina ali osmina, pravijo ji tudi *karmina*, *korbina*, *trbina*, in jo pripravijo domači pokojniku v čast in spomin. Danes je ta mrtvaška gostija navadno takoj po pogrebu in ji pravimo pogrebščina. Povabijo vse, ki so bili na pogrebu, predvsem pa *vabovce*, čuvarja, nosače krste, grobarja, cerkovnika in seveda duhovnika. Preden posedejo, eden izmed njih glasno moli pet očenašev za pokojnikovo dušo. Na nastanek sedmine ali osmine je vplivala črna maša zadušnica, ki se bere za pokojnega sedmi oz. osmi dan po pogrebu. Prav tako so na uvedbo sedmine vplivale ljudske molitve, ki so jih na pokojnikovem domu opravljali sedem oz. osem dni zapovrstjo. O tem poroča že Valvasor iz 17. stol: »Pri pogrebih je ponekod ... navada, da dado precej po pokopu samo nosačem jesti. Nato prihajajo osem dni zapovrstjo v hišo tisti, ki so šli za pogrebom, in tudi tisti, ki so nosili truplo, ter polože v sobi na mestu, kjer je ležal mrtvec, dve voščeni sveči križem druga na drugo, ju prižgo na vseh štirih koncih ... pokleknejo in molijo, dokler sveči čisto ne pogorita... Nato gre vsakdo po svoji poti domov. In tako delajo osem dni. Zadnji, t.j. osmi dan, pa jim je treba dati kaj jesti. Tedaj je pokojni prav pokopan.« Poročila o tem se vrstijo vse do današnjih dni. V Beli krajini so še pred vojno »sedmino molili«, na Gorenjskem celo devet dni, na Dolenjskem še danes hodijo k družini umrlega molit osem dni vsak večer, osmi dan je zadušnica, potem pa jih pogostijo. Iz vsega tega lahko sklepamo, da so sedmine ali osmine z mrtvaško gostijo v bistvu zaključne molitve za umrlega. Zavedati pa se moramo, da je sedmina oz. osmina samo po svojem

imenu in po času vršitve mlajša, iz krščanskega srednjega veka izvirajoča šega. Kot mrtvaška gostija izvira namreč iz prastarih časov in je zadnji ostanek staroslovanskih mrtvaških obredij.

Ob koncu pa omenimo še posebno šego, ki je danes splošno manj znana in vendar je ponekod na Koroškem še živa: s posebnimi šegami je namreč združena skrb za kosti, posebno za lobanjo in večje kosti tistega pokojnega, v katerega grob nameravajo pokopati drugega mrliča. Vse kosti je namreč treba zbrati, jih umiti in zavite v prt ob novem pogrebu položiti nazaj v grob. Šega umivanja in zavijanja kosti nas spominja na drugi pokop mrliča, ki ga poznajo mnoga prvotna ljudstva zunaj Evrope.

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## DEATH CUSTOMS IN THE SLOVENE COUNTRYSIDE

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Helena Ložar-Podlogar

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108

**Key words:** *Slovenia, funeral rites, death, beliefs, funerals, repeated (double) burial*

The path of life links two interdependent extremes: birth and death. When it is born, even at the time of its conception, every living creature starts on the path toward death - one can also say that living simultaneously implies dying as well. Between these two extremes man enters different stages of life which he or she is able to influence to a certain degree: the choice of school, profession, marital status, and so on. These individual stages in one's life denote rites of passage, transition to a new community, to a different group of people. Man has perceived these passages as especially uncertain, risky, and dangerous for the one experiencing them. Such notions resulted in a number of different customs with a defensive (apotropaic) character. And since each of the three life stages (birth, marriage, death) affects others as well, for instance one's family, communities of young men, young women or fellow villagers, these so-called apotropaic »rites de passage« are always closely linked to the customs of departing or of welcoming another human being.

For those who believe in the after-life death merely denotes a transition into the community of the dead, into a better, eternal life; non-believers perceive death as the ultimate end. Since the latter find this hard to accept they, and even more those around them, seek solace, clinging to the hope that they had lived a full life, having created something to remember them by. It is probably in man's subconsciousness to believe in a higher power which governs life and death, and possibly a trace of doubt enters a person's mind before dying, hoping that even after death there might be a different life into which one must come prepared. But such a person is about to undergo the transition which many find equally dangerous for the deceased as well as for those left behind. Death customs and rites which have been preserved most in the Slovene countryside reflect the interconnection of fear and departure. On one hand there is fear of the dead and the possible return of the deceased which could prove fatal for the family or other villagers, on the other a great respect for the deceased who is believed to attain power over the living after

death, becoming the mediator between them and God. Death rites thus contain elements from ancient past whose original meaning has long been forgotten, or is now explained differently, but which have remained and are practiced as a firmly grounded habit. Many are described in old texts or by oral sources, or seen in practice, in everyday communications. It is surprising how what is sometimes labelled "superstition" remains alive, and one cannot help but think that people really believe in the power of these acts - maybe even more so because death seems something truly final, hard to accept, and yet inevitable. Numerous death customs contain the belief in ghosts and demons (represented by the souls of the deceased) and strive to protect against their evil influences. The most appropriate protection thus represents the prayer of those gathered around the dying person. It is interesting that aside from the genuine prayers for the dying other magical formulas (invocations) used on other occasions, such as birth or certain illnesses, are unknown. People usually say the Lord's Prayer, the rosary, the seven gospel truths, or do the stations. The protective power is contained in the sacramental character of the last rites: holy water and candles lit at the head of the dying person, the rosary, the crucifix with relics brought from a pilgrimage.

There is not enough room to dissect and explain each death custom - the process of dying, the moment of death, the funeral, the funeral repast. But those living in the Slovene countryside still greatly value the traditional, firmly established course of events. I have chosen a fragment of what seems to be the most endangered in our ultra-modern, hygienic world of order and practicality - that is the customs which have bound the family, neighbors, and the village community from time immemorial.

Villagers quickly learn of somebody's illness. While they do not often visit the sick in the hospital, they do feel obliged to go and spend some time with them if they remain at home. When it is felt that the time of death is approaching, the whole family, relatives, neighbors, and friends gather at the deathbed to show that old grievances have been forgotten, to make the dying feel less lonely, and to ease the moment of death.

And yet the author of an article in *Stoletna pratika 1801-1900* (1801-1900 Perpetual Calendar) warns his readers: »*If the sick person is very weak, visitors with no specific need should not be allowed to chatter around him, to talk nonsense, and to deafen him... he perceives such a multitude of visitors more of a burden than a relief... the air in a small room soon becomes stale and the sick person starts breathing heavily and feels somehow ill at ease, which is reflected by his whole body.*« The author further advises to chase »... out of the house those whose crying bothers and disturbs the dying person.«

Since time immemorial people have felt that the moment of dying is of the utmost importance for the peace of the dying person's (and, last but not least, of their own) soul. Unconsciously they think of the dramatic fight of God and his helpers, the saints and the angels, with their evil opponent. It is therefore understandable that they do not leave the dying person alone in such a troublesome, dangerous situation. They call for a priest to administer the last rites and to provide the dying with the »sacred provisions«. As late as the first half of the 20th century each house always kept ready a few tablecloths, a crucifix, two candlesticks, a container for holy water and another one for oil. All of this had to be part of a bride's dowry (since the bride who comes to live in



her bridegroom's house has to think of the birth of a baby as well as the final hour of her family – and indeed her own – as well), and was kept more or less at hand as a symbolic »memento mori« – a reminder that sooner or later death visits each and every household.

110 In Baroque the carrying of the sacred provisions was similar to the Corpus Christi procession: church bells sounded when the priest left the church walking under a canopy, two men carried banderas, two carried torches, one held a light, another chimed the bells. People who chanced upon this procession kneeled on the ground, be it along the village paths, in front of their own houses, or in the fields. While it is understandable that this Baroque custom could not have been preserved into the present, it is nevertheless still a habit that the priest bearing the sacred provisions is dressed in funeral robes with a stole, is preceded by the sexton carrying a light and a small bell, and that those who see them still kneel or at least make the sign of the cross, the men taking off their hats. Since the neighbors accompanied the deceased in their thoughts they used to – or they still do so – gather by the village crucifix or by the entrance to the village and then accompany the priest to the house of the deceased. The sacrament of anointing the sick has been available to believers since the very first years of Christianity. Until the High Middle Ages it emphasized primarily the plea and the hope for recovery, only later it shifted toward the absolution of sins and was named »the last rites«, implying that there was no more hope of attaining health again, that what the Church still had to offer was the very "final" act in this world. Since this aspect of finality disturbed the person who was still conscious, the official Church wished to avoid this negative, final aspect and renamed this act the »anointment of the sick.«

In the parish the death of a villager is announced with the chime of a death bell. The bell, called *navček* or *cinklenkl*, chimes or, as people say, »pauses« once, twice, or three times. In Dolenjsko it sounds two or three *štikelce* or *štuke*. Though this differs from parish to parish, villagers are able to recognize by the number of pauses whether the deceased was a man, a woman, or a child. If a parish had several bells, the largest chimed if the deceased was male, the middle sounded for female parishioners, and the smallest one for a child.

When a person dies, those around him first close his or her eyes. This symbolizes respect for the deceased, but is simultaneously the protection from the »evil eye« of the deceased; the notion that another person will die soon if the eyes of the deceased are open, or if the dead person is smiling, is still alive. It is difficult to establish whether this belief is consistent with the Christian notion of death or not; is it a remnant of certain pre-Christian beliefs, or simply the result of negative experiences from the past when people died one after another had there been an epidemic. At any case, these beliefs started after an epidemic of plague which was followed by a series of specific acts. The eyes and the mouth of the deceased had to be carefully closed, people also took care that anything which might have been connected with the living (i.e. monograms on the sheets or pillows, a borrowed death cloth, smaller tablecloths, clothes, etc.) was removed from the proximity of the mouth of the deceased. This was followed by other protective acts: the cattle – especially if the deceased was the master of the

house – had to be awoken, wheat had to be remixed so it would not lose its capacity for germination, a window had to be opened to set free the passage of the soul, all water had to be poured from containers. In Gorenjsko and Dolenjsko the sheet on which the dying had lain had to be soaked in water immediately, then hung to dry without wringing any of the water out (each falling droplet namely represented a soul saved from hell). Even today, a mirror which might reflect the deathly pallor of the deceased is covered, and the clock in the room is stopped since the deceased has run out of time on this earth and he or she should not strain to count the hours and minutes before leaving the home. There is a different explanation of this act in the present, of course: those who come to pay their respect need not ask when the deceased died, they can see it from the clock. It is very important to extinguish the fire in the oven; the fire is namely a living entity, and the crackling of the burning wood sounds like the crying of the faithful souls in purgatory. There is a practical reason for this as well: the deceased most often lies on a catafalque at home, in the so-called *hiša* (house), that is in the room with the oven. Since the room with the deceased has to remain cool lest the corpse starts to smell, there is no fire in the oven. And since there is no fire in the oven in which bread is usually baked, those who come to pay their respect cannot be offered bread. It is therefore customary that neighbors organize themselves and bring freshly-baked bread and cakes.

The deceased is first washed (this is not only due to hygienic reasons, but also because of the old belief that otherwise he or she would be returning to get washed) and changed into the clothes which were often saved for this very occasion throughout one's life; these are often the very same clothes one got married in. If the deceased died at home it is usually customary that this is carried out only by neighbors since the family is not allowed to touch the deceased. In Gorenjsko such neighbors are called the »death neighbors« to differentiate them from those who are the family's godparents; godparents are namely frequently more valued than relatives of kin. But this custom is slowly disappearing and the deceased is now often changed by the family. (»All the neighbors used to come to wash and change the corpse, scrub the floor, assemble the catafalque. We used to stick together while it is each on his own now«). This is the first change in the present times: whoever dies in a hospital is brought to his or her home in a coffin or often even directly to the funeral chapel if there is one in the parish; a number of customs are thus rendered obsolete. Those who still value the old usages are aware of this and frequently bring the dying person from the hospital so that he or she can die »at home«. Their neighbors help them prepare the catafalque, usually called *pare*. The corpse is placed on the catafalque (also called *pare*, *pravica*, *skolke*) in the middle of the *hiša*, with his legs facing the door and with a rosary in his hands. A little table with two burning candles and a crucifix in the middle is placed in front of the catafalque. In front of the crucifix is a cup of holy water or salt and an aspergillum, that is a twig from either an olive, box or juniper tree, only rarely from a fir tree. The catafalque is flanked by benches so that the family and visitors can pause for a while, but mainly they are needed for the wake at night.

Family members inform (»*na pogreb velevati*« or »*na pogreb ukazati*«) their relatives or acquaintances by themselves; in the past – and in some places still today – this task was

performed by the so-called death announcers (*mrtvaški vabovci*). *Vabovci* went from house to house, from village to village, inviting people to attend the funeral (*na pogreb velevati*). An elderly man or woman, usually the one who will keep the wake by the deceased, goes to neighboring houses, announces the death and at the same time invites them to the funeral and the wake (*žebiranje* in Koroško). It was customary in the past that only those who had been specifically invited attended the funeral. If the deceased was either the master or the mistress of the house, the invitation was issued to two people, but only to one if a child had died. *Vabovec*, who stepped into a house announcing »I have come to summon you to the funeral«, received some millet, groats, flour or a piece of bread (later money) as a reward. Even though this custom is not practiced any more, at least one person from each house comes to the funeral. According to an unwritten law all who had known the deceased come to sprinkle holy water on the corpse. Those neighbors who bore a grudge or who had quarreled with the deceased for some reason, usually reconcile at that moment. Even when their resentment is so fierce that no one attends the funeral, they always come to sprinkle holy water on the corpse.

A hired man or a woman stays with the deceased night and day; as a reward he or she receives either a piece of the deceased's clothing, or money. In Notranjsko it is said that such a woman is »*na lučci*«, while in Dolenjsko, where such a person thanks each visitor with the words »*bohlonaj*«, (God bless you), this woman is called »*žena za bohlonaj*« (the *bohlonaj* lady). In Slovene villages people usually come to sprinkle the deceased at night when their daily tasks are mostly done. They stay late at night, keeping the wake. In Bela krajina they are »*na varki*«, in Gorenjsko they call the wake »*mrliča vahtat*« or »*mrliča varvat*«, in Štajerska people come and sit up (*bedijo*) with the dead while in Koroško it is said that people go to pray (*gredo žebirat*) by the corpse. In Dolenjsko people even say that they go »to eat white bread«; but keeping the wake is more frequently called »*mrtvaško vasovanje*« or »*nočno vasovanje pri mrliču*«. During the wake the assembled first pray for the deceased and for the souls in purgatory, especially for those who »wander around with no peace«, as they say. Then they sing church and death songs, and when the mood gradually brightens they tell stories, also scary ones, and play different games, almost forgetting that they are keeping a wake. Folk tradition has not explained the motive of this nightly vigil. One of the explanations maintains that in such a manner people protect themselves from death. The ancient custom of being merry during the wake, of singing merry songs alongside the sad ones and prayers, and of cracking jokes has persisted into the present. It is believed that high spirits protect a person from death which is supposed to be especially catching at night when man is apt to succumb to sleep. Since such customs usually contained more than one meaning, one of the explanations for such behaviour is that people need to cheer up the deceased lest he took offence at his relatives and neighbours taking leave from him in sadness.

The family is obliged to offer schnapps and white bread to every visitor (who is called *kropilec*, *mrtvaški vasovalec*). Even before World War II each house had to serve white bread on such an occasion; if the family could not afford it, a more affluent neighbor brought them a »batch« (about six loaves). All visitors accepted the bread, but many took it home to their children. In this manner the deceased treats his relatives, acquaintances and especially the poor and beggars, for the last time, manifesting his

hospitality. This reveals the close connection of poor souls in purgatory with the poor on Earth. By giving to the poor one can acquire merits for one's own soul or for the souls of one's relatives. This gesture of hospitality has been preserved to the present, even if the deceased lies in a funeral chapel. Those architects who are familiar with people's customs design a small kitchenette alongside a funeral chapel into which the family brings beverages, bread and cakes, and in which they make tea, coffee, or serve wine for those who have come to pay their respect. This is also a place where in winter the family can warm up during their vigil by the deceased. At night, however, the chapel is locked, much to the chagrin of many who feel that this occurs much too early for the farmers who work in the fields till dusk and are therefore able to come only later in the evening. The feelings concerning such funeral chapels are ambivalent: those who still live in their own, original houses, prefer that the deceased remain at home until the funeral so that they can keep a constant vigil and ensure that everything takes place according to old customs and firmly established traditions. If a cemetery does not yet have a funeral chapel, younger people who live in modern houses perceive this as a serious problem and try to solve it as soon as possible by collecting financial contributions and by donating their own labor.

The funeral usually takes place the third day after death. Even at the beginning of the 20th century the grave used to be dug out by neighbors or by the pallbearers. They either brought the necessary tools with them or borrowed them from the so-called *totenkamra*, a funeral chapel which was used only for the homeless. When this custom started to disappear later on, the grave was dug out by gravediggers or sometimes by a sexton who also doubled as a gravedigger. But he had to adhere to the rules prescribing when an old grave could be uncovered for a new corpse. In Koroško it is still customary to form a cross with a pick and a shovel and place them over the freshly-dug grave. Until very recently the pallbearers were usually neighbors, fellow villagers, or friends who had been asked or appointed to do this by the deceased beforehand, or were asked by the family of the deceased. It was a great honor to be a pallbearer; such people were highly esteemed by the community and nobody ever refused this task. But the pallbearers have to be familiar with and strictly obey all the unwritten rules concerning this task. Since this denotes a transition from one's home to one's grave and the customs of such a transition, separation, and farewell have to be strictly obeyed, it is extremely important how the deceased is taken out from his house. His feet have to face forward, his coffin making a cross over all the thresholds in the house. This denotes his leaving, and according to old beliefs he would thus be unable to find the right way home should he accidentally return. By the village crucifix or a chapel the coffin is placed on the ground. Speaking for the deceased, the oldest pallbearer bids farewell, asks to be forgiven for any wrongs the deceased may have done to anybody, gives an assurance that the deceased forgives any injustice done to him, and asks all around him to pray for the deceased. The village crucifix is also called »kerlež« – from *kyrie eleison* (Lord have mercy) – and was named after this very custom. The custom has not only been preserved in the countryside, but is also practiced on the outskirts of Slovene cities, for instance in villages at the foot of Šmarna gora, and even in Šentvid, thus even in Ljubljana. The deceased is then carried into church (in the Slovene countryside funer-

als almost always have a mass and an »ofer« – offering – afterwards) with his feet forward, but opinions differ as to how the corpse should be brought out of the church. Some say that the casket has to be turned around so that the deceased leaves the church with his feet forward as well, while others feel that the deceased should face the altar throughout the ceremony, since »no one should turn his back to God«. The pallbearers therefore have to agree on this beforehand. It was the pallbearers' task to bring the coffin, to carry the deceased (the coffin was driven only if the home of the deceased was quite far from the parish cemetery; according to the popular belief mourners have to follow the cart stepping into the cart track, avoiding any shortcuts or looking back; otherwise the house of the deceased will soon be struck with another death), and to bury the coffin. There were usually four pallbearers, only rarely six. It was advisable that their height was roughly the same so as to evenly distribute the weight. They were dressed in their Sunday best, in black if possible, with mourning bands which were black if the deceased had been married, or white if the person who died had been single. These bands, always made by the family of the deceased, were worn faced outward. When the palls were placed on the other shoulder, the band was always repositioned accordingly. These bands were later taken off and thrown on the top of the coffin in the open grave. Though in a different form, this custom has been preserved up to the present in Dolenjsko: the black band from the state flag, which is carried at the head of every funeral procession, is likewise taken off and thrown into the grave.

Customs taking place at the home of the deceased likewise reveal a special concern for the dead. Those who did not go to the funeral dismantled the catafalque, opened all the windows, scattered all the chairs, threw the sheets and the funeral sheets in water, maybe even burned the mattress. Since they believed that everybody who died had to watch over all the dead in the cemetery, after the funeral they first prayed that the deceased would not be scared. The old custom of organizing a funeral repast the seventh or the eighth day after the funeral is still practiced. The repast, called *sedmina* (the seventh day) or *osmina* (the eighth day), but also *karmina*, *korbina*, *trbina*, and prepared by the family, is to honor the deceased. Nowadays this usually takes place immediately after the funeral and is called *pogrebščina*. All who came to the funeral, especially *vabovci*, the person who was hired to keep the vigil by the dead, the pallbearers, the gravedigger, the sexton, and of course the priest, are invited. Before they all sit down somebody says five Lord's prayers aloud for the soul of the deceased. The origin of *sedmina* or *osmina* is connected to the requiem mass which takes place on the seventh or the eighth day after the funeral, but also to the prayers performed at the home of the deceased seven or eight days in a row. These are mentioned in Valvasor's book »Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Krain« from the 17th century: »In places it is customary that only the pallbearers are given food immediately after the funeral. Those attending the funeral as well as the pallbearers then come to the house eight days in a row. They position two wax candles in the form of a cross, light them on all four ends, place them on the spot where the deceased lay, kneel down and pray until the candles burn out. Then they return home, but repeat the process for eight days. The final, eighth day, they have to be given food. Only then the deceased is buried properly.« Reports on this custom date into the present. Before World War II such prayers (*sedmino moliti*) usually lasted seven

days in Bela krajina, in Gorenjsko even nine days, while in Dolenjsko people still come to the house of the deceased to pray for eight consecutive days, and are offered food after the requiem mass on the eighth day. This leads to the conclusion that such funeral repasts really represent the final prayers for the deceased. We do need to be aware, however, that their name (*sedmina* or *osmina*) reflects a more recent custom originating from the Christian Middle Ages. The funeral repast namely originated in the antiquity and represents the last remnant of Old Slavic death ceremonies.

Let us also mention a special, nowadays less known custom which is still practiced in some areas of Koroško: a ceremonial concern for the bones, especially for the skull of the deceased in whose grave another corpse is about to be buried. All the bones have to be carefully gathered, washed and then replaced into their grave wrapped in a piece of cloth. This custom of rinsing bones and wrapping them in a cloth is similar to the second burial of the deceased known among numerous native peoples outside Europe.

SOURCES AND LITERATURE see page 107

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Helena Ložar-Podlogar, mag., raziskovalka, samostojna strokovna sodelavka s specializacijo. Diplomirala je iz etnologije in nemškega jezika s književnostjo na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani, se dve leti podiplomsko izpopolnjevala na dunajski univerzi (Institut für österreichische und vergleichende Volkskunde) in magistrirala iz etnologije. Dela na Inštitutu za slovensko narodopisje Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra pri Slovenski akademiji znanosti in umetnosti v sekciji za ljudske šege in igre. Glavno področje njenega delovanja so šege življenjskega kroga (knjiga in več razprav). Je dolgoletna urednica slovenskega dela pri mednarodni strokovni reviji *Demos*, Internationale ethnographische und folkloristische Informationen, in urednica za slovenski del Internationale volkskundliche Bibliographie. Je urednica *Traditiones*, Zbornika Inštituta za slovensko narodopisje.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# THE MAGIC OF THE TIME OF DEATH

## A Contribution to the Study of Funeral Customs in the Carpathian Village

Urszula Lehr

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117

### IZVLEČEK

#### **Magičnost časa ob smrti. Prispevek k raziskavam šeg ob smrti v karpatski vasi**

Avtorica v članku prikazuje osnovno obdobje tranzicije v človeškem življenju – smrt – in bogastvo celotnega spektra oblik magičnega in religioznega vedenja, ki so z njo povezane. Način ukvarjanja z umirajočim in umrlim narekujejo ljudska verovanja. Njihova naloga je zagotavljanje miru za dušo umirajočega in preprečevanje njenega vračanja, da bi zagotovili mirno bivanje živih. Tako široko razumljene tradicionalne šege ob smrti so bile globoko prepletene z iracionalnim. Avtorica to ponazarja s primeri stopenj, ki sledijo človekovemu odhodu s tega sveta, kot so, na primer, znanilci smrti (sanje, zlovesči znaki, vedenje živali, zvoki), proces umiranja (magični načini pospeševanja smrti), obredi in šege (ustavljanje ure, pokrivanje ogledal, prižiganje sveče, uničevanje lastnine umrlega itd.), ter pogreb in pokop (obred odhajanja od doma in družine, prekinitev običajnega poteka zadev, vedenje na pogrebu). Pri magično-religioznih oblikah vedenja in obredih pogosto uporabljajo posebne pripomočke in predmete. Nekatere izmed njih so prilagali tudi v krsto, zlasti kovance, zelišča, platno, ki ga uporabljajo pri krstu itd. Ne glede na spremembe po drugi svetovni vojni se tradicionalno magično vedenje, povezano s šegami ob smrti, v karpatskih vaseh še vedno pojavlja, čeprav v omejenem obsegu.

**Ključne besede:** smrt, šege, obredi, magija, religija

**Key words:** death, customs, rites, magic, religion

In the traditional rural community, the time of passing away was always marked by magical and/or religious forms of behaviour and rituals, often accompanied by special accessories and objects. Such practices survived well into the post-World-War-II period and even into the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Pursued by the village dwellers, they were meant to

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<sup>1</sup> The study is based predominantly on the author's own fieldwork on funeral customs, carried out in the years 1991-1994 in the following Carpathian villages: Brzegi, Bustryk, Małe Ciche, Ząb (the Podhale region in southern Poland). These materials are supplemented with some field data on demonology, collected by the author in other parts of the Carpathians in southern Poland, in the villages of: Łącko (the Nowy Sącz region), Istebna, Brenna (the Beskid Śląski region), Miłówka and Sól (the Żywiec region).



allow the dying person to depart in dignity, as prescribed by the religious and social norms, and then to protect the soul of the deceased from eternal damnation. Other forms of behaviour were intended to protect the living relatives from the possible return of the dead, resulting from the failure to perform an appropriate ritual. It thus appears that the measures undertaken were of a preventive and/or protective character. The beliefs underlying such forms of behaviour, which determined the special ways of handling the dying person and then the corpse, give rise to the elaborate concept of the time of death. It goes beyond the purely biological definition based on the bodily functions coming to a stop and can be, generally speaking, divided into four stages.

118 Stage one comprises all kinds of phenomena which are the harbingers of death, including dreams, signs, and unusual forms of animal behaviour, popularly believed to be ominous.

Village dwellers mention certain symbolic themes, connected with things, locations or rituals, whose appearance in dreams signified an approaching death, such as: a falling out tooth (Podhale), a tub filled with water, an empty unmade bed, ash, an owl on the roof, a funeral wreath, crows, a cemetery (Malicki 1947; Silesia), a wedding or a broken tree (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region). Other dreams could have a literal meaning; the deceased family members would visit their relatives in their sleep: "When our father was to die, my sister had a dream: she saw our mother come and take father by the hands. He died soon afterwards" (S 1928; the Żywiec region).<sup>2</sup>

Some disturbing phenomena on the borderline between wakefulness and sleep could also be seen as a kind of an ominous, telepathic message from a dying person:<sup>3</sup> "I put the children to bed, made the bed for myself and then I heard something in the shed, a scratching sound as if a cat was there. Then I heard it again, but didn't go to the shed. When I heard it for the third time, I finally went out to see, but there was no cat there. Then I thought my brother was dead and was coming to visit me. Soon my husband was back home and told me my brother had really died" (Z 1905; Podhale); "Mother told me when she was a child ... and [her] parents attended a wedding in the village of Stasikówka, someone fired a shot and a cousin of my mother's dropped dead. She [her mother] told me then she was haunted by a ghost. The house was trembling

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Only a small proportion of the data comes from the literature, as few publications exist that deal with the problems in question in the area of the Polish Carpathians.

Quotations from the informants are followed by the name of the village, abbreviated to its initial letter (or, in the case of two-word names, the initial letters of both parts of the name), and their birth date. Some of the field data for which no quotation is given are nevertheless also accompanied by an indication of the region and/or village, usually in an abbreviated form: B - Brzegi, MC - Male Ciche, S - Sól, Z - Zab.

<sup>2</sup> A quotation in similar spirit, emphasizing the bond between a deceased wife and her husband, has been recorded in Zab. The informant told the story of his father-in-law's miraculous encounter with his deceased wife: "[Father-in-law said:] 'It's time to leave this world. My old woman came to me as I was herding cattle, she took me by the hand to take me along, and I said, How can I go? I won't leave the cattle on their own!' Soon afterwards he lay down on the pasture and died. People would then say: 'And he had to go'" (Z 1924; Podhale).

<sup>3</sup> Apart from so-called "strangers' dreams", Auerbach mentions some examples of what might be labelled "farewell dreams". They occur in cases where a strong emotional attachment exists, which gives rise to this kind of paranormal phenomena. The same author believes that some mechanism may exist whereby the dying may communicate with the living by telepathy (Auerbach 1992).

and would not stop until daybreak. Then grandma [mother's mother] came and said the cousin had been killed - and they were friends with mother" (MC 1949; Podhale).

There were also recurring dreams in which a missing relative would show. This kind of occurrence usually foreshadowed the official news confirming his or her death and sometimes gave a clue as to the burial place of the missing person - in case of a sudden death inflicted by another person: "You can see in your dream a murdered person whose body has been hidden and awaits an proper burial" (B 1975; Podhale).<sup>4</sup>

It was a widespread belief in folk tradition that the death of a family member could be predicted well in advance on the basis of certain signs, most of which would appear on Christmas Eve. People would watch the shadows cast by the persons seated at table during Christmas Eve supper: a pale and indistinct shadow augured the death of that person in the coming year. To drop a spoon at supper on the same day was likewise an ominous sign signifying a death in the family (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region). In Silesia, it was a custom in the early 20th century to eat walnuts after Christmas Eve supper: finding an empty one was a presage of death, too. People also believed that a person who left the table while Christmas Eve supper was in progress ran a risk of death (*Materiały* 1908; Silesia).

Another group of signs comprised acoustic phenomena. These were generally called "announcements of death" or simply "announcements". They took on various forms and affected - like dreams did - persons who were either related by blood to the deceased or had formed a strong emotional attachment to them. The sounds one could thus hear included the opening of the door or some unspecified knocks: "Some strange disturbance was heard when father was dying" (MC 1914; Podhale); "There was some knocking on the window; it was the dead man coming to let us know he was no longer among the living" (Z 1928; Podhale); "We heard a rapping sound, like our father was there - he used to tap his fingers on the table like that - and the sound went on until we learnt he was dead" (S 1932; the Żywiec region). The "announcements" could also take the form of some inexplicable phenomena, like a clock stopping all by itself at the moment of someone's death, and the like: "My grandma said that when her father-in-law was about to die, a picture fell off the wall" (Z 1905; Podhale); "When granddad was dying, the radio fell down to the ground and the candle at his bedside went out" (S 1920; the Żywiec region).

One more important category of omens was connected with unusual animal behaviour, which made people apprehensive. At least some species were believed to be able to feel or even see the approaching death. The most sensitive in this respect, it was said, were dogs. "When they howl, it means there is going to be a death in the village" (B 1975; Podhale) and they always "face the place where the death is heading, three days in advance" (Z 1928; Podhale), their muzzles pointing to the ground (Kowalska-

<sup>4</sup> This story, together with the conclusion it leads to, are based on an actual event which took place in one of the villages of the Podhale region a couple of years ago (1992). A relative of the murder victim saw in his dream the place where the corpse had been buried. (The police had staged an energetic search, but to no avail.) Even so, no one would believe in what the man said. Nevertheless, when all other clues failed, the place he had seen in his dream was inspected and the body was there.

Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region). If horses neighed or were restless, or if cattle lowed, it could also foreshadow death (Malicki 1947; Silesia). When “a mole digs through the snow” (B 1949; Podhale) or “digs underneath the doorstep, it digs a grave” (Z 1924; Podhale), particularly when it proceeds from the doorstep outwards, to the fields (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region). An ominous meaning was likewise ascribed to certain bird cries: a hen crowing like a rooster, an owl hooting near the house (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region), a crow or a cuckoo - “A cuckoo’s song meant someone was going to die” (MC 1914; Podhale), especially when it was “singing next to the house” (MC 1921; Podhale).

120 The finality of God’s decree necessitated further action to be taken at the second stage of the time of death. At the bedside of the dying person a candle which had been blessed on Candlemas Day (*gromnica*) was lit. Its purpose was not only to light up the way for the soul of the deceased, but also to keep all kinds of evil spirits and demons at bay.<sup>5</sup> In the presence of the dying or deceased person, the relatives were supposed to behave in a special way. This was intended, on the one hand, to make sure the death would be peaceful and, on the other hand, to guarantee an undisturbed existence of the survivors. First of all, any children or pregnant women present in the dying person’s house were made to leave. The reasons behind this practice were predominantly of magical nature, particularly as regards pregnant women. People feared that the baby would be born “pale as a corpse” (Z 1928; Podhale). Seeing the dead body by a pregnant woman might even have more dire consequences, as “there was a danger of a stillbirth” (MC 1966; Podhale), resulting from the mother “fixing her stare” at the corpse (*zapatrzanie*). This alleged harmful influence of the dead person on the future mother is explained by the *similia similibus* principle (like attracts like) in its purely negative form.

The dying person was censed with a miniature wreath made in the form of a wedding ring (*witka*), or one was placed on his or her finger. This custom, which was still practised in the early 20th century in Silesia (Malicki 1947; Silesia), has never been explained. Presumably, the *witka*, being a form of a wedding ring, was meant to accompany the dying person as a symbol of their new bond - with death. If the agony was prolonged, as was often the case, this was believed to be due to some evil deed performed by the dying person which went unforgiven. In obvious cases, the wronged individual was asked to come so that the dying person could offer an apology and obtain forgiveness (Podhale, the Nowy Sącz region, Silesia). When the reason of the prolonged agony was unknown, it was common practice - as late as between the two World Wars in Podhale and the 1950s in the Nowy Sącz region (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985) - to move the dying person to the floor, strewn with straw and covered with a sheet (*plachta*). It was thought that the closeness to the earth would quicken the death: “When my mother was dying, father carried her to the floor to ease her pain” (Z1905; Podhale).

Placing the dying person on the floor was undoubtedly an act of magic significance, symbolizing the imminent lowering of the body into an earthly. Such an act of anticipating and the downward motion associated with it were believed to assist the dying person in

<sup>5</sup> For other types of symbolic meaning attached to the word “candle”, including those related to the dead and their cult, see Kopaliński (Kopaliński 1991:417).

departing from this world.<sup>6</sup> It was not only the action itself that was magic: a similar significance was attached to the straw placed underneath the dying person. According to Fischer, the very structure of straw - its smoothness and lack of knots, which symbolize the bond (in this case) between body and soul, facilitate their severance. The same author states that similar properties were ascribed in Podhale to pea stems (Fischer 1921). He gives, however, no explanation. Means used to quicken the death also included herbs blessed on the Assumption Day (15 August) and a bell which had been blessed in church. It was believed to have "a supernatural power, because its owner had said certain special prayers over it. One rang the bell and the death came faster" (B 1944; Podhale). People would also remove the pillow from underneath the dying person's head, as it was thought that chicken feathers in the pillow could stand in death's way (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region).

Yet another magic form of behaviour was recorded in the early 20th century in the village of Czarny Dunajec (Podhale). When a farm-owner (*gazda*) was dying, people would wake up his cattle and bees "so that they would not depart together with their master" (Kantor 1907:141), and if the animals were grazing at the moment of their owner's death, they had to be sold immediately, or else "they would never thrive" (Kantor 1907:141). Similar customs and beliefs existed in the Nowy Sącz region (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985).

The third successive stage of the time of death comprises customs, rituals and practices that follow the death. The first things to do included covering the mirror "so that the corpse should not reflect" (MC; Podhale)<sup>7</sup> and stopping the clock "so that the dead person's heart should remain at rest" (MC; Podhale). An important duty of the person who kept vigil at the bedside of the dying person was to wake up all the other inhabitants. This custom may be related to the primeval belief that sleep was a momentary state of death, during which the soul left the body.<sup>8</sup> On its way, it was believed, it could encounter the soul of the deceased which might take it along into the other world. This is just one of several hypotheses that account for the necessity to wake up the dead person's family. Special forms of behaviour stemmed also from the belief that the soul remained in this world until the funeral day. Invisible, it observed the actions of the relatives. Thus some magic and religious practices were undertaken for fear that if the traditional rituals were not observed, the dead person might return and take revenge on the family. This also explains the prohibition of weeping and loud lamentation from the time the person was about to die until a certain moment after his or her death: otherwise, those outward manifestations of sorrow might have hindered the soul from going away forever.

<sup>6</sup> Described by Fischer (1921: 74, 80), who takes issue with Hortland's views.

<sup>7</sup> This is just one interpretation of the symbolic importance of mirrors, preserved in a highly simplified form. Following Kopaliński, we may add that by looking at the mirror, the dead person could spot another victim: "The mirror is a door through which the soul may pass to (and from) the other world" (Kopaliński 1991: 206-209). On this last interpretation, the mirror becomes a transition zone or a border between the two worlds.

<sup>8</sup> This accounts partly for the origin of the belief, inspired by Christian tradition, that a nightmare (*zmora*) might haunt the souls that have left the sleeping body at night. As regards the nightmare, see materials on demonology, Archives of the Ethnology Workgroup, Archaeology and Ethnology Department, Polish Academy of Sciences (items no. 1576, 1596, 1597, 1647, 1719).

The belief in the harmful properties of things that had come into contact with the dead was widespread in the Carpathian village at least until the mid-20th century. When the corpse had been washed by a person regularly hired for such jobs, the water was disposed of at some out-of-the-way place "where no one walked" (MC 1921; Podhale), taking care "that it did not get into the stream" (MC 1914; Podhale). People believed that the water in which a corpse had been washed acquired an evil power. A person who came into contact with such water "would wither like a corpse" (MC Podhale). Even before World War II a common thing to do was to burn the dead person's property. That was done on rational grounds: to avoid contagion or because the clothes or sheets were worn out. In most cases, however, this act had a magic significance, too, its purpose being to eradicate all the traces of the dead and "prevent the deceased person from coming back" (B 1924; Podhale). At the bottom of such practices was thus the fear of the dead. The use of fire to dispose of the dead person's belongings is explained both by the destructive power of flames and by the belief in the purifying properties of fire. The notion that contact with the dead person's possessions was dangerous - in terms of magic - to the living is attested to by the practice of making the fire "at some place, like a mountain slope, where few people pass by" (MC; Podhale).

The deceased person would next be dressed in their best clothes, or, as the case may be, in accordance with their wish made before death. During the period between the two World Wars, it was customary in Silesia to sew shirts for the dead. No knots were allowed when making such a shirt, and the needle was not to be used any more afterwards. Usually, it was left in the dead person's clothes, only to be removed on closing the coffin. It was believed that a person who carried such a needle was lucky at gambling (Malicki 1947).

It was important to make sure that all the wishes of the deceased were complied with and to remember about some of his or her favourite items to be taken to the other world. Were these to be forgotten, the person might wish to claim them and return. Thus, apart from the clothes, the dead person was provided with a prayer book, pictures of his or her favourite saints, a rosary (*korunka*), a handkerchief, sometimes a pipe, if he had been a smoker, a pair of glasses, a walking cane or even a violin bow if the person was a musician (Ząb; Podhale). Other things put in the coffin included herbs, money and so-called "baptism linen" (*krzcielne płótno*). All of these had distinct, magic functions.

The most important herb placed in the coffin was artemisia (*Artemisia abrotanum* L.), blessed on the Assumption Day and subsequently dried. A bunch of artemisia placed in the dead person's hands would serve to fend off the hell fire. Even though this custom was not observed by everyone, older women attached great importance to it, as is illustrated by the following quotation: "When my mother died, a neighbour came to pay her the last visit and saw there were no herbs in the coffin, so she got angry with me. I didn't have any artemisia so she fetched me some and I had to put it in the coffin" (Z; Podhale). For the sake of completeness, and to emphasize the persistence of certain customs, let me add that the event in question took place in 1992. Some informants interpret the functions of artemisia somewhat differently: "One gives artemisia to the dead for they need it do drive the devil away" (Z 1928; Podhale), or "The soul

stays at St. Gertrude's place for the night and the soul uses the branch to keep her dog away" (Z 1905; Podhale). Instead of artemisia, one occasionally used bluebells (*Campanulla*) for the same magic purpose - to protect the soul from evil spirits. One of the informants says that her grandmother (who died in 1982 at the age of 92) wanted "blue flowers, that is, bluebells, blessed on the Assumption Day" placed in her coffin after death (B 1944; Podhale).

Equally important, from the point of view of magic, were coins put on the eyelids of the dead. This custom was practised in Silesia, and in Podhale it persisted well into the 1980s. It was motivated by the fear that with half-open eyes, the dead might "catch sight" of a relative, thus causing that person to die soon afterwards. It was believed that leaving the dead with one eye half-open posed a threat to some more distant family member, and if both eyes were left that way, it would be a close relative that the dead might take along to the other world.

Another interesting custom, whose interpretation is not entirely clear, is the placing of so-called "baptism linen" or a piece of clothing made thereof in the coffin. This custom is still remembered and sporadically practised in Podhale. A child would receive from its godmother at baptism a piece of white linen several metres long, which was put inside the christening set. Afterwards, it was either cut into nappies, or carefully folded and stored in a chest. When a maiden was to get married, she used the cloth to make a shirt or a petticoat, which she would keep until death to be buried in. This custom is still alive among older women, as is confirmed by informants: "I kept this linen since baptism and had a petticoat made of it for my wedding. When I die, they'll dress me in it for the funeral" (Z 1928; Podhale). If the linen was not used in any way during the owner's lifetime, it would be placed in the coffin in its original form. The magic and religious significance of "baptism linen" can be explained, to a certain degree, by its sacred properties acquired in the course of the baptism ceremony, which allowed it to avert all kinds of evil.

The corpse was put in the so-called white chamber (*biała izba*), which was the room used for special family or festive occasions only. On the one hand, this was a token of respect for the dead person and, on the other, offered a more convenient place to receive relatives and neighbours, and keep a vigil at the corpse. The body rested on wooden boards covered with a sheet. If a coffin had been bought in advance, the corpse would be placed therein immediately. Typically, however - during the period between the two World Wars - one had to wait for the coffin as it was being made by the local carpenter. The boards were subsequently thrown away or, more frequently, burnt, as they were considered to be impure because of the contact with the dead body.

One should mention at this point a custom which has disappeared in Podhale by now. It was concerned with the wooden shavings left after the making of the coffin, which were once used as a sign of death and a supplication for prayer. They were usually left at some busy place and weighted down with a stone so that they would not be blown away by wind. Fischer provides evidence from the village of Czarny Dunajec in Podhale showing that the shavings were left there in front of the deceased person's house as late as in the 20th century. He interprets this as a warning sign for the passers-

by, for it was believed that the house where a corpse lay was impure and was thus best avoided (Fischer 1921).

The time when the corpse remained at home allowed the inhabitants to become accustomed, to a certain degree, to the phenomenon of death and to the dead body. The beliefs associated with the ritual keeping of the corpse at home for three days point at a psychological explanation of the observed forms of behaviour. People thought that by staying close to the body or even by touching it, one could overcome the fear of the dead: "They come, they want to see the dead body, touch it and gain their peace of mind - they will not be afraid of the deceased person any more" (B 1925; Podhale).

124 Stage four of the time of death begins when the corpse leaves home. This period was also marked by many irrational forms of behaviour, explicable mostly on the grounds of the fear of the dead coming back. Thus before the body left the home for good, the bearers of the coffin would touch every doorstep with it three times: "At every doorstep they stop and put it down for a while" (Z 1928; Podhale). This ritual was accompanied by the words, uttered in the name of the deceased person: "God be with you" (Z 1928; Podhale).

The custom described above,<sup>9</sup> which is still practised in the Podhale villages under study and in other regions, obviously reflected the fear of the deceased person and meant more than just a symbolic parting of the dead with the relatives and home. It also provided a guarantee for the living that by solemn observance of the traditional norm, they would ensure a peaceful eternal rest for the deceased and an untroubled existence for themselves. The parting was repeated, as described above, at every doorstep, which provided a symbolic border between the inner and outer worlds, or, in this case, between home and the unknown. As this ritual was being performed, the coffin was left for a short while in a state of suspension and the deceased person was led out of the world of the living but not yet quite to the world of the dead.

That ritual parting of the dead with home and family was already practised centuries ago, even though it was considered then to be a form of witchcraft for which one could stand trial in court.<sup>10</sup> Despite the possible sanctions, it has survived to this day, which attests to the ever-present fear of the dead. During the period between the two World Wars, when the coffin was being carried out of the house, relatives and friends of the widow moved the seats (*lawy*) about so that she might be able to remarry. At the same time the cattle were fed, so as to ensure they would thrive (Malicki 1947).

No less important than the parting ritual was the proper way of carrying the coffin out of the house - feet first: "They carry the dead man feet first; maybe it's because he's leaving for good that they do this" (Z 1925; Podhale). Such positioning of the

<sup>9</sup> The ritual parting of the deceased with their house is described by anthropologists as "separation rites" which consist in the so-called "killing of the corpse". It is followed by further practices whose aim is to sever all emotional relations with the dead (*Księga* 1993: 219, 411).

<sup>10</sup> In his account of witchcraft trials connected with the rites practised at the doorstep, Zborowski gives a different interpretation of this custom, namely, that such practices were meant to prevent the dead "from taking someone else along" (Zborowski 1932: 74). It seems less convincing, especially in view of the previously mentioned symbolic properties of the doorstep.

corpse was an unequivocal indication of its ultimate and irrevocable exit. In Polish, there is a colloquial expression widely used to refer euphemistically to someone's death: "He left feet first" means "He died".

The next magic practice performed when the coffin had been carried away consisted in knocking over the chairs on which the coffin had been placed "so that the dead person would not return" (B 1934; Podhale). This precaution, which was also taken in the Nowy Sącz region, can be seen as a symbolic disruption of the order the dead person was accustomed to. Thus the deceased who sought to return from the other world would not recognize the old place and go away, leaving the inhabitants alone. Should the dead succeed in returning, the family would be exposed to the danger of a new death. This is one of the reasons why the empty space left by the dead person had to be filled up as soon as possible. Such was the interpretation given in Podhale: "They knocked over the chairs so that there would be no new corpse, no room for it. Sometimes they still do it" (B 1924).

Another form of behaviour motivated by magic had to do with arousing the livestock when the body was being carried away: "Someone will go to the cowshed, prod at the cows and replace their chains so that they would not follow him [the deceased]" (Z 1905; Podhale). Moreover, the previously mentioned belief in animals' capacity to sense the approaching death is supplemented by accounts of unusual behaviour of animals in time of their master's death: "When my brother-in-law and my sister died, the cows lowed loudly as they carried the coffin away; and a dog will always keep howling at such moments, until they are gone with the coffin" (MC; Podhale).

Between the two World Wars it was customary in the Nowy Sącz region to pour a pail full of water on the wheels of the cart that carried the coffin away. The pail being normally used for milk, this practice was believed to prevent the dead person from depriving the cows of their milk by witchcraft (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985).

The mourning procession would proceed from church to the cemetery, where the final parting usually took place, to the accompaniment of the church bells. On the one hand, the knell informed the community about the death and conveyed an obligation to say a prayer for the dead. On the other hand, this sound was meant to keep away the soul of the deceased, which, it was believed, would hover round and take part in the funeral until the body was buried. According to folk beliefs, any kind of noise could drive away spirits and evil powers. In this particular case, the ringing of bells was meant to force the soul to take leave of its family for ever. It should be added that the bell whose sound announced death could not be used for any other religious ceremonies or magic practices, such as dispersing hail clouds. If sounded in such circumstances, it would not only fail to achieve the desired result but might even make matters worse.

The funeral procession never went through the fields, as it was believed that it would make the soil barren. Likewise, the cart with the coffin should never be drawn by a mare in foal, since her offspring might be affected (Kowalska-Lewicka 1985; the Nowy Sącz region). The examples of magic and/or religious practices presented above attest to a deep-rooted conviction among village dwellers that the deceased and all kinds of objects associated with them in any way whatsoever exert a harmful influence



on the surroundings. Laying the deceased to his or her eternal rest was the last episode of the time of death. The subsequent stage - mourning - was also permeated with magic and religious themes, but not to such a degree. Together with the ceremonies and rituals it included, the multi-stage time of death was intended to fulfil all the obligations towards the deceased in the spirit one's religion. Most of all, however, its function was to protect the living against those who had departed for good. A system devised for the dead served the needs of the living.

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The materials used in the present study come from the Archives of the Ethnology Workgroup, Department of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow: items no. 1556, 1576, 1596, 1597, 1647, 1697, 1717, 1719, 1751, 1761, 1763, 1780, 1788, 1795, 1796.

BESEDA O AVTORICI

Urszula Lehr, dr., je diplomirala na Univerzi Jagellon v Krakovu (etnografija). Trenutno dela na Poljski akademiji znanosti v Krakovu, na Oddelku za arheologijo in etnologijo, v delovni skupini za etnologijo. Njeni glavni akademski interesi so na področju raziskav (temelječih na terenskem delu) demonologije in družinskih obredov v Karpatih, po letu 1998 pa se ukvarja tudi z ljudskim verovanjem o starosti. Objavljala je tako dela o psiholoških, socialnih in religioznih aspektih demonoloških verovanj kot tudi o družinskih šegah.

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# OD POSTELJE DO POKOPALIŠČA ZGODBA O MRLIŠKEM VOZU

Inja Smerdel

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127

**Ključne besede:** Slovenija, transport, vozovi, mrliči, odnosi

Pričujoče besedilo sega na področje ene izmed povečini obrobno obravnavanih kulturnih sestavin, kakršno pomeni transport umrlih. S poskusom strnjenja niza zapisanih védenj o prenašanju in prevažanju umrlih na slovenskem podeželju v 20. stoletju prinaša nekaj splošnejših odgovorov na vprašanja o fizičnem preseljevanju iz tostranskih bivališč v onstranska. Besedilo sklene zgodba o mrliškem vozu iz Smlednika pri Ljubljani in o njegovem vzniku; sicer posamezen zapis, vendar poln zgovornih odse-  
vov dveh osnovnih odnosov do smrti – strahu in pietete.

Trenutek smrti je tudi na Slovenskem, tako kot v mnogih drugih družbah in kulturah, stoletja pomenil ločitev fizisa in metafizisa, telesa in duše. Obdajala so ga dejanja pred tem in dejanja okoli mrliča vse do njegovega pokopa, ki so bila povečini obredna, apotropajska, namenjena še posebej čim lažjemu prehodu duše iz sveta živih v svet senc in temu, da bi se duša iz onega sveta ne vračala. Odsevala so odnos do umrlih, v katerem so se prepletali strah, pieteta in verovanja v čudežno moč.

Metafizičnemu odhodu duše umrlega v vice, nebesa ali pekel, njeni selitvi v takšen ali drugačen Hades, ki jo je marsikje na Slovenskem še vse do zadnjega časa vsaj kot navado označevalo na primer odpiranje oken (Orel, 1944, 305; Smerdel, 1980, 135; Ložar Podlogar, 1980, 163), je sledilo fizično potovanje trupla; od postelje, v kateri je pokojnik izdihnil, do pokopališča oziroma do groba kot njegovega onstranskega doma. Začetek mrličeve selitve iz tostranske postelje, v kateri ali nad katero – na mrtvaškem odru - je najprej dan ali dva ležal, je pomenila njegova premestitev v krsto, v njegovo poslednjo posteljo. Ta je bila na Slovenskem največkrat črna – za poročene, bela – za otroke in za “mlada dekleta”, glede na gmotni položaj umrlega bolj ali manj okrašana in nemalokrat tudi kar doma izdelana iz grobega nepobarvanega lesa (Smerdel, 1980, 137; Makarovič, 1985, 275; Oder, 1992, 262). V krsti kot poslednji postelji so potem praznje oblečenega mrliča prenesli ali prepeljali od doma do groba; iz vasi – naselja živih, do pokopališča – mesta mrtvih.

Transport umrlega je bil na Slovenskem pogosto že del pogreba, obreda pokopavanja; zlasti v primerih, ko je bil dom, ki ga je mrlič zapuščal, v bližini pokopališča. Od bližine oziroma od oddaljenosti pokopališča je bilo povečini tudi odvisno, ali so umrle nosili ali peljali in s čim so jih peljali. Bistvene spremembe glede transporta umrlih sta prinesli šele izgradnja in splošneje uveljavljena raba mrliških vežic – posamezne se omenjajo ob koncu 19. stoletja (Terčelj, 1989, 20), ponekod v mestih ter njim bližnjih vaseh v letih po drugi svetovni vojni in ponekod drugod v zadnjih dveh desetletjih (Pajsar, Židov, 1991, 171; Oder, 1992, 262; Tome Marinac, 1994, 200; Terčelj, 1989, 171; Fister, 1985, 140; Balkovec, 1994, 235) – ki je prenašanje oziroma prevažanje umrlih skrčila na kratkotrajno, uradno, brezosebno porivanje mrliškega vozička. Kljub nezadržnemu uveljavljanju vežic pa v mnogih bolj odmaknjenih vaseh mrtvi ponavadi do pogreba še vedno ležijo doma.

Redki objavljeni zapisi o prenašanju umrlih na Slovenskem pričajo, da so krsto na pogrebu skoraj praviloma nosili nesorodniki; ti so tudi sicer na dan pogreba opravljali večino del okrog mrliča. Na Koroškem kot nosače krste omenjajo sosede (Oder, 1992, 264), v Beli krajini sosede oziroma “prve sosede, ki so tudi izkopali grob” (Makarovič, 1985, 276), in v slovenski Istri tiste štiri sovaščane, ki so kopali “bužo”, grob, vnuke, če umreta “nono” ali “nona”, in vaške fante v spremstvu v belo oblečenih deklet, če umre mlad fant (Smerdel, 1980, 137).

Nadomestna možnost za prenašanje je bila v primerih oddaljenosti pokopališč nedvomno že od nekdaj prevažanje umrlih z vozom s konjsko ali z drugo živinsko vprego in v zadnjih desetletjih tudi z drugimi vozili.

Za okolico Raven na Koroškem je tako na primer sporočeno, da so konec 19. stoletja iz bolj oddaljenih krajev krsto peljali na vozu s konjsko vprego, v 70-ih letih tega stoletja so ponekod za prevoz do odmaknjenih pokopališč uporabljali traktor in gasilski avtomobil, v 50-ih letih pa naj bi krste začeli splošno voziti, in sicer v dolini s “totnbognom”, z mrliškim vozom, v hribih pa kar z lojtrskim vozom (Oder, 1992, 264). Iz zapisa iz Strojne na Koroškem je mogoče razbrati, da so tam krsto še leta po drugi svetovni vojni nosili ali vozili z vozom, vse do zadnjih let, ko jo peljejo s traktorjem (Makarovič, 1982, 297). Besedilo iz Bele krajine, iz okolice Metlike, pa na primer sporoča, da so krsto “pozneje” vozili z mrliškim vozom, “zdaj pa tudi z mrliškim avtomobilom, furgonom” (Balkovec, 1994, 235).

Posebno pozornost kaže nameniti še prevažanju umrlih v zimskem času. Iz življenja odmaknjenih samotnih gorskih kmetij v takem času na primer obstajajo posamezna ustna pričevanja (terenski zapisi avtorice, Arhiv SEM), kako s svojimi morebitnimi mrliči niso zmogli poti do nižje ležečih pokopališč, temveč so jih morali do pomladi ohranjati na hladnem, zakopane v snegu. Kjer je bilo to mogoče, so umrle od doma do groba drugače nedvomno tudi pozimi nosili ali jih peljali z vozom ali s sanmi, v katere so bili vpregli živino.

Na Blokah, v Vidovskih hribih in v delu sosednjega dolenskega ozemlja pa je pri pogrebu v zimskem času za obdobje do druge svetovne vojne izpričana posebnost – raba smučī ali sani s podloženimi smučī (Orel, 1964, 71). Bločani in Vidovci tako svojih starodavnih smučī niso uporabljali le za hojo in za drsanje. Služile so jim tudi kot

prevozno sredstvo, s katerim so prevažali svoje umrle: kot zasilno prevozno sredstvo oziroma nadomestilo za sani in kot pomožni sestavni del pri saneh. V prvem primeru so krsto z mrličem položili kar na dve letvici, ki sta počez povezovali nekaj daljši par smučī, oziroma na podložene deske in jo nanju privezali. Tako so prepeljali umrle zlasti v hribovitejših krajih. V drugem primeru so vzeli manjše otroške sani, pod njihove bose krivine pribili primerno široke in dolge smučī, na sanke so položili eno ali dve dolgi deski in vrh njiju krsto, ki so jo s sanmi dvakrat prevezali z vrvjo. Na ta način so vozili svoje mrlīce še posebej na položnejših Blokah. Povsod v omenjenih krajih pa raba smučī pri pogrebu ni bila vsakdanja. Vanjo so bili primorani le v primerih izredno hudih snežnih razmer ali terenskih ovir (Orel, 1964, 71-74).

Poskus strnjenja skopih zapisov o prevažanju umrlih na Slovenskem lahko dosega zgolj raven sporočil, da so krste z mrlīci od doma do groba tu in tam pač prepeljali, in navedb, s katerimi prevoznimi sredstvi so jih vozili. Zato se zdi ob koncu mikavno ubesediti zgodbo o enem samem prevoznem sredstvu (ki je postalo muzejski predmet; hrani ga SEM); gre za pripoved o mrlškem vozu iz Smlednika in o njegovem vzniku, ki razkriva nekatere bolj povedne vsebinske razsežnosti prevažanja umrlih.

Že sam pojav mrlškega voza je v tem pogledu pomenil nekaj novega. Za vsa druga vozila (razen novejših furgonov), za lojtrske in druge vozove, za traktorje in gasilske avtomobile je namreč mogoče zapisati, da je bilo prevažanje mrlīcev le njihova sekundarna, zgolj občasna funkcija. Šele mrlški vozovi s svojo zgovorno obliko in slavnostno podobo so bili temu nedvoumno v osnovi namenjeni. Zato je bil za skupnost, ki je posamezen mrlški voz uporabljala, njegov pomen nedvoumno precejšen.



Mrlški voz iz Smlednika pri Ljubljani (foto I. Smerdel). ♦ Hearse from Smlednik near Ljubljana (photo I. Smerdel).

Lastniki smledniškega mrliškega voza (imenovanega po kraju, v katerem so ga pod cerkveno lopo nazadnje hranili in iz katerega je bil leta 1988 prepeljan v muzej) so bili farani nekdanje smledniške fare, prebivalci vasi Pirniče, Vikrče, Zavrh, Verje in Smlednik. Kot kaže, so sredi 50-ih let soglasno ugotovili, da želijo imeti za prevažanje svojih umrlih mrliški voz. Zanj naj bi zbirali denar prav vsi. Potem so v Vižmarjih pri Ljubljani naročili njegovo izdelavo, in sicer pri treh uglednih vižmarskih mojstrih – kolarju, kovaču in sedlarju. Pripovedovali so, da je mrliški voz, imenitna črna kočija, leta 1957 ponosno zapeljal na cesto. Voznika zanj pa niso našli kar takoj. Poleg ustreznega para konj je moral imeti izbrani mož tudi voljo za opravilo, kakršnega pomeni prevažati mrliče. In takega dela ni bil pripravljen sprejeti prav vsak.

130

Voz je nazadnje zapeljal v lopo največje vikrške kmetije pri Bačniku (Vikrče 28). Njen gospodar, tedaj triindvajsetletni Franc Trojanšek (r. 1934), je imel zanj v hlevu primeren par temnih slavonskih konj in skorajda v usodo vdan odnos do dela, ki ga nekdo pač mora opravljati. O takem odnosu priča preprost stavek, s katerim se je Bačnik branil pred pomisleki druge žene, ki si jo je leta 1980 kot vdovec pripeljal v hišo, in so veljali njegovemu prevažanju mrličev: “Sej veš – eden mora.”

Iz ženinih pomislekov je prepoznavno velj strah pred umrlimi, pred smrtjo, ki jo je poosebljal črn mrliški voz. Ko ga je ob prihodu na novi dom prvič uzrla, je kar zakričala. In na Bačnikovi domačiji ni bila edina, ki se je črnega voza bala. Po opravljenih pogrebniških vožnjah so se vsi branili njegovega čiščenja, a ne zaradi morebitne lenobe. “Kdo ga je pucal? Eden družga smo gledal – kir ga bo.”

Kaže, da je za vsako delo treba najti pravega človeka. Bačnik je vsekakor poseben človek, ki še dandanes (zapisano leta 1988), v času skoraj popolne mehanizacije kmečkih del, na veliki kmetiji nedaleč od Ljubljane še ni sedel na traktor, temveč mirno, preudarno vozi in orje s parom konj. Tako mirno in vdano je vse do pred nekaj leti prevažal tudi umrle. Ponje se je odpravljal v vse vasi smledniške fare ter celo na Marjeto in v Žlebe. Iz domačih hiš jih je prevažal na pokopališča v Smlednik, v Soro in v Šmartno. Ponj niso prihajali le svojci tistih umrlih, ki so živeli v neposredni bližini pokopališč in so krste s pokojniki nanje kar nosili.

Bačnik je bil pripravljen zapreči svoja črna slavonska konja ob vsakem času in ob vsakem vremenu; takoj ko so prišli ponj iz hiše, v kateri je kdo umrl. Vrancema je nadel plašnice, “ta boljša” komata in že se je odpravil. Kot tuzemeljski Haron je za selitev mrličev od doma do groba njihovim svojcem zaračunal skromno brodarino. (Leta 1980 je na primer za vožnjo v Žlebe in od tam na pokopališče računal le petdeset tisoč dinarjev.) Plačilo je moralo biti sprejemljivo za vsakogar. Poslednja vožnja s črno kočijo, z imenitnim smledniškim mrliškim vozom, namreč nikakor ni bila socialni privilegij.

Povednost zgodbe o mrliškem vozu je tako še posebej v naslednjem:

- ◆ Iz nje je mogoče razbrati skrben odnos skupnosti do vseh umrlih – najsibo sosedov, sovaščanov ali okoličanov – oziroma do njihovih svojcev, ne glede na njihov gmotni ali družbeni položaj.
- ◆ Samo dejstvo, da so pogrebno kočijo sploh želeli imeti, morda sporoča uveljavljenost religioznega prepričanja o tostranskem trpljenju in onstranskem bolj-

šem življenju. S poslovilno vožnjo na imenitnem mrlškem vozu so morda želeli narediti prehod svojih praznje oblečenih umrlih – iz tega na oni, boljši svet – še posebno svečan.

- ◆ Tako skrben odnos skupnosti do svojih umrlih in do njihovih svojcev kot svečana selitev na oni svet izpričujeja enega izmed obeh osnovnih odnosov do smrti – pieteto. Drugega, strah – je mogoče prepoznati v nelagodnem obnašanju smledniških faranov ob iskanju voznika za skupen mrlški voz in v še bolj nelagodnem počutju Bačnikovih najbližjih, ki so črno kočijo doživljali kot poosebljeno smrt.
- ◆ V nasprotju z odnosom njegovih domačih in širše skupnosti pa je mogoče pri Bačniku zaslutiti drugačen odnos do smrti. Kot izrazito tradicionalen kmečki človek je smrt sprejemal analogno z naravnimi dogajanji – kot samoumevno sklenitev življenjskega kroga.
- ◆ In končno je mogoče zapisati, da je pripoved o smledniškem mrlškem vozu in o njegovem vozniku zgodba o posebnem posamezniku, ki je s svojima vrancema in s črno mrlško kočijo v skupnosti vasi nekdanje smledniške fare pomenil nedvomno svojsko pogrebno ustanovo.

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## FROM BED TO CEMETERY THE STORY OF A HEARSE

Inja Smerdel

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132

**Key words:** *Slovenia, transport, the dead, hearses, attitudes*

The present text tackles the domain of a largely marginally treated cultural element - the transportation of the dead. It is an attempt to outline a range of written information on carrying and transporting of the deceased in the Slovene countryside in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and offers some answers of a more general nature to questions on the physical transfer from people's worldly dwellings to those of the other world. The final part of the text tells the story of a hearse from Smlednik near Ljubljana and its driver. Though referring to a singular record it nevertheless contains many telling reflections of two fundamental attitudes toward death - fear and piety.

In Slovenia as in many other societies and cultures the moment of death had for centuries implied the separation of *physis* and *metaphysis*, of body and soul. It was accompanied by activities before burial and around the body that were largely of a ritual, apotropaist nature aimed primarily at alleviating the soul's transition from the world of the living to the world of shadows, and also at ensuring that the soul would not return from the other world. These activities reflected the attitude toward the dead in which fear, piety and beliefs in magical power were interwoven.

The metaphysical departure of the deceased's soul to purgatory, heaven or hell and its transfer to some or other Hades was in many places in Slovenia until quite recently as a rule denoted by opening the windows (Orel, 1944, 305; Smerdel, 1980, 135; Ložar Podlogar, 1980, 163). This was then followed by the physical journey of the body from the bed, in which the deceased had passed away, to the cemetery or the grave - its home in the other world. The deceased's transfer from his earthly bed in or above which (on a bier) he or she had rested started by being laid in coffin - the ultimate bed. In Slovenia the coffin was mostly black - for those who had been married or white for children and for "young girls" and, depending on the means of the deceased, more or less ornamented. Quite often coffins were home-made from rough unpainted wood (Smerdel, 1980, 137; Makarovič, 1985, 275; Oder, 1992, 262). In the coffin as the deceased's ultimate bed the

formally dressed body was carried or driven from his home to the grave, from the village - the settlement of the living - to the cemetery - the home of the dead.

The transportation involved was in Slovenia often part of the funeral, of the burial ritual; especially in those cases where the home which the deceased left behind was close to the cemetery. And it also generally depended on the distance to the cemetery whether the deceased was carried or driven and, when driven, by what means of transportation. Major changes to the transportation of the dead followed the building and later common use of funeral chapels - a few are mentioned toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Terčelj, 1989, 20) - in some towns and surrounding villages in the years after the Second World War and in some places elsewhere in the past two decades (Pajsar, Židov, 1991, 171; Oder, 1992, 262; Tome Marinac, 1994, 200; Terčelj, 1989, 171; Fister, 1985, 140; Balkovec, 1994, 235). Their existence reduced the carrying or transportation of the dead to the brief, formal and impersonal pushing of the funeral cart. Despite the general spread of funeral chapels the dead still rest at their homes until the funeral in many a remote village.

The scarce published records on carrying the dead in Slovenia tell us that at a funeral the coffin was as a rule carried by non-relatives, and the same people took care of most of the jobs related to the body. In Koroška neighbours are mentioned as coffin bearers (Oder, 1992, 264), in Bela krajina neighbours or "the closest neighbours, who also dug out the grave" (Makarovič, 1985, 276), and in Slovene Istria four co-villagers who dug out the *buža* (grave) or the grandchildren when a *nono* or *nona* (grandfather or grandmother) had died or, when a young lad had died, the lads of the village accompanied by girls dressed in white (Smerdel, 1980, 137).

In those cases where the cemetery was far away an alternative to carrying has undoubtedly always been provided by transportation of the dead on a cart drawn by a horse or another domestic animal. And the last decades other means of transportation have spread.

Related to the environs of Ravne na Koroškem a record states, for example, that around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century coffins were transported from more distant places on a horse-drawn cart; in the 1970s the transport to distant cemeteries was in some places performed by means of a tractor or fire engine, and in the 1950s coffins were generally transported in valleys on a *totnbogen*, a hearse, and in the mountains even on an open-frame wooden handcart (Oder, 1992, 264). A record from Strojna in Koroška reveals, that for many years after the Second World War and until the quite recent use of a tractor coffins were either carried or transported on a cart (Makarovič, 1982, 297). A written source from the environs of Metlika in Bela krajina on the other hand tells us that coffins were "later" driven on a hearse and "nowadays also in a motor hearse" (Balkovec, 1994, 235).

The transportation of the dead in winter time deserves special attention. Individual oral records related to life on remote, solitary mountain farms (author's field notes, SEM archives) refer to times when it was impossible to reach the cemetery which was situated far below: the bodies were preserved until spring by burying them in the snow. But wherever it was possible in winter the dead were undoubtedly carried from their



home to the grave or transported on a cart or sleigh drawn by a horse or other domestic animal.

Related to Bloke, the Vidovci hills and to a part of the adjacent area of Dolenjsko records indicate that a funeral held in winter during the period up to the Second World War was marked by the particular use of skis or of a sleigh mounted on skis (Orel, 1964, 71). The people of Bloke and Vidovci thus did not use their ancient skis just for walking and gliding, but also used as a means of transportation to transfer the dead, as a provisional means of transportation or alternative to sleighs or as an accessory to a sleigh. In the first case the coffin containing the deceased was laid on two boards, cross-connected by a pair of long skis, or on underlain planks to which the coffin was tied. This is the way the dead were generally transported in mountainous areas. In the other case a children's sleigh was used and adequately wide and long skis were nailed to the bends not covered by the metal face. On top of the sleigh one or two long boards were fixed and the coffin was tied to the sleigh with two ropes. This is how the dead were generally transported in the more level regions of Bloke. But the use of skis at a funeral was, however, not common in the places mentioned above. It was a solution people resorted to only in cases of exceptionally high snow or other natural obstacles (Orel, 1964, 71-74).

This attempt to summarise the scarce records on the transportation of the dead in Slovenia can achieve hardly more than conveying the message that in some places coffins were driven from the deceased's home to the grave and, further, to mention which means of transportation were used to that purpose. It therefore appears interesting to relate the story of a particular means of transportation (which became a museum object and is kept by SEM). It is the story of the Smlednik hearse and its driver, a story which reveals some significant and essential dimensions of the transportation of the dead.

The arrival of the hearse was in this respect something new in its own right. About the other vehicles (except for the more recent motor hearses) - open-frame wooden carts and other carts, tractors and fire engines it is safe to say that the transportation of the dead was only a secondary, occasional function. Only hearses were by their proverbial forms and ceremonial appearance undoubtedly intended exclusively for this purpose. To a community which used a hearse of its own its significance was no doubt considerable.

The owners of the Smlednik hearse (the name derives from the place where it was kept in a shed belonging to the local church, from which it was taken to the museum in 1988) were the parishioners of the former Smlednik parish - the inhabitants of the villages of Pirniče, Vikrče, Zavrh, Verje and Smlednik. It is said that in the mid-1950s they agreed that the community required a hearse to transport the dead. All parishioners contributed money for it. The hearse was commissioned in Vižmarje near Ljubljana and involved three renowned master craftsmen - a wheelwright, a smith and a saddle-maker. The story goes that the hearse, a splendid black coach was proudly taken to the road in 1957. But it took some time to find a driver. Beside a suitable pair of horses the chosen person had to be willing to carry out this particular job - the transportation of the dead. It certainly was not something the first man around wanted to do.

The hearse was finally taken to the shed of the biggest farm in Vikrče, called "Bačnik's" (28 Vikrče). Its owner, the then twenty-three year old Franc Trojanšek (born

1934) had in his stables a suitable pair of black Slavonic horses and, what is more, the proper resigned attitude that it was just a job someone had to take care of. This attitude of his is confirmed by the plain sentence Bačnik used when facing his second wife's apprehensions - he was a widower until he married her in 1980 - about his transporting the dead: "You know, dear, somebody's got to do it".

His wife's apprehensions reveal an apparent fear of the dead, of death itself as embodied by the black hearse. When she first laid eyes on it at her new home, she even screamed. And she was not the only one at Bačnik's who dreaded the black coach. After its funeral runs everybody tried to dodge cleaning the hearse but this had nothing to do with laziness. "Who cleaned it? We just stood around, looking at each other and waiting for the other guy to do it."

It appears that for every job the right person has to be found. Bačnik was no doubt a particular breed: even today (written in 1988) when all jobs on a farm are mechanised, he has never mounted a tractor on his big farm close to Ljubljana, but continues to quietly and prudently drive and plough with a pair of horses. As quietly and resigned as he used to transport the dead until a few years ago. His rides took him to all the villages of the Smednik parish and even as far as Marjeta and Žlebe. From the homes of the deceased he took their bodies to the cemeteries in Smednik, Sora and Šmartno. The only people who did not turn to him for his services were the relatives of deceased people who lived close to the cemetery and who carried the coffin with the deceased themselves.

Bačnik was always ready to harness his black Slavonic horses at any time and in any weather as soon as someone came to him from a house in which someone had died. He put the blinkers on his black horses, their "Sunday" collars and on his way he was. Like a worldly Charon he charged a quite modest fee to the relatives for transporting the deceased from his or her home to the grave. (In 1980 he charged only fifty-thousand dinars for the ride to Žlebi and from there to the cemetery.) The fee indeed had to be within everybody's reach. A man's ultimate journey in Bačnik's coach - the magnificent Smednik hearse - was not by any means a social privilege.

The significance of the story of the hearse lies above all in the following considerations:

- ◆ It tells us about the conscientious attitude of a community toward all the deceased, whether neighbours, co-villagers or people from the village's environs, as well as their relatives, irrespectively of their financial or social status.
- ◆ The mere fact that they actually wanted to have a hearse of their own is perhaps related to the common religious beliefs about suffering this side of the grave and about a better life on the other side of it. The farewell journey on a splendid hearse was perhaps their idea of making the transition of their solemnly dressed deceased to the other and better world something particularly ceremonial.
- ◆ Such a dedicated attitude from a community toward the dead and toward their relatives witnesses as does the ceremonial transfer to the other world to one of the two fundamental attitudes toward death - piety. The other one - fear - can perhaps be traced in the uneasy approach of the parishioners of Smed-

nik when searching for a driver for the community's hearse and in the even more obvious apprehensions of Bačnik's family, who saw the black coach as the embodiment of death.

- ◆ Contrary to the attitude of his family and to that of the wider community we can sense a different attitude toward death in Bačnik himself. Being a remarkably traditional peasant he accepted death as all other natural occurrences - as the natural end to a life's circle.
- ◆ And finally, we may well conclude that the story of the Smlednik hearse and of its driver is that of a particular individual who with his black horses and black hearse was an undertaker *avant-la-lettre* in the community of the former Smlednik parish.

SOURCES AND LITERATURE see page 131

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Inja Smerdel, mag., etnologinja, direktorica Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja od julija 1995, je bila pred tem kustodinja za ruralno gospodarstvo v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju (od leta 1980) in glavna urednica znanstvene publikacije *Etnolog* (1991-95). Po preučevanju nekaterih pojavov množične kulture (stenskega okrasja in godbe na pihala) se je v preteklem desetletju in pol posvečala zlasti raziskovanju različnih gospodarsko kulturnih prvin: soseskine gospodarske samouprave, del ob spravilu žitnega pridelka, ovčarstva s selitveno pašo, ptičjega lova, nazadnje oselnikov in košnje.

Med objavljenimi razpravami in članki, izmed katerih jih nekaj izpričuje tudi njene muzeološke poglede, sta pomembnejši deli: *Ovčarstvo na Pivki, Transhumanca od srede 19. do srede 20. stoletja ali Trije »ovčarji«* (Koper, 1989) in *Oselniki: zbirka SEM* (Ljubljana, 1994).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Inja Smerdel, M.A., ethnologist and director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum since July 1995. Prior to her appointment as director she was curator of rural economy in the museum (since 1980) and chief editor of the scientific periodical *Etnolog* (1991-95). After initial studies of mass-culture phenomena (wall decorations and brass bands) her research efforts of the past fifteen years concentrated on the cultural elements of economic activities: economic self-management of a village, harvesting jobs, sheep-farming and transhumance, bird-catching, and, most recently, whetstone holders and the hay harvest. Noticeable among her treatises and articles, some of which also reveal her views on museum issues, are *Sheep-farming in Pivka, Transhumance from the Middle of 19<sup>th</sup> to the Middle of 20<sup>th</sup> Century or The Three "Sheep-masters"* (Koper, 1989) and *Whetstone Holders*, published in the series of SEM (Ljubljana, 1994).

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# ABOUT THE CUSTOM OF REPEATED (DOUBLE) BURIAL

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Branko Đaković

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137

## IZVLEČEK

### **O šegi ponovnega (dvojnega) pokopa**

Za današnje vsakdanje življenje sta značilna obstoj in praksa novih obredov, zlasti kadar se ti nanašajo na spremembe v družbenem in političnem življenju. Prekopavanje in prevoz posmrtnih ostankov pomembnih in kulturnih oseb v povezavi z dvojnimi pokopom v kraju rojstva pomenita pravzaprav prenašanje starih kulturnih vzorcev, prilagojenih novim kulturnim (in ne le kulturnim) kontekstom. V ciklusu posmrtnih in pogrebnih šeg, pri ponovljenem oziroma "dvojnem" pokopu, je imel izkop poseben pomen, tako kot tudi "srečanje" in "videnje" umrlega. Natančno ime šege s tako kompleksno strukturo in vsebino ni jasno. Medkulturni podatki potrjujejo razširjenost obredov, povezanih s to šego, in potrjujejo njen univerzalni antropološki kontekst.

Podatki za območje južnih Slovanov potrjujejo, da je bila na tem območju šega dvojnega pokopa znana že v prvi polovici devetega stoletja. Motiv za nastanek tega članka pa je bilo neobjavljeno gradivo Etnološkega atlasa Jugoslavije, ki so ga zbirali na Centru za etnološko kartografijo Oddelka za etnologijo Filozofske fakultete v Zagrebu. Iz zbranega gradiva lahko sklepamo, da je do dvojnih pokopov (s spremljajočimi obredi) prihajalo v časovnem razponu od 40 dni do 30 in več let. Razlogi in motivi za prekopavanje so bolj ali manj jasni. Pogosto je bil vzrok le pomanjkanje prostora, vedno pa je prekope spremljalo spoštovanje do ostankov umrlega. Po avtorjevem mnenju je ključ za razumevanje tega problema mogoče najti v raziskavah in zanesljivih interpretacijah obredov, ki so del procesa prekopavanja. Glede na to avtor omenja dve tradiciji:

1. izkop grobov, da bi preučili stanje trupla, povezan z verovanji o volkodlakih in vampirjih;
2. različni načini izražanja spoštovanja.

**Ključne besede:** šege, obredi, pogrebi, dvojni pokopi, vprašalniki

**Key words:** customs, rituals, funerals, double (repeated) burials, questionnaires

Double burial is one of syntagm which is used in ethnological standard and scientific literature to denote and include a custom of digging up posthumous remains after a definite time (after 40 days or after 10 or more years) and burying them again which is followed by different rituals. The notes from the literature used in this paper were a line of direction for the elaboration of the material from the ethnological Questionnaire, which was gathered for the ethnological Atlas of Yugoslavia in the sixties and seventies of this century.

138

The past war hardships and distractions unfortunately marked out the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the south Slavic territory. Unbelievable destruction did not pass by many sacred objects, even graves. There were much devastation of tombstones and other ways of desecration of graves. All this was motivated with irrational wish to exterminate the cultural, national and religious identity of the "enemy". This showed a complete negation of universal human values and man as the only being that buries his dead and pays them respect. In the meantime exhumation and transport of the posthumous remains (or relic) of persons of dignity and Saints from the near or past times was going on and become a sort of political and religious ritual. Scaffolds, charnel-houses and grave-yards were visited. Requiems and funeral services were held. Mass hysteria led to the celebration of god Tanatos. In the final act of this tragedy the defeated (as if all aren't defeated and losers), of both at war sides began to exhume old as well as new graves so that the posthumous remains of their deceased could be taken away from "ethnic-clean" territory.

This so called human transport showed its other side too, the inhuman.

All these events and relations towards contemporaries, ancestors and entire heritage showed in a tragic way that this is in fact a transmission of old cultural patterns into a new social and cultural context.

In the cycle of posthumous customs the ethnologists during their research come to interesting cognitions. Some of this cannot be entirely explained and some questions ask for other answers, but in fact it is not possible to deny the positive attitude towards dead, which is sometimes explained as fear. Death, durable in time and decades in "folk culture" confirm that positive attitude.

In a general division there are at least two traditions which contain more different elements and through these elements we can observe the attitude of the south Slavs towards the place of the burial (grave) and deceased. The grave-yard or grave alone is always considered holy without regard to religious or other differences. One tradition forbids or avoids digging up grave for more than one decade as long as there is any sign that grave existed. If it is a custom, with many different rituals, the other tradition permits digging up the graves in different time intervals, from 40 days to several years. In both traditions, nearly without exception, the respect towards the deceased is shown, except when the exhumation is connected with beliefs that the deceased might become a vampire or werewolf.

The custom of digging up a grave in different time intervals with local characteristics, in ethnological literature known as *repeated* or *double burial*, arouse an interest among several ethnologists in the last hundred years. It was merely briefly described or mentioned in different scientific publications. A detailed research and analysis about this matter made Evel Gasparini and Milko Matičetov in the first half of the fifties and Šefik Bešliagić in the seventies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tihomir Dorđević gave an impulse to this research, on the south Slavic territories, in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although some information was found by J. Čsaplovics at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We can also mention Lilek (and other authors mentioned by Dorđević, Matičetov and Bešliagić) and some foreign authors (Haberlandt, Wlisoeki, Vakarelski, Burgstaller etc.) and their comparative data.

Meanwhile the Union of Ethnological Societies of Yugoslavia started a project The Ethnological Atlas of Yugoslavia. The Project (forming the Questionnaire and gathering material in the field) was realised by many associates from all federal units (republics). The material that first arrived in the Centre for Ethnological Cartography at the Department of Ethnology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, was archived till the second half of the sixties. The Centre has valuable archive with data for 157 ethnological themes from about 3100 places (villages) covering all the regions of former Yugoslavia.

The material for the theme "Digging out the posthumous remains and repeated burial" (Questionnaire, vol. IV, No. 129), was gathered between seventies and eighties.<sup>2</sup> My intention is to make a short preliminary analysis of data concerning this theme.

There are seven groups of questions, which are to be answered:

- the time when the ritual of digging out the grave took place (after 3, 7 or more years) with the intention to bury a next body or digging out grave for some other reason
- who is involved in the exhumation and what rituals are connected with it
- the treatment with the posthumous remains (putting them in a basket or small coffin, wrapping in linen or scarf)
- the place where the remains are placed, in the same grave or outside the grave.

There is an extra group of questions: - is the grave dug out in order to examine the posthumous remains or with other reason "...to let the sun warm the bones".

According to data from the Questionnaire the time after which it is permitted to disinter an old grave and to bury a new deceased is very variable.

It is not possible to know after how many years the exhumation is allowed on a wide and familiar region. In most cases it concerns local traditions which correspond with the same ones on a faraway territory.

To disinter a grave after 3 or 5 years is very rare, except if it was the last wish of the dying person who wanted to be buried in a particular grave regardless to the time that passed from last funeral. A custom in which a married couple is buried in the same grave is not equally spread. For example, in northeast Macedonia the husband can be buried in his wife's grave but not the other way, or whether the children (son or daughter) are allowed to be buried in their parent's grave. Disinterring a family vault, mostly in Adriatic region, is permitted even before the determined time has passed. Exhumation after 40 days or 6 months, often in the east and southeast regions, is usually explained by great grief, especially for dead children. In Slovenia exhumation is done after 5 or 10 years, and in west Serbia, east Herzegovina and Monte Negro after 7 years.

In Monte Negro, Serbia and Macedonia the exhumation takes place on religious holiday, usually on holidays after Easter. The holidays are: Christian's day (5<sup>th</sup> January), Lazarus day, Theodore's day, Easter Monday (Pobus(a)ni ponedjeljak) – when peo-

<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to emphasize an excellent poll by M. Matičetov and the research work of Maister. Gathering the data for this theme, with the Questionnaire of the Ethnological Atlas, faced many difficulties – the mere conception of the questions, which could not include everything, and misunderstanding the meaning of the question by some of the persons which were taking down notes.

ple visit the grave-yard to tidy the graves (pobusaju se),<sup>3</sup> Pentecost day, All Souls' day (1. before Easter; 2. close to Pentecost day; 3. Demetrius day, 9<sup>th</sup> November) and St. Marcus day; (all the holidays and dates are according to the Julian calendar).

Here and there it is permitted to dig over a grave after 20 or more years. In the lowlands and partly in the highlands (northeast Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), both the Catholics and Orthodox do not permit exhumation at all. It could only happen by accident when nobody knows the old burial place.

Even then the posthumous remains are treated with respect although significant rituals are not omitted. The bones are buried in new dug up grave (or old dug over grave) or they are buried in an other part of the grave-yard and that only if there is no collective vaults. For example, in Glinsko Novo Selo, a village between Petrinja and Glina in Croatia, and in some villages in Pokuplje and east of Zagreb people cease digging up a grave if they come upon "old" bones and the grave is immediately covered, while in Blato on the island of Korčula it is considered bad luck to touch the bones which are dug out.

To show the smallest sign of respect to the posthumous remains, they are put on the ground, paper or linen beside the newly dug up grave where they are covered with some soil till the next burial. In the villages Jablanica by Maglaj in Bosnia and Razbojna by Brusa in Serbia the bones are left for a while out of the grave, so that the sun can shine on them and then they are buried.<sup>4</sup>

According to the data from the Questionnaire it is not possible yet to make definite conclusions about digging over graves and repeated burial as a family tradition (which has been mentioned in literature), but it confirms an important role of the Church. In some places the exhumation and repeated burial had to be done by neighbours (it was in fact their obligation); older men from the family, godfathers or the god-mother or even the grown up children.

In Macedonia women could participate in the ritual when the bones have been washed (with water or wine) but their status in the community is not stated.

In Mrakovo by Sarajevo, men who didn't have children or won't have children any more were those who dug up the grave; in Zapolje by Otočac in Lika the sons-in-law are those who dig out their mother-in-laws grave. But, regardless the time when an old grave is dug over the bones are carefully wrapped in linen (best in white and home wo-

<sup>3</sup> The "pobusan" Monday (pobus(a)ni ponedjeljak) is mentioned in the Orthodox community as a day when people visit the grave-yard to tidy the graves ("pobusavaju, busaju se"), (busen, bus = turf of grass and soil); in other parts (in Monte Negro) people put on the graves, beside other gifts, black painted Eastereggs.

<sup>4</sup> Beside data from the Questionnaire there are other informations. While digging up a mediaeval cemetery in Brestovik (Serbia) the women from the village approved the action only because, "...the sun will warm the bones once more". Even the Muslims from the area near Bihać in northwest Bosnia "opened" the grave, "...so that the sun warms their dear deceased once more" (Š. Bešlagić, 1974, 207). According to this Bešlagić tried to link, (maybe it's too exaggerated?), the double burial with prechristian worship of the Sun. If such evidence exists; examples from a research done in Čučavac, Soboština and Smoljanovci in the west part of Požega basin in Slavonia by Orthodox in the eighties; or the information by Ivan Klarić, that the Catholics in Kralje near Bihać, "...before they buried (the deceased) they opened the coffin so that the sun can shine on him and the relatives can kiss him", (I. Klarić, Kralje in Bosnia: Rodenje, svadba i smrt, Zbornik za narodni život i običaje južnih Slavena, 27, 1930, 165 - 175); they are insufficient for the thesis by Bešlagić.

ven), put in small trunk (*kovčežić, zaboječek*), or a linen bag. In some places, mostly in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia, a white sheet is used (*lancun, čaršaf*).

Often the bones are put in scarf (*rubac, facolić, šamija*), usually a white one, but in some places in Serbia and Macedonia they put them in black one. Sometimes they are put in white rag or towel (*peškir, ubrus*), in Serbia and Macedonia the male bones are put in a cap.<sup>5</sup>

Reduction of the ritual, on a vast territory, confirms that the custom is gradually disappearing. In Slovenia there is very little data about cleaning and washing the bones with water (the custom is otherwise confirmed), than in Monte Negro, Serbia and Macedonia. The usage of wine in the ritual remains only in the east and southeast parts but there are no data about washing the bones with it. It is often mentioned that the Orthodox perform sprinkling and blessing with holy water, which is brought from the Church and while burning the incense it is done by a priest. For sanctification a mixture of wine and oil was used in west Bosnia, east Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia.

From Slovenia (Dovje by Mojstrana) to Macedonia there are noted cases where the posthumous remains are taken to church and put on the altar usually for one night; in the surroundings of Ohrid even 40 days.

A special procedure with the skull (well known from the research of M. Matičetov and Maister) accordingly to the Questionnaire is confirmed only in a few places in Slovenia: Srednji Vrh – Gozd, Nomenj and Stara Fužina – Bohinj, Olševik and Tupališče – Kranj, Rateče and Spodnje Jezersko – Preddvor. Outside Slovenia it is mentioned in Đevrske by Obrovac in Bukovica (Croatia) where the Orthodox Serbs live and in Brajići by Budva (Monte Negro), where the skull of the deceased son was put in his mother's coffin. Washing the skull was practised in Matiševo by Kolašin (Monte Negro) but without a detailed description. In the villages near Livno, mostly the Catholics and some Orthodox separated the skull and covered it with a sheet, and in Miši the skull was buried separated from the skeleton and put beside the skull of the last deceased.

The conduct with the dug out posthumous remains at the repeated burial show great differences according to the place in the old grave where they are put. It is difficult to make a relevant systematisation, not only because of the wide rang of the territory but because of the need for thorough analysis and complete understanding and interpretation of the rituals. The posthumous remains are put beside the new coffin, generally, or below the coffin (the coffin is put directly on the remains or the remains are put in small hole; in the corner of the grave or in a small opening; on the coffin (in the centre, to the head or down to the feet); in the grave beside the coffin – up to the loins (in southwest Bosnia), up to the head or feet, in general and with some special characteristics. In Zagoni by Bjeljina (northeast Bosnia) the female bones are put at the left and the male at the right side of the coffin. In Borike by Rogatica (east Bosnia) the male bones are put beside the head of the last deceased and the female beside the feet.

<sup>5</sup> In Monte Negro a red scarf is mentioned. Matičetov (note 33) quotes: "There are two isolated examples that white colour is not the only colour: 1. for wrapping the bones they bought 1 meter of red linen (41); 2. they would wrap the bones of an unmarried person in white linen and married in black" (28), (M. Matičetov, 1955, 240).



In Bribir by Crikvenica (the Croatian Littoral) the bones of the relatives are put on the coffin up to the head, and the other bones down to the feet.

Beside the examples mentioned in the region of Livno the Orthodox Serbs from Ivoševci, Kistanje, Biovično selo (all surrounding Knin) put the dug out bones in the coffin of the “newly died” person. It is done the same way in Monte Negro (near Budva), southeast Serbia (near Vranjska Banja) and in Macedonia (near Kičevo).

In Kordun and Banija (Croatia), in northwest Bosnia (sometimes in east Bosnia by the Orthodox) and here and there in Serbia in the dug out grave some money is thrown in order to “buy a place”. In Serbia and Macedonia, after 6 week or 6 months, some magic action were done in the dug out graves. For example, if someone died from tuberculosis (*jektika*, *sušica*) a bottle of wine (or plum-brandy) is put with him in the grave, so after the exhumation in a determined time, the bottle was taken out and given to family to drink (especially to the children). There are some magic actions and fortune-telling which are done with the bones or parts of the skeleton; in Dupljaj by Valjevo (Serbia) a woman clasps the bones of her dead child to her bosom so that she can have more children. In Slavonski Kobaš (Croatia) the bones are kissed with an explanation that, “God forgives sins to those who kiss dead bones”. In the village Slepče by Bitola (Macedonia) they tie a red thread around one bone, or put in the grave a bottle of water, some grain, flour, salt or even a new suit (Serbia, Macedonia). This confirms the complexity of the custom in which are incorporated elements of different cultural patterns and traditions, sometimes much wider from the observed cycle. Data that confirms similarity or is identical with some elements of the double burial custom is significant with the “first” funeral but is out of the frame of the church rituals. For example, in the region of Kočani (east Macedonia) during the “second” burial (after 3 years), relatives, friends and neighbours are invited to lunch; in Bijela by Daruvar, Slavonia, the Serbs remember that there were “intended” exhumation after a year and on that occasion the grave-diggers were invited to lunch. Similar, but incomplete descriptions refer to some villages near Bor in east Serbia. Unfortunately there are no other data, which would complete this “picture”.

Even so, this data contributes the conviction of the thesis such as is the double burial custom, which is accompanied with series of rituals of considerable regional differences. The purpose (or explanation) why is the custom and the rituals done, also the different terms can help in revealing its nature. The research must continue and that depends on the aim of the research.

The explanation, that disinterring is done because of great grief, (mainly when the children are concerned), usually before the year is out, is unspecific and incomplete, and such a procedure cannot be interpreted as the “real” *double burial*.

*Meeting and seeing the deceased* as reasons for digging up (disinterring) the graves are insufficient explanation for the whole procedure and are only a part of a very complex custom, exactly only one part of beliefs in the posthumous customs. The contents of the rituals that follow the whole procedure (washing the bones, pouring wine upon the bones, kissing them, wrapping and burying them again, etc.) surpass the given reasons. In the east and southeast regions (where it mostly occurs), it could be

considered as “real” *double burial* due to the explanation; “...to be sure that the body has rotted; “...the soul is absolutely free to go to heaven only when the body has completely rotted”, (Petar Vlahović, Beograd, 1972, 62). If it is believed that the deceased could become a vampire (or werewolf), or if the extent of his sinfulness has to do with it, than that belongs to other contents.

Disinterring which is justified with an explanation such as: “...let the sun warm the bones once more” or “...let the sun shine upon the bones” or “...let the bones see the light once more”, and followed by rituals, as well as special treatment with the skull, could be also considered as “original” or “real” *double burial*.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of this it is possible to emphasise few basic elements:

- a) believing in life after death and the duality of existence (material and spiritual)
- b) special meaning of skull and the relation towards it as probable substitute
- c) believing in exceptional importance of the Sun, that is, the Light

Each of these elements hasn't got the same significance or value on the research territory, neither each of the rituals, which are their component parts. In relation towards the posthumous remains dualism is noted. It is expressed in the respect and piety towards the remains because of duty, love or fear, or as taboo (avoiding or forbidding disinterring the graves).

It is necessary to emphasise the important elements which, are *diferentia specifica* of the whole problem:

- a) ritual digging out the deceased without burying other deceased in the same grave
- b) intentional digging up the grave (the ritual with the posthumous remains) and burying the other deceased in the same grave
- c) accidental (or after many decades) digging up the grave; the procedure with posthumous remains and burying the other deceased.

As we can see, it is a custom of very complex structure for understanding. It is necessary to research the reference data and facts outside its narrow frame; to search for an important indicator in the wider posthumous customs and ritual cycle; to prefer multidisciplinary approach, so that historical, social, cultural and religious aspect, influenced its beginning and its disappearance, would be included. In the procedure of disinterring the grave and repeated burial a large number of variants make the correct systematisation and conclusion difficult. Especially because it is a very heterogeneous cultural (and traditional) territory, which was exposed for a long period to various influences, frequent migrations and changes of systems and orientations.

<sup>6</sup> On the basis of data concerning this custom, it is difficult to establish a thesis about worshipping the Sun or worshipping the skull. The significance of the Sun and light is not debatable. For example, burning candles in general or burning candles for 40 days while the bones are laid in the church (in the surroundings of Ohrid and further in Aegean Macedonia). But in posthumous rituals we even note quite the opposite behaviour – from avoiding disinterring the grave to avoiding leaving the grave open (“so that it wouldn't get wet (rain); that hail doesn't destroy the crops”, etc.); disinterring the grave in order to see if the body has rotted, because of suspicion that the deceased turned into a vampire or gained some saintly attributes; the degree of his sinfulness, colour of his bones and their symbolics. We could discuss here the worship of the ancestors too.

A comprehensive elaboration of the ethnological data from the Questionnaire, completed with comparative material and cognition, can offer a major help in solving the problem. A well-done typology for a cartographic presentation and elaboration of ethnological charts, would be an important contribution in that direction.

A broader knowledge could make it clear, why are riches and varieties of customs, (not only of these customs and rituals), a rich treasury in which mass ideology as political category presents its ambition as the will of the people. Using myths and rituals and adjusting them to new (mass) folk pattern, such politics creates a negative attitude in interpretation of tradition, and intrudes "worshipping the past" and affirming neo-conservatism.

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## BESEDA O AVTORJU

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# VISITING AND TENDING THE GRAVES WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CASE-STUDY IN BREŽICE

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Mateja Habinc

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145

## IZVLEČEK

### **Obiskovanje grobov in skrb zanje na primeru študije iz Brežic**

Avtorica opisuje obiskovanje grobov in skrb zanje v obdobju koledarskega leta in tudi v obdobju življenjskega ciklusa posameznika. Obiskovanje grobov in skrb zanje sicer povezuje s pogrebi in tradicionalno določenim obdobjem žalovanja, a ju skuša raziskovati onkraj tega konteksta. Predpostavlja, da je pokopališče kot socialen (javen) in obenem zaseben prostor vključeno v vsakdanji način življenja večine. Avtorica je želela ugotoviti, katera dejanja, pričakovanja pa vrednote in drugo so bili značilni za preteklost in so še danes povezani z obiskovanjem grobov in skrbjo zanje. Njena metoda je etnografska. Terensko delo je bilo osredotočeno na Brežice, majhno mesto na jugovzhodu Slovenije. Raziskava je zajela obdobje tridesetih let tega stoletja do sedanjosti.

Iz načina obiskovanja grobov in skrbi zanje je razvidno, da (živi in umrli) sorodniki delujejo kot hierarhičen sistem in da vedno obstajajo tudi razlike med grobovi. Ljudje hierarhično razporejajo najpomembnejše grobove sorodnikov in grobove družine kot gospodinjске enote. V tem kontekstu so avtorico zanimale odločitve izvršiteljev oporoke, povezave z lastništvom, vloga oporok, vplivi na spomine sorodnikov, njihova srečanja in prepričanja med njimi. Avtorica v članku poskuša pojasniti, kaj skrb za grobove obsega in kako jo posamezniki dojemajo. Zanimal jo je tudi videz grobov in nagrobnikov, finančna struktura ter delitev skrbi za grobove med spoloma, pa čiščenje in okraševanje grobov itd. Posebno pozornost je posvečala tudi (v preteklosti) dnevu mrtvih, oziroma vseh svetih, ki je v Sloveniji javni praznik, ter cerkvenemu prazniku vseh vernih duš.

**Ključne besede:** pokopališča, grobovi, obiskovanje, Brežice

**Key words:** cemeteries, graves, visiting graves, Brežice

This article<sup>1</sup> discusses visiting and tending the graves as a subject for ethnological study and, on the micro level, presents the findings of the field work carried out on the same subject.

I would like to start by determining why and from what points of view I believe that visiting and tending the graves is or should be a subject for ethnology.

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<sup>1</sup> The report is based on the author's degree dissertation, written under the mentorship of Professor Dr. Janez Bogataj at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana, 1997/98.

## Visiting and tending graves as an ethnological subject

146

A survey of the existing literature makes it quite clear that the cemeteries, funerals and death in general are themes dealt with by architecture (urban planning), history (including art history), archaeology, sociology and other sciences. The basis for their research is - in some fields - the place itself (cemeteries or graves), while in other sciences the attention is given to the values connected with the place or to the attitudes thought to have been common in specific historical periods, societies or geographic areas. The Slovene ethnology asserts that as a carrier of the cultural phenomena (Kremenšek 1973: 115) is by definition the subject of an ethnologist's interest and, in accordance with this definition, also man's activities related to the graves and cemeteries are important issues for the ethnological research. In my opinion ethnology should beside funeral rites, death as a part of man's life cycle, people's attitude to cemeteries and other themes, also research the visiting and tending graves. The theme is a common, everyday and obvious basis for the study of cemeteries by many sciences, but none of them researches it as a specific subject. They all take it for granted and mostly deal with its external phenomena - tombstones, epitaphs and the like.

The subject of my study can be linked to some established fields of ethnological research. The basic subject the Slovene ethnology today deals with is folk culture and the way of living (considering all classes of society and all periods) (Kremenšek 1973: 111-125). In this context we can see visiting and tending the graves primarily as a part of people's way of living. According to the ethnological systematisation (Kuret... 1978: 1-94, Bogataj... 1978: 95-118) the subject was already partially researched in the fields of traditions and customs (as part of the calendar year and of the traditions and customs related to important events in a person's life) and in the field of religion. In the traditional societies we can chiefly consider death and funeral also as ceremonies, rites of passage (Prošić - Dvornić 1982: 41-53). However, my principal interest was not in visiting and tending the graves as the traditionally claimed final (and according to Arnold Van Gennep third aggregate) stage of a tripartite funeral ritual. I concentrated on periodical visits to cemeteries (Mystical... 1975: 32-41) after the (first) period of mourning. The ethnological research of these phenomena is also sustained by the premise that an ethnologist should deal with mass, public<sup>2</sup> phenomena on the level of everyday life, such as All Saints' Day. Moreover, cemeteries are considered to be public places, open to everybody and a matter of public consensus.

There are at least two possible views when researching the tending of the graves. On the one hand, we can examine professional tending of the graves and cemeteries (undertakers, municipal services, the jobs of grave-diggers etc.) and, on the other hand, there is the private care by relatives and friends of the deceased. I would like to point out that I was primarily interested in the latter aspect. What I see as people's care of the graves are intentional acts like paying the lease and other costs related to the graves, arranging and decorating them. I also believe that individual or collective visits to the cemeteries have multiple meanings: on the one hand and though they are viewed also

<sup>2</sup> For the definition of public, see: Habermas 1989: 293-299 & Bajec 1994: 358-359.

as an obligation, the attitude towards them is positive (they contribute to the establishing and preserving one's identity - be it on the level of one's family, native place or a country identity). On the other hand and more recently, visiting can also function as something possibly negative, if no appropriate measure is observed in giving expression to or effecting such visits. In the course of time the meaning of "appropriate" has changed. Analysing individual, different and always family-related actions I tried to find out, whether there is anything we might determine as common to a majority of people, as known to nearly everybody.

In the case study of the cemeteries of Brežice, a small town in the south-east of Slovenia close to the Croatian border, I attempted to present visiting and tending the graves within the periods of the calendar year and to a minor extent also within a person's life. I sought to answer some questions about how a cemetery as a public, social and at the same time private place is a part of the way of living of the majority. I dealt, beside cyclical visits and the ways of tending the graves also with the following issues: where are people's ancestors buried - in the graves of their parents or in the new graves; what is the connection between the graves of a family or new graves and the place of birth and residence of the deceased; where are children buried; what are the values and expectations that determine visiting the graves, what do these visits mean to people...

To gather answers to these questions, I primarily relied on interviewing people. The basis for an interview was beside a questionnaire (based upon literature, sources, media) also a survey of inscriptions from tombstones of my own relatives, buried in the cemetery in Brežice, and some observations and personal participation in the events. My informants were those who (even) today tend one or more graves and who are active in this sense, but who recently had no death in the family. This excludes all those who today do not pay lease for one or more grave plots, that is children, youths, elderly people, about whom I also believe that they have their own opinion about tending graves.

At first I wanted to deal chiefly with the present condition, but after carrying out some initial research I established that this would not be possible without revisiting the past. I then decided to deal with the period from a few years before the outbreak of the Second World War to the present. In accordance with this decision I chose informants among people who lived in Brežice in this period. Some further explanation is required: Brežice was a much smaller place in the period before 1941 than it is now. This means that there are only a few families and people left who actually lived in the town in the beginning of the period and who are still alive. This was one group of informants. Before the Second World War their families (parents) were mostly merchants, inn(hotel)-keepers, tradesmen. Accidentally, it was established that before the Second World War most of them were nationally conscious Slovenes with a Catholic background. Only one of the informants was (in the eyes of others rather than in his own) a member of the higher middle class and sympathised with the Germans. All the parents of the informants had moved to Brežice in the period between the two world wars. The second group were people now living in the town, but only since 1981, when the area selected for the case study was incorporated into the town. Earlier, this part consisted of villages and most people were farmers.

## The cemeteries of Brežice

To begin the presentation of the findings of my field research let me provide some brief information on the cemeteries of Brežice<sup>3</sup> throughout history. It could be said that the cemeteries in the town in general followed the tendencies described in literature and related to the history of attitudes towards death. In short: from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Lapuh 1990: 18 & Škaler, Savnik 1976: 25 & Pokopališča... 1916: 339), there has always been one main municipal cemetery which until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was situated around the parish church. After a major flood caused by the nearby Sava river, the cemetery was transferred to the borders of the town, that is until 1901 (Pokopališča... 1916: 340 & Lapuh 1990: 22 & Tiller 1937: 4), when due to the ill-suited land and the lack of space, the graveyard had become too small. A new cemetery was established in the southern border of the town and is still in use today.

In the course of time there have been other cemeteries in Brežice and their history both confirms and reflects the common historical attitudes to death and cemeteries in general and as described in literature. The Franciscans built a monastery and a church in the town in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They also had their own cemetery for which it has not been established yet until when it was used, but it is certain that it was no longer in use after the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tiller 1937: 10). Until 1775 also lay people were buried in the Franciscan church (Lapuh 1990: 26 & Pokopališča... 1916: 339), the site of the oldest graves in the parish of Brežice. In 1941 the church was demolished and the Franciscans were banned from the town. There still is a small Franciscan filial church in a nearby village that also had a cemetery (Lapuh 1990: 28) around it. This cemetery was used until the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sources confirm the existence of other churches (some of which are gone) in or near the town, but they do not refer to cemeteries around or near them<sup>4</sup>.

The new cemetery south of the city was the church property until 1955 (Škaler, Savnik 1976: 13), when the municipality of Brežice was founded. In the same year the municipality became the administrator of the land (until the 1980s the cemetery was managed by a special municipal service) while the church continued to be the owner of the greater part (and the municipality of the smaller one). The churchyard was laid out in accordance with generally accepted principles: it was surrounded by a wall or trees and divided into sections (for wealthy people, non-Catholics, Franciscans, dead-born babies and sinners etc.), and most of the tombstones are aligned east-west. Until the 1960s and 70s there were tombstones on the graves near the wall, others were mounds with wooden or iron crosses<sup>5</sup>. The big cross in the middle of the churchyard was erect-

<sup>3</sup> The inhabitants of Brežice and those from its environs call the cemetery in Brežice "pokopališe" (colloquial, "britof" (German: *Friedhof*) and, in sources from before the Second World War I also encountered the expression "mirodvor". The latter does not appear in any Slovene or Croatian dictionary, but I would like to point out its similarity with the name of one of Zagreb's cemeteries (the capital of Croatia) "Mirogoj" (meaning perhaps a peaceful grove).

<sup>4</sup> See: Tiller 1939: 12 & Tiller 1937: 11 & Lapuh 1990: 19 & Škaler, Savnik 1976: 26.

<sup>5</sup> Today, when all plots in the cemetery should have equal value, informants consider a "nice spot for the grave" a plot that is seen from all sides, with an easy approach, clean (not near the waste) and which is not sloping - so that the soil stays in place...



The abandoned grave with a plastic note from the municipal service, which I attached behind Christ's left hand (Brežice, January 1998, photo: M. Habinc). ♦ Zapuščen grob s plastičnim obvestilom komunalne službe, pritrjenim na Kristusovo levo roko (Brežice, januar 1998, foto: M. Habinc).





Note from an abandoned grave, asking the owner (according to the text of the note - not the leaseholder), to fill out the data on the lease on the back of the note and hand it over to the municipal service (Brežice, January 1998, photo: M. Habine). ♦ Obvestilo na zapuščenem grobu, ki sprašuje njegovega lastnika (kot je napisano na njem - ne njegovega najemnika), da izpolni podatke o njegovem najemu na zadnji strani istega obvestila in ga izroči komunalni službi (Brežice, januar 1998, foto: M. Habine).

ed in 1901. The cemetery also had a mortuary chapel but until recently (mid-1980s) it was used only for people who died of certain diseases.

Today there are 1507 grave plots in the cemetery of Brežice<sup>6</sup> and most of them are single or double graves. In the northern wing of the cemetery an area is dedicated to the partisans and civilians, victims of the Second World War. In the southern wing of the cemetery there is still a special section reserved for the graves of children. Today it presents a problem to the municipal service in the sense of managing the graveyard as a whole. There have never been proposals (as sources told me because there was neither need nor wish) for an urn garden or for a place for dispersing ashes. The first urn niches were erected in the cemetery in 1989-90 and today there are 60. From the evidence of people who pay the lease for grave plots in the cemetery of Brežice I tried to establish the structure of the cemetery: for 50% of the graves the citizens of Brežice pay the lease. Further - a comparison of the numbers of leaseholders from Dolenjska and Štajerska (the border between the two regions is the Sava river) which also belong to different dioceses, shows that the majority of the leaseholders are from Štajerska (from the villages or towns). This allows us to conclude that the cemetery in Brežice is used mainly by the families from the right bank of the Sava.

<sup>6</sup> The number is approximate: according to the map of the cemetery of Brežice from 1996 there should be 1507 plots, but the figure differs from the number of leaseholders (October 1997: 1280 - a leaseholder can appear several times in the evidence if he or she is paying the lease for more than one grave). The municipal service in Brežice does not have any information about the number of abandoned graves (for which the lease has not been paid for a long period). I consider this situation to reflect also a part of the attitude towards the cemetery in Brežice and more generally towards death (as still personalised) in the new state.

## Visiting and tending the graves with reference to the Brežice case study

In this presentation of the findings from the research of visiting and tending the graves in Brežice I highlight only those which I found to be the most common and applicable to a majority of people, while the article deals much less or not at all with details and descriptions of, for instance, events like All Saints' Day. When dealing with visiting and tending the graves in general, we need to distinguish between various groups of the graves. The first distinction must be made between the graves someone tends and those people only visit (bring flowers, lights candles). The two acts can be joined, but usually there are less graves that are tended than such that are merely visited.

151

A further subdivision can be made into the two groups of the graves, similarly as we use term a family. A family (Flandrin 1986: 10-11) can either mean a nuclear family or an extended family including relatives. In this context we can distinguish between the graves of the nuclear families<sup>7</sup> and those of extended families.

In the first case at least one parent of the children of a nuclear family rests in the grave. If we presume that the children of this fictional family are married, then every couple is related to the two **extended-family graves** - one belonging to the woman's/mother's line of relatives (her parent/s) and the other is the grave in which the father's/man's parent/s is (are) buried. All those related by blood or marital ties automatically become members of two different sets of relatives. But the attitude towards all relatives is never equal. Every family in its entity means and symbolises an arrangement of a special kind - a hierarchy (Rabuzzi 1987: 277). The same is true, in my opinion, of the tending of the graves: the spouses usually pay more attention to the one of the two graves belonging to an extended family. Which grave receives more attention mostly depends on the patrilocal or matrilocal residence (or on the proximity of their residence to the place where the spouse's parents live or are buried), on the kind a nuclear family or extended, and in general on emotional, material and other bonds within one line of relatives. When a person is single than his or her extended-family grave is automatically the grave of his or her parents.

Usually the tending of this extended-family grave is in the hands of a couple which through marriage also adopted the care for the household of the respective partner's parents. This has always been considered as something common, self-evident and not deemed to be worth mentioning or to be included in wills or donation. It has not been the rule that the oldest son or daughter should be the one to continue to live in the parental home. If the children decide not to live at (or near) the place where their parents are buried, they, at least in some cases, in Brežice pay someone to tend the family grave. Usually, the children share the costs and visit the grave at least once a year (generally on the occasion of All Saints' Day). Informants also mentioned the more or less present cases of exuma-

<sup>7</sup> My informants (from the basic point of view of a married couple, used in the research, i.e. both partners are also viewed as somebody's children) did not distinguish between these two groups, they labelled both as "family" graves. But in the interviews it became obvious that the division is acceptable and in many cases exists.

tion and transportation to another place, closer to the residence of the children of the deceased. Such graves of an extended family are the centre of understanding, of meetings between relatives as well as the source or place of arguments - though not quite of arguments about the graves themselves; instead hidden animosity may become obvious (for example when relatives do not want to meet at a specific grave).

Visiting and tending the graves of an extended family also determines the scope of memory involving relatives. It is usual that the last two generations, including the grandparents, are commemorated. Dead brothers or sisters are also more or less commemorated (of any of the parents, but less their partners), especially if they were (in some cases) victims of the Second World War.

152 Before the Second World War and until approximately the 60s parents generally buried their deceased children in a special children's section of the cemetery for one specific reason - because many of them had migrated to Brežice and/or did not have their own family grave (neither as nuclear or extended family) at the cemetery yet. In recent times things are different: "*Nowadays everybody makes sure where their grave will be before they die.*" (FN - Lepšina 1997: 24). When a couple establishes a family of their own they already reserve (though in most cases only in their mind) a place at the cemetery for themselves, for their nuclear family (Sore 1985: 203). In the past most of the relatives of my informants did not exhume and transfer the mortal remains of their deceased family members to the new graves. It was, however, a general custom for people to have their names and dates of birth and/or death inscribed on the tombstones of the nuclear or extended-family graves. In most cases it has always been considered (for example for dead children) to be unusual when this is not done, because the family ought to be at least symbolically together in one place. When a nuclear family leases its own grave, the relatives usually stop tending the children's graves in the special section. After some time most of them were abandoned and leased by other people.

People's recollections of who had a tombstone placed and a grave arranged are weaker among the inhabitants of the town's environs than among the townspeople. The latter exactly remember placing (even several) tombstones, what were they like... and recently people even take photographs of all the graves of their relatives so that they can preserve them for memory. Informants interpreted this as preserving information about one's relatives.

Nowadays a **family grave** is something everybody "wants" and the trend is connected with the feeling of private ownership (Vincent 1980: 157/50). By the term family grave I understand the grave of one nuclear family or one individual. This kind of grave can coincide with an extended-family grave or can be the abandoned grave of (usually, but not necessarily) relatives or acquaintances. Regarding the latter case: the tending of a grave is not necessarily officially agreed (the lease may still be paid by someone else). What is more important when someone considers to take a lease on such a grave is the attachment to the deceased and the material bonds with him or her, as well as a feeling of being obliged to make sure that the grave is always well tended. In this sense graves are often viewed as a real estate. There is also a third possibility for

acquiring a grave for a nuclear family - a completely new grave at the cemetery in a spot meant for graves and where no one is buried yet.

I have already mentioned that in recent years (twenty or more) people usually determine where their family grave shall be during their lifetime. To this I may add that there are some graves (approximately 10) in the cemetery in Brežice which have no inscriptions on the tombstones (some have names inscribed on them, but without the dates of death). Nevertheless, these graves are more or less well kept (with flowers, people tending them etc.). They are graves of nuclear families and informants say that this custom was not known before the Second World War and for some decades after it; as far as they recall the custom appeared some ten or fifteen years ago.

The two groups of graves mentioned do not mean that they are the only options to be buried - they are merely (and were especially in the past) the most common practice. But where someone is buried recently and increasingly depends on people's mobility and their life story or fate. The principal factor in deciding where to be buried - the informants were quite explicit in this matter - is the understanding and relationship with (dead and living) relatives, regardless where they live or where they are buried.

Besides graves of the two groups mentioned people may honour someone's wish or feel obliged (that is in the after-war period) to also tend other graves - of friends, relatives... Nevertheless, I found out that there still exists some hierarchy in tending and visiting the graves. The hierarchy can be compared to that existing between living relatives or people in general. Interviews made it clear that throughout the whole period under discussion people primarily visited and tended the graves of their nuclear and extended family (or, considering also singles). I have to mention also the graves of deceased partners). Second in the hierarchy are the graves of relatives, friends, acquaintances... but the occasional visits have always been concentrated on important dates like All Saints' Day, the anniversary of someone's death, Christmas or New Years' Eve, Easter and the name-day of the deceased (or his or her birthday).

Another hypothesis I put forward in my dissertation is - as mentioned above - that visiting cemeteries and tending the graves is a **part or a way of preserving one's identity** - on the level of the family, native place or country. This also explains why as far as Brežice is concerned I have no evidence to state that people do not tend the graves of their ancestors<sup>8</sup> - as seems to be the case with some people in Western Europe and the USA. In my research I also included the old cemetery which was officially abandoned in 1901. People had the opportunity to transfer tombstones or exhume the mortal remains of the deceased but very few (one of the richest families) opted for the first possibility (moving tombstones) and no one for the latter. Nevertheless, until the end of the Second World War, there were still some tombstones on the graves in the old cemetery.

<sup>8</sup> In the Christian areas of the Western countries people still occasionally visit the cemetery. In the cities, however, people visit the cemetery only once a year, on the occasion of All Saints' Day (Vincent 1980: 20). According to the data for Slovenia referring to 1997 (Slovenci... 1997: 1) one third of the respondents to a survey occasionally visit the cemetery once a month; a little under one third every week or even more frequently and 5,3 % only once a year. The latter data probably confirm the research carried out in Brežice. See further few examples, primarily related to the national and local identity.

Most of the people I spoke with remember the cemetery because of the tombstone of Radoslav Razlag, an intellectual and fighter for the rights of the Slovenians, who died in the late 19th century. In the period preceding the Second World War his grave continued to be decorated on the All Saints' Day by the school children who had to bring flowers from their home gardens<sup>9</sup>. On the same occasion people also visited other graves there, bringing flowers and lighting candles. The informants were, however, predominantly children of the immigrants of the town, who did not have their own nuclear or extended-family graves. According to the register of the church announcements from the 1930s prayers were also told in the old cemetery on the All Saints' Day.

In spite of the fact that the cemetery was officially abandoned, and a sports stadium was built next to it, that a part of it was rearranged into a fruit garden (Tiller 1939: 13) and that some informants remember it as a quiet spot for people in love as well as a good place for catching small birds, in the minds (and stories<sup>10</sup>) of people it still remained a more or less sacred place until recently. In this context we can also understand why some people (though not a majority) were against building the stadium next to the old cemetery.

People preserve their identity also through social contacts in a cemetery since it is a public place. Even communicating with the deceased can, in a way, be considered "socialising". However, if we agree that socialising is possible only between living social beings, then it includes people meeting and greeting one another in cemeteries on occasions when their primary reason for being there is to visit the graves of their family. In the past people used to greet everybody they met in the cemetery, but recently they only greet people they know from other places and have talked to on other occasions. More than just saying "hello" occurs between people who are well acquainted. On some occasions - for example when there is a larger group of visitors (usually relatives) in the cemetery, on certain holidays... disputes and/or loud laughter may occur between them or between the group and other visitors. The situation is specific when the groups consist also of children (youths) or distant relatives. Adults (those who regularly visit graves and take tending them) usually try to demonstrate not only what has to be done at a grave, but also explain who is buried where and what the deceased's relation to the nuclear or extended family was. It is further specific of women - who prevail among the people tending the graves<sup>11</sup> that they convey the family's history to the

<sup>9</sup> See more in: Počkar 1998: 308, 347.

<sup>10</sup> In 1997, for instance, I was told a story about a white woman who was walking to the town together with three sisters. Only one of the sisters was able to see the white woman, who after approximately two kilometers left them by turning to the place where the old cemetery was. Informants date the event approximately prior to the Second World War - but the story is still known to the family members (and recently told to children).

<sup>11</sup> For the whole observed period and for all strata the following division of labour reasonably applies: tending graves (or, in the higher middle classes, organising the tending) was women's business in pre-war times and in most cases still is. Observations from 1997 show that 57 % of the visitors were women (cleaning the graves, changing the flowers and lighting the candles). In most cases (39%) they went alone to the cemetery, the second largest group were the couples and the third were elderly single men (Habinc 1998: 81). Men tend graves themselves, if they are widowers or single, in other cases they organise the lease of the grave, help out when more demanding renovations (cleaning, renovating frames, plates, tombstones ...) are required.

young ones by regularly taking them to the cemetery. Communication varies from individual to individual, but cemeteries are generally held to be among other things public places (like churches, streets ...) - though primarily by the elderly people nowadays - where they meet and greet and which require a specific demeanour.

It is commonly known and accepted that when people went to the cemetery in the past they used to wear their so-called Sunday (or mass) outfit which was not necessarily black. Men had to take off their hats and as mentioned in a church announcement<sup>12</sup>, they were supposed not to smoke or talk in a loud voice. Similarly, it is today still important for people to be dressed "properly, decently" - though it is on the other hand quite acceptable that when people go to arrange a grave they wear comfortable clothes of the kind they wear when gardening. If there happens to be a funeral at the time someone is visiting a grave he (she) will be quick about it or even abandon the idea. If, however, the funeral concerns someone known to the visitor (perhaps only by name or by his place of residence) some informants would join the mourners and attended the ritual for some time. This practice continues in recent times.

The research also investigated and revealed some restrictions (taboos) connected with cemeteries and graves. What should be done or not, however, differs from reality. For instance, one should not step on or across a grave ("*don't squeeze the deceased, don't thrash him...*" FN - Habinc 1997: 7) - but for practical reasons this occurs very often and on different occasions. It is further unacceptable to "borrow" (piller) flowers, vases or candles from other graves, but all informants told me that they know of at least some instances when this occurred. Elderly people said that the punishment for such acts is that the deceased will appear visiting the perpetrator one night and ask for the flowers or a candle from his or her grave. Other taboos are sitting on the plates or tombstones, bringing one's bicycle or dog - but people continue to do this. Nobody approves of the practice but most of the pre-war inhabitants of the towers expressed their disagreement with it without having been asked. The only time people visit a cemetery at night - at least in the last quarter of a century - is the All Saints' Day. Some consider this to be the only time of the day when there is peace in the cemetery and when it does not matter how one looks.

There are also stories about cemeteries people tell their grandchildren, but this has become rare even among those who used to live in the environs of the town. People who lived in the town before the war remember such stories from their grandparents, servants, teachers etc. But most of them do not pass them on. The most common story<sup>13</sup> is that about a man who went to the cemetery at night to test his courage. His friends gave him a stake so he could stick it in the ground of the cemetery to prove that he was really there, but he was so nervous that he pierced his own trousers when sticking it in the ground. Thinking that the hand of a dead person was holding his leg he became totally paralysed. The next morning his friends found him dead in the cemetery. There are also local stories<sup>14</sup> about the heavenly chariots flying over the cemetery and about a

<sup>12</sup> See: Oznanila 1927-1934: 2. 11. 1930.

<sup>13</sup> Mentioned (in more or less the same words) in: Smerdel 1980: 145, FN - Lepšina 1997: 25-26, FN - Poljanšek 1997: 35.

<sup>14</sup> See: FN - Vidmar 1997: 69-70, FN - Lepšina 1997: 26.

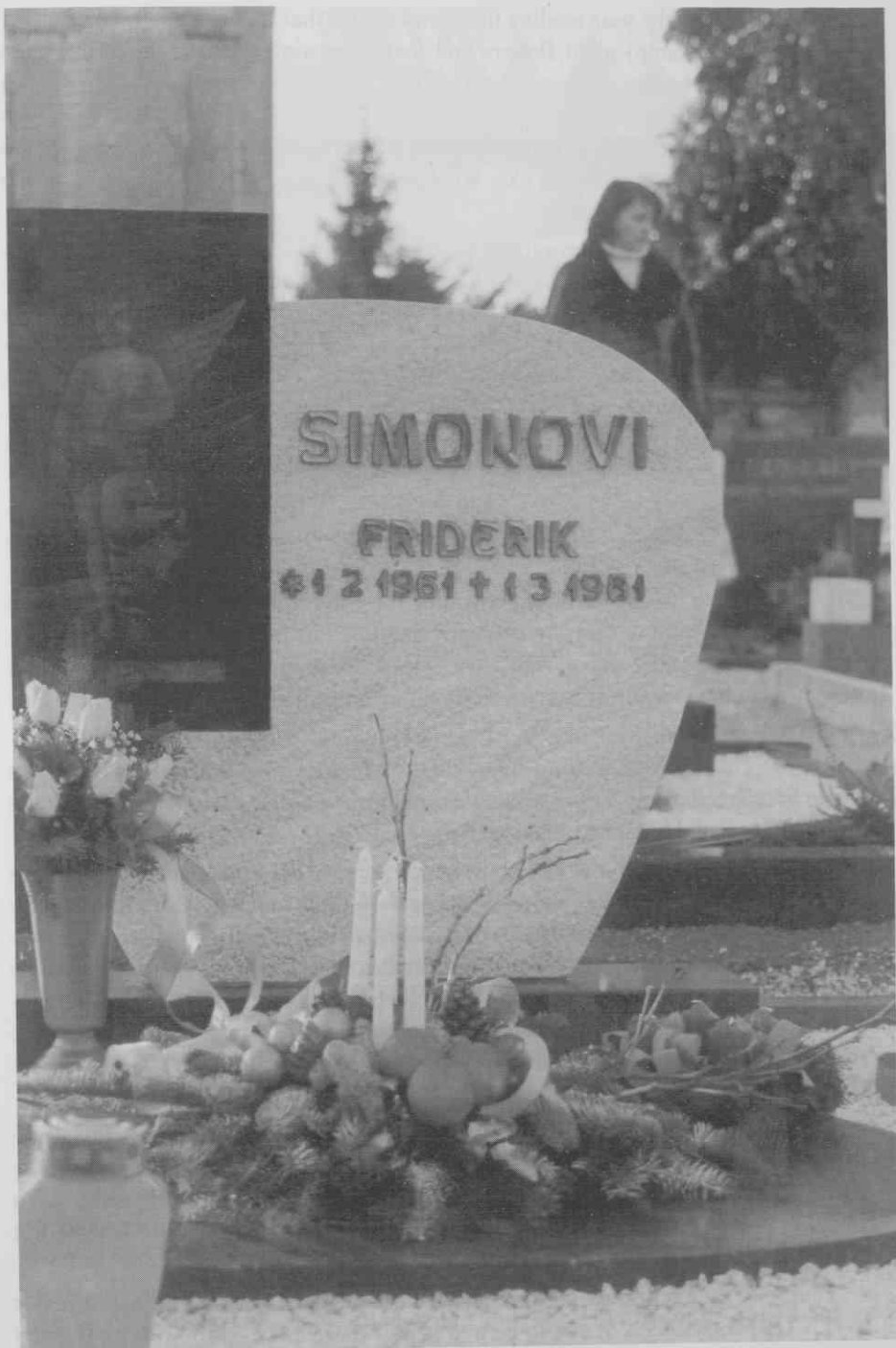
pre-war grave-digger, of whom some people believed that he used to boil skulls from the cemetery at night to call the spirits of the deceased. One day he hung himself in one of the Brežice's churches.

The interviews confirmed the thesis put forward in sources<sup>15</sup> - **how a grave is tended depends on its actual form.** In the past when most graves were mounds the grass on them had to be cut regularly; graves with flower-beds needed to be weeded, and in nowadays some people quite honestly stated that they chose a grave with just a tombstone and a stone or concrete plate because it needs no special tending or gardening etc. The same is the true of the urn graves<sup>16</sup>, which first appeared in the cemetery of Brežice in 1989. But this has no impact on the (ir-)regularity of visits. Before the war and much in the same way as today, people used to visit cemeteries individually or with their partners or children, and only very rarely in bigger groups. Basically, visiting a grave has always been an individual, emotional act, which can, however, turn into a social event in the cemetery itself. Referring to the entire period, from the 1930s to the present, about half of the informants mentioned also special fixed days (Sunday afternoon, once a week, after morning mass etc.) when they used to go or still go to the cemetery. In the past, it was more common that the men from peasant families of the town's environs used to visit the cemetery more often. They used to do it after the mass or when going to town (on a bicycle) simply because they were more mobile. This was not common with the townspeople because the distance to the cemetery was shorter. But even their visits were - as nowadays viewed by the informants - quite rare and usually a part of the usual Sunday stroll. People started to visit the graves more often in the 60s and 70s when there was more money around and more spare time to do it.

**Tending the graves** before the war mostly involved their arrangement: hoeing or weeding, cutting grass, decorating graves with flowers and candles. How often people did this depended on the individual, his or her social class, how close the cemetery was and how much time they spend. When asked to recall how often they themselves or their parents tended the graves in the past, most informants stated that until around the 60s - they generally made comparisons with the present - that was not very often, approximately once a month, but in most cases even less, that is only on the most important (already mentioned) dates concerning the deceased. It was however, common as it is today that people started to clean the graves and prepare them for the All Saints' Day about a month in advance. Today some people wash the plates and tombstones with water, polish them with oil to make them shine, renew the colour of the letters in inscriptions ... If there is a flower-bed, they plant new flowers as they used to do before 1941, but the custom saw general revival only in the 1960s. On the same occasion they also strew new white gravel.

<sup>15</sup> Regarding this issue I refer mostly to: Kocjančič 1980: 56.

<sup>16</sup> One of the informants stated that he had heard about a cremation that took place before the Second World War. The story goes that a German chemist from Brežice wanted to be cremated and his ashes thrown into the Sava. In the past decade - according to representatives of the municipal service of Brežice, the urn funerals have become increasingly common. People prefer them because they are cheaper and "cleaner" (as I was told by informants - you don't see decaying body and that's why goodbye is easier). Urns can be kept in a grave intended for a coffin or in a special urn niche which occupies less space and can be tended as any other grave. In the latter case the decoration is concentrated on a smaller area, though a flower bed can be arranged, and an urn grave needs almost no cleaning or arranging.



Christmas and a New Year decoration (Brežice, January 1998, photo: M. Habinc). ♦ Okraševanje v času božiča in novega leta (Brežice, januar 1998, foto: M. Habinc).



For the rest of the year tending the graves means that women usually twice a year (in Spring and Autumn) plant flowers and that after winter some people renew the tombstones (if winter has damaged them). Minor damages are repaired by the men in the family, but if larger pieces have broken off of the tombstones or plates, professionals are paid to do it. Practically nobody protects the plates or tombstones during the winter with wooden covers or the like. What people do is protect the flowers from the cold with paper or plastic sheets.

Tending also includes decoration: before the Second World War graves were mostly decorated for the All Saints' Day and for the funerals. On the occasional visits people used to bring flowers, which they put in the vases or simply laid then on the grave. They also used to bring small white candles. Townspeople used to bring flowers from their gardens or they bought them at the florist's. After the world war wreaths became more frequent as a decoration, used not only for funerals (as was common before the war). Flower arrangements appeared as decorations in the 70s. Townspeople bought them at the florist's (some also in nearby Zagreb or in other towns) while women from the villages around Brežice mostly made them themselves from flowers they grew in their gardens. Before using flower work women also stuck flowers, pine or cypress twigs of pines or cypresses in the ground. They arranged them in different forms - hearts, circles, crosses etc. Women used this way of decorating the graves quite generally until the early 70s, but when there was any "emergency situation" as informants called it (for instance when flowers were stolen from a grave) they also used this method in later times. In recent years home-made or purchased flower arrangements made of dried, plastic or exotic flowers are popular.

On the eve of Christmas (or a New Year) people used to (and many still do) take a few pine branches to the graves, ornamented with Christmas tree decorations. Sometimes these bouquets look like small Christmas trees.

Before the Second World War many people, mostly the inhabitants of the town's environs, decorated the graves - some townspeople continue to do so - also for the Easter or Palm-Sunday. They brought a branch of an olive-tree or (more recently) specially decorated flower arrangements or bouquets with candles shaped into an Easter egg. People however stated that it was always risky to leave such rich decoration in the cemetery because it might be stolen. In Spring and in general throughout the year the flowers on the graves follow the seasons: Spring flowers (hellebore, meadow saffron, bell-flowers...) were planted or brought to the cemetery.

Before the Second World War only thin slender white candles were put on the graves without a box to put them in. They were still used sometimes until approximately five years ago<sup>17</sup>. Richer townspeople remember that before the Second World War candles were put in boxes and that there were "eternal lights", either home-made or bought, but they were very rare. Today many people use special electric lights.

People consider a grave to be neglected when the weed on it is half a meter high (FN - Lepšina 1997: 25) and to be well kept if there are fresh flowers on it and a

<sup>17</sup> They were in use mostly at the Day of Remembrance of the Death (today's formal name for the former All Saint's Day) because at that occasion people "needed" a lot of candles and the white thin ones were the cheapest.



Spring flowers (tulips, hellebores, bell-flowers) on a grave (Brežice, April 1998, photo: M. Habine). ♦ Pomladne rože (tulipani, teloh, zvončki) na grobu (Brežice, april 1998, foto: M. Habine).

burning candle. Graves are supposed to be decorated with flowers and candles and nothing else because flowers symbolise love and candle's life<sup>18</sup>. Roses and carnations are thought to be the most appropriate flowers for a cemetery, but this is usually a matter of individual taste. If there are children buried in the grave, the proper colour is thought to be white both for flowers and candles. The cost of arranging and decorating the graves has never had any major effect on the family budget. Informants often said: "*A funeral is expensive, but tending the graves ... it isn't worth mentioning.*"<sup>19</sup> Costs increase when a grave has to be repaired or renovated, but people usually save money for the purpose. People who accept to tend a grave, also decide about its appearance - the tombstone, the inscription etc. Even before the war it was obviously of major importance to the townspeople how a grave looked. On the one hand they may have had less time (for instance inn-keepers) to tend a grave - before and after the war they also paid women from the surrounding villages to cut the grass on the graves and the like - but on the other hand they renovated the appearance of the graves more often. It has always been important what natural stone to choose for the tombstone, what will be written on it, where it will be bought and from whom. And the grave also had to be in a good spot, meaning near or by the cemetery wall. Some informants valued the artistic outlook of the tombstones and intend to keep them the way they were intended to look like. Other people think that a grave

<sup>18</sup> See for example: FN- Habine 1997: 6.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*



The crowd in the Brežice's cemetery on the All Saints' Day (Brežice, November 1, 1997, photo: M. Habinc). ♦  
 Gneča na pokopališču v Brežicah na dan mrtvih (Brežice, 1. november 1997, foto: M. Habinc).

needs renovation when the stone does not look new any more or when it is damaged, that is approximately every 40 years<sup>20</sup>.

When talking about tending the graves in general, people often said that in the past twenty years there has been an explicit tendency towards exaggeration and material symbols (the All Saints' Day was dubbed the Fur Coat Day for instance).

They criticised not only the emphasis on the appearance - referring to it as pretentious - but also irregular visiting. Obviously visiting and tending the graves related to the perception of others and can be valued in two ways: connected with an obligation and duty in the sense of something positive (because of the identification with the family, the village, town etc.) and as something negative when there is no "proper limit" in the expression or material form of the tending. In the course of time this so-called appropriate limit changed in accordance with the general economic and ideological changes in the society (post-war "modesty" turned into "pretentiousness" in the 70s).

<sup>20</sup> It is also a period in which a generation, which is tendings for grave, changes.

## Conclusion

The work carried out in the case study with the classical ethnological methods of observation, participation and intertwining offered some general data and some descriptions. But the links to a specific time sequence or to professional or stratified groups of the town's inhabitants are quite loose. It would be better to pick out a shorter period or to concentrate on just one or two social classes. Particulars have hardly any value for the present because of the increasingly diverse population living in the town or buried in its cemetery.

The picture described in this article is also a picture shaped by informant's belief. In order to establish more certain facts qualitatively and quantitatively, the findings would have to be verified with methods evaluating people's statements. To what extent is what they reveal actually a true, "objective" picture and to what extent is it embellished? In my opinion - this might be a direction for further research on the subject - that drawing up family trees of dead relatives may be a valuable method. Similarly as is done for the living relatives when dealing with the family as one of the basic ethnological subjects, we could draw genealogical trees of the dead relatives. Following a general genealogical tree we could go back into the past for a few generations and collect data where the relatives were buried, why in that place, what is written about them (if anything) on the tombstones etc. By doing this for a substantial sample of people from one period and one social class, I believe the thesis mentioned in my report could be either confirmed or refuted.

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#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

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# ZMANJKALO JE SOLZ

## Konceptualizacija fenomena smrti skozi prostorsko-časovno dimenzijo in tradicionalno vs. moderno dihotomijo na primeru pogrebnih obredov

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Marta Gregorčič

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163

**Ključne besede:** smrt, pogrebni obredi, tradicija, Jessica Mitford, Internet, postmoderna družba

### 1. Uvod

Smrt je na mestu glavne tabu teme mojega časa zamenjala spolnost. Tekmujemo, kdo bo naštel zanimivejše detajle intimnega življenja, o smrti pa nimamo česa povedati. Kratkotrajnost spolnega užitka ni primerljiva z dokončnostjo smrti. Pogrebne šege se malo spreminjajo, na kar vplivajo vera v posmrtno življenje, želja spoštovati, ceniti in spominjati se umrlih, strah in ugibanje, povezana z neznanim, ter končno občutek izgube in porušenje ravnotežja, ki spremljata smrt. Globoko zakoreninjene vrednote, verovanja, prepričanja nam ne dovolijo spreminjati obredov, ki izpolnjujejo našo odgovornost do umrlih, boga, celijo rane tako nam kot tudi družbi. Pogrebne šege so v svojem bistvu konzervativne in tradicionalne. Kadar se spremenijo naglo in v veliki meri, odsevajo dramatične materialne, vedenjske in tudi ideološke spremembe v širši družbi. Modernizacija, industrializacija, visoka tehnologizacija, sekularizacija, globalizacija, mobilnost... so le nekateri od elementov postmoderne družbe, ki se razkrivajo tudi v samem obredu pokopa. Najprej se nameravam v prvih treh poglavjih sprehoditi skozi opis pogrebnih obredov, šeg in pogrebne industrije, ki sem jih spoznala v literaturi, prek interneta, skozi intervjuje (pogovore) ali pa sem jih opazovala na pokopališčih.

Zanimal me je zunanji - kvantitativni čas obredov (obred v času) kot tudi notranje časovne kvalitete obredov (čas v obredu: krajši/daljši oz. počasnejši/hitrejši). Opazovala sem tudi obred v prostoru in sam prostor obreda (tudi specifičen prostor znotraj pokopališča). Skozi tako optiko časa in prostora sem poskušala uzreti tradicionalni (na primerih antične Grčije, starega Rima, zoroastrizma, avstralskih staroselcev in starega slovenskega krščanskega pogreba) in moderni (na primerih: Žale, Trst, Amsterdam; internet) obred pogreba. Pri tem sem namerno nekoliko zanemarila samo komparacijo, ker se mi je zdelo bolj optimalno skozi tradicionalni obred pokazati specifičnosti novih,

modernih obredov (ki se kažejo v zrcalu moderne družbe), predvsem pa z njimi povezane nove procese ali elemente, ki zadevajo sam obred kot 'slovo od umrlega' in hkrati tudi spriznanjenje ali pomiritev žalujočih, bližnjih.

Pri deskripciji pogrebnih obredov sem se naslonila na Van-Gennepovo konceptualizacijo obredov prehoda:

Obred	umrli	žalujoči
SEPARACIJA	od živečih članov družbe	od živečih članov družbe
TRANZICIJA	iz sveta živih v svet mrtvih	iz sveta mrtvih v svet živih
INKORPORACIJA	v svet mrtvih	v svet živih

Separacijo sem (v nasprotju z Van-Gennepom) razumela kot nastop smrti ('mrlič v hiši', 'mrlič v bolnišnici ali kakšni drugi instituciji') in z njo povezane obrede. Transzicijo sem razumela kot konkreten akt pogrebnega obreda (akt pokopa, akt kremiranja) v vseh specifikah. Pri inkorporaciji pa so me zanimale popogrebne šege, sprejetje smrti, 'živost' spomina na umrlega in vključitev žalujočih nazaj v vsakdanji življenjski, rutinski svet.

Če uvod morda zmotno napeljuje, da bom govorila predvsem o žarnih pokopih, naj opozorim, da sem se le-tem v veliki meri odpovedala, saj bi s samim opisovanjem različnih žarnih obredov povedala prav malo novega ali vsaj ne tistega, kar želim povedati. Seveda menim, da so zanimivi in da bi zaradi svoje 'modernosti' nedvomno zaslužili opredelitev. Opozoriti moram tudi še na to, da sem namerno zanemarila cel kup elementov, ki so relevantni pri proučevanju obrednega pogreba (vaško/mestno, nagrobni spomeniki, osmrtnice, pogrebi otrok ali tistih, ki so umrli nasilne smrti - zanje so veljali posebni obredi...), ker sem poskušala poudariti predvsem novejši procese pri sprejemanju smrti svojcev kot tudi novejši procese, ki zadevajo sam obred pokopa. O tem več na koncu.

## 2. Tradicionalni pogrebni obredi glede na prostorsko in časovno dimenzijo v treh momentih

Za antično Grčijo in Rim veljajo določene podobnosti pri pojmovanju smrti, ker je Rim precej prevzel od grške kulture. Kljub temu so pri starih Rimljanih smrt in pokop spremljale zapletene šege, v grški mitologiji pa je smrt štela za nesrečo, nekaj nečistega, kar je zahtevalo celo vrsto pravilno izvedenih postopkov, da ne bi 'okužila' drugih.<sup>1</sup> Tudi pogrebni obredi zoroastrizma<sup>2</sup> so prežeti z mitologijo. Smrt je zmaga hudiča nad dobrim stvarstvom in truplo prebivališče demonov, zato zaradi svoje nečistosti ne sme biti pokopano ali sežgano, da ne bi onečastilo zemlje ali ognja. Avstralski staroselci<sup>3</sup> imajo smrt ved-

<sup>1</sup> Pri spoznavanju pogrebnih obredov Rimljanov in Grkov sem se opirala na: Toynbee, Jocelyn M.C. (1996): "Death and Burial in the Roman World". Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press; Vernat, Jean-Pierre (1991): "Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays", Princeton: Princeton University Press; Janičević, Jovan (1986): "U znaku Moloha: antropološki ogled o žrtvovanju". Beograd: Vajat.

<sup>2</sup> Pri opisovanju pogrebnih obredov zoroastrizma sem se opirala na: Hinnells, John R. (1985): Persian Mythology. Peter Bedrick Books, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Pri opisovanju pogrebnih obredov Aboriginov sem se opirala na: Turner, Ann Warren (1976): Houses for the Dead. New York.

no za umor; človek ne more umreti naravne smrti: kako sicer pojasniti nenadno smrt nekoga, ki je bil tako poln življenja? Sorodniki umrlega morajo najti morilca in pri tem izprašajo vse člane skupnosti. Mrtveca vsi objokujejo ter kažejo druge znake žalovanja tudi zato, da jih ne bi osumili umora (Turner, 1976: 69). Kristjanov, ki so kot Kristusovi udje eno v Kristusu, niti smrt ne more nikdar ločiti.<sup>4</sup> Krščanski pogrebni obredi se razlikujejo glede na regije, zato bom poskušala podati splošen opis. Krščanska cerkev poučarja spoštovanje telesa, pristojno obnašanje in pokopališče kot sveti kraj.

#### a) 'Mrlič v hiši' - separacija

V antičnem Rimu so umirajočega položili na gola tla in najbližji sorodnik je s poljubom ujel njegov zadnji dih in mu zatisnil oči. Navzoči so začeli glasno klicati umrlega po imenu<sup>5</sup> in njegovi domači so, v posebnih oblekah za to priložnost, umili truplo s toplo vodo, ga odišavili in odeli v togo. Truplo je bilo nato izpostavljeno<sup>6</sup> v atriju hiše na mrtvaškem odru, obdano z gorečimi oljenkami in prekrito s kitami in venci cvetja. Mrtvec je pod jezikom nosil novčič za plačilo brodarju mrtvecev - Haronu, da bi duša pokojnega mogla v onostranstvo. V znamenje žalovanja so ugasnili ogenj v domačem ognjišču, jokajoče žene so si pulile lase, trgale obleko in bile po prsih. Grške predpogrebne šege se le malo razlikujejo od rimskih. Truplo je bilo tu le dan ali dva izpostavljeno v hišnem preddverju 'z nogami naprej' - proti vratom. Podobno kot Rimljanke so tudi Grkinje glasno žalovale, se tolkle po prsih, posipale lase s pepelom, s posebnimi pahljačami varovale mrličev obraz pred soncem in muhami. Grki so si v znak žalovanja rezali lase. Najeti žalovalci in žalovalke so prepevali pogrebno žalostinko. Pred vrati hiše z mrličem je stala posoda z vodo, kot simbol, da je mrlič v hiši, in kot simbol očiščenja.

V zoroastrizmu mora biti truplo umito z gomezom,<sup>7</sup> oblečeno v čisto sudre<sup>8</sup> in povezano s kusti.<sup>9</sup> S truplom se ukvarjajo le naras-salas - nosači trupla, saj telo zasede demonka trohnenja in razpada - Nasu, zato se žalujoči truplu ne približujejo. Nasar-salas z žebli ogradijo nečisti prostor okrog mrtveca in pripeljejo psa, da bi potrdil, da je človek res mrtev - sagdid. Navzoči z duhovnikom molijo do pogreba, ki je še isti dan, vendar ne po sončnem zahodu, saj v temi na žive prežijo zle sile. Po Solonovem zakonu je potrebno mrliča odnesti naslednji dan po izpostavitvi trupla in pred svitanjem, da ne bi onečistili sončnih žarkov. Po smrti avstralskega staroselca truplo posujejo z rdečo prstjo, ki spominja na kri, ki je bila prelita ob rojstvu (Turner, 1976: 70). To kaže na ponovno rojstvo umrlega na drugem svetu. Na pokojnikove prsi in trebuh narišejo znak klana v beli in rumeni barvi - verujejo namreč, da ti znaki spreminjajo umrlega v sveto bitje, ki lahko vstopi v svet duhov (Turner, 1976: 71).

<sup>4</sup> Prim. Simeon Solunski, PG 155, 685 B, v: Krščanski pogreb: Slovenski obred: Rimski obrednik kakor ga je prenovil drugi vatikanski cerkveni zbor in ga je razglasil papež Pavel VI, Ljubljana, 1970. Pri opisovanju krščanskega pogreba sem se opirala še na: 'Knjižice' - časopis za duhovno probudo in prosveto (1938, let. 5, št. 119).

<sup>5</sup> To je stara šega, imenovana conelamatio, o kateri je pisal tudi Homer v Odiseji.

<sup>6</sup> Truplo je bilo izpostavljeno največ en teden, vendar pa je to veljalo le za veljake. Reveže in otroke pa so pokopavali brez sežiga navadno še isti dan, sredi noči.

<sup>7</sup> Kravji urin, ki velja za najmočnejše zemeljsko očiščevalno sredstvo.

<sup>8</sup> Sveta srajca iz belega bombaža.

<sup>9</sup> Dolga tkana volnena vrveca.



Smrt katoličana so na Dolenjskem najprej oznanili zvonovi.<sup>10</sup> Domači so ustavili stensko uro, mrliču so v največjem prostoru v hiši pripravili mrtvaški oder, stene so oblekli v črnino in obesili vence. Mrliča so preoblekli in položili na mrtvaški oder. S sklenjenimi rokami je objemal rožni venec. Pred odrom je na mizi stalo cvetje, križ in blagoslovljena voda, da so ga ljudje hodili kropit in zanj molit. Ob straneh so gorele sveče in nad vzglavjem je navadno visela slika ali križ. Mrlič je ležal v hiši 48 ur, tako da ni bilo več mogoče dvomiti o smrti. Svojci so pri bedenju ob mrliču molili, peli psalme ali brali Sveto pismo. Včasih so duhovniki prišli na dom in so s procesijo pospremili mrliča v cerkev, kasneje pa so mrliča pričakali na cesti do cerkve ali pred cerkvenimi vrati.

166

## b) 'Akt pogreba' - tranzicija

Za Rimljane je veljal obred pokopa za slovesnost. Pogrebni sprevod so vodili piskači, tem so sledili flavtisti, hornisti, trobentači; naenia - žena, ki je pela hvalnico umrlemu, nato vzklikajoče žene z lesenimi butarami, prepojenimi z dišečimi smolami; igralci, ki so z mimiko ponazarjali lastnosti umrlega. Tik pred nosili z mrtvim so si žalujoči nadeli voščene maske umrlih prednikov. V črno oblečeni liktorji so nosili odkrito truplo, ki mu je v žalni črnini sledila žalujoča družina. Mesto pokopa ali sežiga je bilo zunaj naselbine,<sup>11</sup> kjer je bila pripravljena bustum.<sup>12</sup> Prastara šega je bila, da so truplu poslednjič odprli in zaprli oči in mu dali poslednji poljub, zatem pa je bližnji sorodnik zažgal grmado, prisotni pa so v ogenj metali cvetje, nakit, hrano, dišave. Z vinom so pogasili žerjavico in umili kosti, ki so jih z dišavami in medom stresli v urno. Med pogrebom so svojci s posebnim obredom izlili pitno daritev bogovom. Kraj sežiga je kasneje krasil s cipresami ograjen oltar - aro -, okrašen s slikami in statuetami, žaro pa so najpogosteje postavili v kolombarij, ki je nosil pokojnikovo ime. Rimljani so pokopavali mrtve tudi v znamenite podzemne katakombe z marmornatimi sarkofagi ali umetno sezidanimi grobnicami, v katere so polagali nakit, keramične figurice, velike jantarne prstane, ki so varovali pred zlimi uroki...<sup>13</sup>

Grško pogrebno povorko, ki je krenila po opravljenem žrtvovanju v hiši pokojnega, je vodila žena s posodo za izlitje žrtve, njej so sledili možje, nato žene<sup>14</sup> in kot zadnji godci s frulicami. Mrtveca so na odru nosili sorodniki ali sužnji ali pa so ga peljali na vozu. Pri Grkih, podobno kot pri Rimljanih, je bilo pokopališče zunaj mestnih zidov. Mrtvega so pokopali ali sežgali. Po sežigu so pepel in kosti zbrali v robec in spravili v žaro, nato pa pokojniku izlili žrtve. Pri Perzijcih pogrebno procesijo vodijo nasar-salas,

<sup>10</sup> To velja vsaj za večji del Dolenjske še danes. (Smrt duhovnika: 3-krat veliki zvon s presledki, smrt moškega: 3-krat mali zvon s presledki, smrt ženske: 2-krat mali zvon s presledki.) Zvonjenje se je ponavljalo 3-krat na dan z vsemi zvonovi, ko so klicali k molitvi.

<sup>11</sup> Nekropole so navadno ležale ob mestnih vpadnicah.

<sup>12</sup> Rimljani so poznali več vrst grmad. Bustum je izkopana grobna jama, nad katero so položili les, nanj pa nosila s truplo in vse skupaj zažgali, ostanke pa nato prekrili z zemljo.

<sup>13</sup> Več o bogati pestrosti predmetov, ki so jih Rimljani polagali v grobove, v: Janičijević, Jovan (1986): "U znaku Moloha: antropološki ogled o žrtvovanju". Beograd: Vajat.

<sup>14</sup> Žene v Grčiji se niso pojavljale v javnosti, tako so se tudi pogrebne udeležile izključno bližnje sorodnice pokojnega.

ki nosijo kovinski mrtvaški oder in z mrtvaškim prtom pokrito truplo; njim sledita dva duhovnika in nato v parih žalujoči, ki med sabo držijo bel kos blaga, da jih povezane varuje pred zlom. Ko v tišini prispejo do dokhma (stolpa tišine), položijo truplo na marmorno ploščo, žalujoči se z zadnjim pogledom poslovijo od umrlega in še zadnjič izvedejo sagdid. Nato truplo v dokhmi izpostavijo jastrebom. Žalujoči se po poti domov umivajo in molijo za očiščenje, nasar-salas pa se lahko vključijo v družbo po devetdnevnem očiščevalnem obredu.

Avstralski staroselci položijo truplo v drevesno deblo, kjer leži tri mesece. Očistijo kosti, jih 2-3 mesece opazujejo, da se prepričajo, ali jih je duh zapustil, nato jih zložijo v deblo, ki ga položijo na sredo tabora (Turner, 1976: 76). Krščanski pogrebni sprevod je vodil duhovnik s strežniki, ki so nosili križ, kropilo z blagoslovljeno vodo, kadilnico in večno luč. Njim so sledili pogrebci s krsto. To so včasih peljali na vozovih, kasneje avtomobilih ali na traktorjih. Za krsto so hodili svojci, bližnji. Kar zadeva nadaljnjo razvrstitev, obstajajo spet različne šege.<sup>15</sup> Med potjo so molili in peli. Pogrebni sprevod je najprej peljal v cerkev, kjer so pri opravi božje besede poslušali tolažbo upanja, darovali evharistično daritev in pozdravili rajnega s posebnim slovesom. Opravili so tudi obred absolucije ("reši me"), ki so ga kasneje imenovali 'poslednje priporočanje in slovo', kar je pomenilo nekakšno oproščanje grehov rajnega, ko krščansko občestvo skupno pozdravi svojega člana, preden ga pokopljejo. Ta obred je bil večkrat izvršen na pokopališču. Ko so duhovnik in verniki spremljali rajnega na pokopališče, so molili ali peli. Tu je duhovnik opravil verski obred: kropljenje groba v znamenju sv. križa in s tem blagoslov, nato blagoslov telesa in na koncu je na krsto spustil zemljo.<sup>16</sup> Pogrebni akt se je lahko končal s pesmijo.

### e) 'Popogrebni obredi' - inkorporacija

Rimljani so se tudi po smrti na različne načine spominjali pokojnega. Na grob so prinašali cvetje in darila in v njegov spomin opravljali obrede. V grobno jamo so porinili cevko, po kateri so spuščali mrtvemu jedačo in pijačo.<sup>17</sup> Grki so po pogrebu odšli na žalujoči dom, kjer so morali, da bi se rešili najhujše nečistosti, ki so jo pridobili v stiku s smrtjo, opraviti pomembne obrede očiščevanja, temu pa je sledila žalna gostija. Naslednji dan je bila hiša očiščena z vodo in dišavami in v znak kultnega spoštovanja pokojnika se je gostija ponovila tretji, deveti in trideseti dan po pokopu in ob obletnici smrti.

Zoroastrijci molijo in opravljajo posebne obrede skupaj z duhovnikom prve tri dni, ko duša potuje v večnost. Posebni obredi sledijo še vse leto po točno določenih intervalih, ko v veselju vabijo mrtve k praznovanju živih. Avstralski staroselci poskušajo pomagati umrlemu na njegovi poti v svet duhov, zato opazujejo kosti umrlega, da bi se prepričali, ali je njegov duh uspešno prešel na oni svet. Do mrtvih se torej obnašajo zelo

<sup>15</sup> Na Dolenjskem niso poznali posebnih navad. Drugod po Sloveniji pa so svojcem najprej sledili mladi moški, nato poročeni moški z družino, na koncu so hodile ženske ali je veljal spet obratni vrstni red...

<sup>16</sup> Blagoslov, voda, zemlja - imajo v krščanstvu simbolni pomen: ...sprejmi zemlja, kar je tvojega... z nebeško roso naj orosi tvojo dušo Bog..., iz prsti si ga naredil, s kostmi in kitami si ga sklenil, obudi ga poslednji dan..., Gospod, daj mu večni mir in pokoj in večna luč naj mu sveti...

<sup>17</sup> Ta šega še danes živi med pravoslavni v Evropi.

spoštljivo in skrbno. Katoliki so poznali šego, da so se po pogrebu, ki mu je sledila gostija, še sedem dni zbirali na domu pokojnega, kjer so peli, molili in obujali spomine na mrtvega. Udeležili so se tudi sedmine, tridesetega dne in obletnice pogreba. Prav tako so se rajnih spominjali ob cerkvenih praznikih - npr. ob veliki noči, kjer so se bodrili v veri v vstajenje in ponovno snidenje.

### 3. Moderni pogrebni obredi skozi prostorsko in časovno dimenzijo (separacija - tranzicija - inkorporacija)

168

Danes smrt ne nastopi več na domu, pač pa v bolnišnicah, zavodih, ustanovah. Domači mrliča ne vidijo in z njim nimajo nikakršnih opravkov, saj truplo prevzamejo pogrebni servisi. Prva postaja za truplo je hladilnica, kjer na ljubljanskih Žalah<sup>18</sup> truplo tudi po teden dni čaka na upepelitev. Svoji pokojnega ne morejo obiskati in "slovo" je le zadnja ura ali zadnje minute v obredu. Kljub temu da Žale pesti problem časa, da se pogrebi odvijajo vsako uro (ko je umrljivost večja pa vsake pol ure<sup>19</sup>), je krščanski pogreb ohranil vse tri dele obreda: prvi del, ki se je nekoč odvijal na domu, danes opravijo pred mrliško vežico, drugi del v cerkvi ali v katafalku - pred Plečnikovo molilnico, tretji del pa na samem grobu. Pri žarnem pogrebu smo Slovenci izoblikovali poseben obred - izognili smo se "slovesu" in imamo le "pogreb"<sup>20</sup>.

Pri krščanskem pogrebu opozorimo še na eno spremembo, ki jo je uvedel drugi vatikanski cerkveni zbor 1970. leta; dejstvo, da smrti ne gre več zavijati v črnino in obup, pač pa v vero v vstajenje, črnino zamenja upanje, kar se kaže v oblačilih, molitvah, nagovorih... Žale so posebnost v tem, da je arhitekt Plečnik že 30 let pred vatikanskim koncilom zaslutil ne le arhitekturni, pač pa tudi verski pogled na smrt in črnino zamenjal z belino. Žale kljub urbani stiski poskušajo ohraniti 'človeške' obrede, kar pa za nekatera velika evropska mesta na velja več.

Samo pogled na pokopališče Sv. Anne v Trstu pove, da je tam velika prostorska stiska. Grobovi so nametani vseprek in stisnjeni drug poleg drugega, kolikor prostor dopušča. Mešajo se različni slogi in oblike. Mogočnim grobnicam in velikim družinskim kapelam danes konkurirajo 'serijski grobovi'. V tako imenovane 'serijske grobove' pokopljejo 48 neznancev, ki jih veže le isti časovni termin smrti. Nova grobišča so v obliki betonskih ploščadi, kajti ne pokopavajo v zemljo, ampak vlagajo krste v podzemlje. Namesto nagrobnih spomenikov imajo skupno betonsko korito za rože v obliki križa ali črke T (ti so ob koncih vrst), v velikosti 2x7m, ki pa je mnogokrat prazno ali poraslo s travo. Vsako korito ima 48 serijskih števil, ki se ujemajo s serijskimi številkami v podzemlju, kjer so nameščene krste. Vsakemu pokojnemu tako na korito s serijsko številko prilepijo ploščico z njegovim imenom, letnico rojstva in smrti in navadno do-

<sup>18</sup> Žale predstavljam na podlagi pogovora z gospodom Antonom Rojcem.

<sup>19</sup> Prehodi iz zime na pomlad, jesensko obdobje, včasih tudi poletno obdobje...

<sup>20</sup> To pomeni, da imamo samo zadnji del - drugod po svetu pa je ravno obratno.

dajo še sliko. Poleg vsake serijske številke pa je majhna luknjica v obliki kroga, kamor je možno namestiti vazo z rožami. Korita si v vrsti sledijo v razmiku enega metra. Med vrstami, ki so vzporedne, so hodniki ali ulice s pokritimi jaški, skozi katere s posebno pripravo spustijo krsto v podzemlje. Vendar je to podzemlje le začasni dom pokojnega, kajti po 10 – 15-ih letih krste potegnejo iz podzemlja,<sup>21</sup> jih sežgejo in s tem pridobijo prazne prostore za nove krste. Samo v primeru, če svojci plačajo novi prostor za žaro ali 'serijsko' pokopališče z žarami, pokojnemu zopet pripada tablica z napisom na posebnih stenah ali betonskih panojih, sicer pa njegovo ime izgine.<sup>22</sup>

Poleg očitne prostorske stiske pokopališče Sv. Anne v Trstu pesti še časovna stiska, ki se kaže ob obredu pokopa. Pri civilnem pogrebu svojci pospremiijo krsto iz mrliške vežice do kraja pokopa, kjer delavci krsto postavijo na posebno pripravo in jo spustijo v podzemlje. Zatem se v podzemlje spustita tudi dva od delavcev in vložita krsto pod zaporedno številko. Eden od delavcev svojcem pokaže serijsko številko, pod katero nalepijo ploščico s pokojnikovimi podatki, in tako se obred po dveh minutah konča, brez govora ali kakšne pristojne osebe. Tako kot mene, ki sem pokop zgolj opazovala, je tudi svojce, ki verjetno niso poznali 'modernih' šeg, poleg kratkosti obreda presenetila še ena malenkost. Ko so prisotni po teh dveh minutah hoteli še zadnjič stisniti roko žalujočim ali jim morda nameniti spodbudno besedo, so presenečeni ugotovili, da se morajo kar najhitreje odstraniti, saj so pogrebni delavci že prinašali naslednjo krsto. Cerkevni pokop se ne razlikuje mnogo od civilnega. Traja za spoznanje dlje - to je 3.48 minute. Ko duhovnik spregovori zadnje besede in simbolno z lopatko na krsto položi zemljo, krsto spustijo v podzemlje. Temu sledi že opisan nadaljnji potek, vključno s tistim, ko delavci zopet prinesejo naslednjo krsto in se morajo žalujoči umakniti naslednjim žalujočim...

Absolutni kontrast opisanim novim, 'modernim', 'mašinskim' pokopom, s katerimi se soočajo številni svojci na prenatrpanih (predvsem mestnih) pokopališčih, je De Nieuwe Ooster v Amsterdamu. Govorim o 33 hektarjev velikem, arhitektonsko konstruiranem parku in pokopališču obenem. Naravni in kulturni park je s svojim intimnim značajem in veličastnimi spomeniki območje, ki nudi več kot le kremiranje in pokopavanje ali obisk svojcev. Narava in spomeniki nudijo ogledalo časa v socialnem in kulturnem pomenu. Zelenice, ogromna, stara drevesa in raznovrstno grmičevje popestrijo ptičje petje, ježi, fazani, zajci... Moja pozornost je pritegnila predvsem raznovrstnost, vendar ne razkošnost nagrobnih spomenikov. Pokopališče je razdeljeno v 82 con, ki jih ločuje široka peščena cesta. Cone se med seboj razlikujejo v slogu ali obliki nagrobnih spomenikov, ki so razvrščeni glede na leto smrti ali glede na slog pogreba, narodnost umrlega... Ponudba pogrebnih servisov se tu ne razlikuje veliko od ameriške, ki je podrobno opisana v naslednjem poglavju. Samega obreda pogreba nisem imela možnost opazovati, pa si kljub temu upam trditi, da se močno razlikuje od obreda v Trstu.

<sup>21</sup> O tem sem se tudi prepričala, saj sem videla delavce, ki so sredi popoldneva iz podzemlja vlekli razpadle krste, iz katerih so gledale kosti ali ostanki trupla.

<sup>22</sup> Njihov pepel verjetno shranjujejo na kakšnem skupnem pokopališču ali prostoru.

## 4. Pogrebna industrija na internetu in v delih Jessice Mitford

Tako imenovani pogrebniiki (preden je prišlo do sprememb v terminologiji) se niso ukvarjali samo z vodenjem pogrebnih zavodov: izdelovalci pohištva so delali krste, družinski člani so pripravili vse potrebno za pogreb. Ponavadi so truplo opazovali ne zaradi želje - vtisniti si pokojnika v spomin - pač pa da bi preprečili morebitno pomoto. Moderno pogrebno podjetje je iznajdba podjetnika, ki je zaslutil, da je mogoče s ponudbo pogrebnih storitev na enem mestu dobro zaslužiti. S podporo kapitala prepričane oblasti odobrijo podjetniško iniciativo. Je torej res mogoče govoriti o pogrebni industriji? Vsekakor! Delo Jessice Mitford *The American Way of Death* razkrinka vse črne plati pogrebne industrije. Skepticizem, ki se je na začetku porajal ob tem šokantnem besedilu, se je razblinil, če jo preverimo na Internetu. Svetovni splet razkriva 1132 spletnih strani na temo smrti, 21772 na temo pogreba, 13885 strani o pogrebnem obredju, 36711 o pogrebnih podjetjih, 3827 o krstah... Na voljo je ogromno informacij o različnih pogrebnih obredih, mrliških vežicah, pogrebnih zavodih, organizaciji spominskih slovesnosti, pripravah na pogreb in čas po njem,<sup>23</sup> balzamiranju, glasbeni spremljavi, cvetličarjih, darovanju telesa, oblačenju in kozmetični obdelavi trupel, obisku pokojnika, bedenju pri njem,<sup>24</sup> o cerkvah, kapelah, izbiri krst in žar,<sup>25</sup> hranjenju trupel v hladilnici, mumificiranju, spominkih<sup>26</sup> ... (Precej naštetega je na voljo ne le umrlim ljudem, temveč tudi hišnim ljubljencem.)

Če ne bi poznali črne plati pogrebne industrije, bi bilo potrebno navdušeno pozdraviti samo zamisel, pomagati ljudem v prelomnem (morda najtežjem) trenutku, ko so izgubili bližnjega. Ker pa v moderni družbi vsaka velika ideja sloni na profitu, realnost pokaže, da je pogrebna industrija ena izmed najpohlepnejših, saj služi na račun žalujočih. Pogrebni industriji je uspelo prevrednotiti ali razvrednotiti pogrebni obred. Danes prej kot o slovesu od umrlega in kreiranju obreda lahko govoritmo o kompliciranem poigravanju s ponodbami pogrebnih direktorjev in denarjem žalujočih. Naj najprej opozorim le na nekaj nepravilnosti ali načinov manipuliranja, ki jih hitro opazimo ob prebiranju pogrebnih ponudb in pritožb nanje na internetu. Pri svojih ugotovitvah pa se bom oprla predvsem na Jessico Mitford in njeno precizno kritiko.

Najprej naj opozorim na ogromne razlike v ceni med posameznimi pogrebnimi zavodi za enake ponudbe.<sup>27</sup> Hvalospevi izdelkom in pretirano besedičenju pogrebnih poslovnežev vsiljujeta opcije, kaj bi pokojni najbolj želel oz. kaj bi si zaslužil. Pogrebni zavodi ponujajo "pogrebne pakete", ki naj bi svojem pomagali pri izbiri ustreznih po-

<sup>23</sup> Tako imenovane "post-need services", ki skrbijo za potrebe žalujočih po pogrebu, obsegajo od pomoči pri izpolnjevanju raznih obrazcev do sponse knjig z relevantno vsebino in organizacije terapije za odrasle in otroke...

<sup>24</sup> Enkratni obisk \$185.00, poldnevno bedenje \$285.00, celodnevno \$385.00.

<sup>25</sup> Ker sem prepričana, da ne znam opisati izjemno raznolike ponudbe caskets (neke vrste krsta), predlagam, da si kot primer ogledate Virgil T. GOLDEN Funeral Service casket price list: <http://www.golden-funeralservice.com/caskets.html> - in spoznate pogrebno industrijo iz prve roke.

<sup>26</sup> Zahvalna pisma, seznam pogrebcev, molitve, osmrtnice, razpelo, program spominske slovesnosti, sveče...

<sup>27</sup> Do 4-kratna razlika za 'casket' iz enakega materiala, barve...

grebnih storitev. Tako so mnogokrat prisiljeni plačati tudi storitve, ki jih ne potrebujejo ali ne želijo. Pogrebni direktor nadzoruje celotno dogajanje po smrti. Funkcionira kot glavni igralec pogrebne ceremonije, oskrbnik trupla in koordinator z njim povezanih dejavnosti. Poznavanje njegove vloge je ključno pri razumevanju s smrtjo povezanih obredov v sodobni družbi.<sup>28</sup>

Gre za paradoks: na eni strani družine, ki so izgubile ne le bližnje, pač pa jim je bil onemogočen tudi način pokopa, ki bi ga želeli, in na drugi strani t. i. "tradicionalni obredi", ki so jih ustvarili pogrebni poslovneži zaradi za dobička, nadzora nad žalostjo svojcev in razrednega položaja.<sup>29</sup> Nekdanje "coffins" (krste) so danes zamenjale "caskets" v vseh možnih oblikah, barvah in 'presenetljivo dobrih' materialih, ki uničijo truplo veliko hitreje ter preprečijo, da bi ga napadli črvi in mravlje, pač pa ga napadajo plesni v vseh barvah in oblikah.<sup>30</sup> T.i. "pre-pay plan"<sup>31</sup> (plačilo za pogreb še za časa življenja) znašajo običajno veliko več kot pogreb, ki ga naročijo svoji; po večini se ga ne da odpovedati, v primeru odpovedi stroški navadno niso vrnjeni v celoti ali sploh niso vrnjeni; mnogi ne dobijo pogreba, ki so ga naročili... Kiber-spominki<sup>32</sup> naj bi izražali našo bolečino in častili spomin na pokojnega, pa temu navadno ni tako.

Pogrebe lahko razdelimo na takojšnje pokope (tj. brez kakršnegakoli obreda), tradicionalne pogrebe, sežige, ki jih spremlja pogreb, in sežige brez obreda. Takojšnje pokope izvršujejo ob smrti brezdomcev in tistih, ki ne morejo kriti stroškov pogreba. Kremiranje je danes prepovedano pri ortodoksnih judih, parsih, muslimanih in pravoslavni Grkih, običajno pa pri hindujcih in tudi že pri krščanskih pogrebi. V zemlji zakopano telo razpada počasi, naravno. Pri upepelitvi pride do zelo hitrega, nenadnega razpada. Pri tradicionalnem pogrebu predajamo telo bogu in zemlji, pri čemer sta združeni naravna in nadnaravna komponenta. Sodobna upepelitev pa je tehnološki postopek, ki pokojnika zelo hitro pretvori iz enega v drugo stanje. Leta 789 je Karel Veliki zagrozil s smrtno kaznijo vsakomur, ki bi se ukvarjal s kremiranjem trupel. To početje je veljalo za nekrščansko, saj sežgano telo po smrti ne bi moglo vstati od mrtvih. Prvi sežig trupla v ZDA so opravili 1876. leta v Washingtonu, v Angliji pa 7 let pozneje (Hatfield, 1993). Katoliška cerkev je trikrat ostro obsodila sežiganje trupel (1886, 1918 in 1926).<sup>33</sup>

V Ameriki iz leta v leto sežejo več trupel, ne zaradi mode ali želje pokojnega. Tako imenovani tradicionalni pogrebni obredi so v svojih izpopolnjenih detajlih na-

<sup>28</sup> Več o tem v: *Death, Value, and Meaning Series* by John D. Morgan (1993).

<sup>29</sup> Pogrebnički so zabrisali spomin na religiozne obrede in družinske tradicije na račun lastnega dobička.

<sup>30</sup> Več o tem Jessica Mitford. Ali so pogrebna podjetja, ki povzročajo uničenje trupel, silijo stranke, da kupujejo krste iz škodljivih materialov in jim za to mastno zaračunajo, res "ugledna", "čuteča" in "skrbna", za kakršna se razglasajo?

<sup>31</sup> Nosilci pogrebne industrije naštevajo mnogo "utemeljenih" razlogov za 'plačanje pogreba še za časa življenja' (npr.: olajšali boste bolečino svojcev, prihrankov vam ne bo požrla inflacija, sami boste določili obliko in trajanje pogrebnega obreda in tudi pri načrtovanju boste lahko sodelovali; tako se boste izognili nasoglasjem med družinskimi člani, pomirjeni bodo tako oni kot vi...).

<sup>32</sup> Nekaj primerov: Highgate Cemetery, New Orleans, Online Memoria, The World Wide Cemetery, DeathNET, Rivendell In Memoriam, The Virtual Memorial Garden, The DAV Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire, New Mexico...

<sup>33</sup> Več o tem 'Knjižice' - časopis za duhovno probudo in prosveto (1938, let. 5, št. 119).

menjeni le še eliti, zato raste povpraševanje po (cenejšem) kremiranju. Ker pa pogrebni direktorji neradi izgublajo svoje radodarne stranke, okoliščinam primerno višajo tudi ceno kremiranja.

Čeprav je v ZDA še vedno več tradicionalnih pogrebov, število upepelitev narašča (med letoma 1990 in 1995 naraslo s 17% na 24%). Število Američanov, ki načrtuje upepelitev, se je v tem času povečalo s 37% na 43%; interes za upepelitev narašča s starostjo, stopnjo izobrazbe in zaslužkom... Upepelitev je precej cenejša od tradicionalnega pogreba... V 23% primerov žaro s pepelom vrnejo družini, 16% jih pokopljejo ali shranijo na pokopališču, 6% jih svojci raztresejo po zemlji ali morju. V večini primerov (54%) svojci pepel preprosto pustijo pogrebniemu zavodu.<sup>34</sup> V študiji o upepelitvah v Angliji Jupp navaja, da se zanje odločajo mestni, predmestni in na podeželje priseljeni prebivalci, za tradicionalni pogreb pa tisti, ki že dalj časa živijo na podeželju.

Opozorila sem le na nekaj očitnih primerov zlorabe pogrebnih servisov, veliko bolj pa so šokantne ugotovitve Jessice Mitford. Prva raziskovalna študija Jessice Mitford "The American Way of Death" (1963)<sup>35</sup> razkriva pohlep, skomercializiranost in zlorabe ameriške pogrebne industrije. Knjiga je postala uspešnica in je sprožila veliko polemik o moralnosti in načinih dela pogrebne industrije, ki se je poigrala z ameriško javnostjo. Beremo jo lahko kot satiro ali kot neomajno kritiko potrošniške družbe in manipulacije s ponudbo in povpraševanjem. Mitfordova je raziskala novi besednjak smrti, v katerem ni več mesta za pogrebne krste in mrliške vozove. Danes se govori o "pogrebnih direktorjih", "bivališčih" in "transportnih sredstvih". Rože so "cvetni spomin", trupla vedno "ljubljene osebe", pepel je "pepelnata zapuščina", pare "kraj počitka"... Ena od posledic je, da stroški pogrebov naraščajo hitreje kot življenjski stroški.

Natanko 35 let po prvi izdaji je Mitfordova objavila novo, dopolnjeno: "The American Way of Death Revisited",<sup>36</sup> kajti v pogrebni industriji je prišlo do mnogih sprememb in le redke so bile na bolje. Spremembe Mitfordova razdeli v tri glavne kategorije: prvič, upepelitev, včasih najcenejši način pogreba, postaja čedalje dražja, pogrebna podjetja pa delajo iz nje čedalje bolj zapleten obred. Drugič: težko pričakovani odlok zvezne trgovinske komisije, ki naj bi pokrival to področje, ima veliko pomanjkljivosti. Najbolj zaskrbljujoče pa je dejstvo, da se je v zadnjih petnajstih letih močno razširilo monopolno lastništvo prej neodvisnih mrtvašnic in pokopališč. Stroški pogrebov so dramatično (desetkratno) narasli. Pogrebna industrija je velik posel, v katerem čedalje bolj prevladujejo velike korporacije, ki imajo v lasti ogromno mrliških vozov, limuzin, storitvenih vozil, v službi pa cel spekter pisarniških delavcev, od računovodij do obdelovalcev podatkov, ki skrbijo za potrebe več kot pol ducata nekdanj neodvisnih pogrebnih

<sup>34</sup> Po Brad Edmondson: The Facts of Death (American Demographics magazine, April 1997) - [http://www.demographics.com/publications/ad/97\\_ad/9704\\_ad/ad970427.htm](http://www.demographics.com/publications/ad/97_ad/9704_ad/ad970427.htm)

<sup>35</sup> Pred tem je Mitfordova kot reakcijo na pojav revij, ki so se ukvarjale s ponudbo pogrebnih storitev (The Mortuary Management, Casket and Sunny Side, The Journal of Creative Ideas for Cemeteries...), objavila članek "Sveti Peter, ne drzni si me poklicati" ("St. Peter, Don't You Call Me"). S tem je sprožila veliko člankov na to temo - npr.: v Saturday Evening Postu je Roul Tunley objavil članek "Si lahko privoščite smrt" ("Can you Afford to Die").

<sup>36</sup> Večino poglavij (A Global Village of the Dead, Pay Now - Die Poorer, New Hope for the Dead ...) v prenovljeni izdaji je Jessica Mitford napisala sama, preden je leta 1996 nepričakovano umrla za rakom. Knjigo so dokončali njeni asistentki Karen Leonard in Lisa Carlson ter njen mož Robert Treuhaft.

podjetij. Pogrebna industrija je zdaj verjetno večji posel kot kdajkoli poprej in je odkrila nov vir dohodkov - kupovanje parcel za grobove vnaprej. Skupno je bilo v te nakupe v zadnjem času vloženi 20 milijard dolarjev (v letu 1961 le milijarda dolarjev). Načelo, ki velja za industrijo, je še vedno isto: to je posel velikih razsežnosti, v katerem se neprestano uporabljajo evfemizmi in olepšave, ki trkajo na domišljijo Američanov in njihovo željo po urejenosti. V boljšem in morda pametnejšem svetu bi bili pogrebi skromnejši in preprostejši, kot so npr. v drugih deželah, zlasti v tistih, ki jih še ni pozlatil ameriški "Midasov dotik" (Jonathan Yardley, 1998).<sup>37</sup>

Mitfordova želi zrušiti mit o pogrebi: mit o tem, da sodobni pogrebi temeljijo na ameriški tradiciji; da javnost dobiva, kar želi, vendar pa so stroški pogreba spremenljivi ne glede na posameznikov okus, ampak glede na to, kaj bo pogrebna industrija prinesla; in končno psihiatrične teorije, ki stojijo za njo, in zagotavljajo, da je trajna spominska slika ali zadnji pogled na umrlega terapija za žalujoče. Na nepravilnosti pogrebne industrije in njenih direktorjev pa ne opozarja le Jessica Mitford, pač pa je bilo na to temo napisanih ogromno člankov in knjig.<sup>38</sup> Slovenija premore odliččen primer pogrebne industrije: monopolno javno podjetje Žale d.o.o. z monopolnimi cenami. Zaradi prostorske stiske in estetike so preuredili zapuščene grobove in iznašli novo pogrebno filozofijo, da gredo 'vnaprej pripravljeni grobovi' dobro ali bolje v promet.<sup>39</sup>

Moje lastno opažanje pogrebne industrije, besedila, pa tudi vse dostopne informacije na internetu so me privedli do spoznanja, da ne gre zgolj za moderno ekonomijo pogrebnih servisov, pač pa za nekaj več! Lakomnost pogrebne industrije in njeno profitno cvetenje, z vsak dan lepšim cvetom, je zgolj posledica želje svojcev, da bi šlo to trpljenje (truplo) ne glede na ceno mimo njih. Znebiti se trupla hitro, tiho, nemoteče, komaj opazno, po receptu pogrebnega direktorja, brez velikega žalovanja, objokovanja in velikih družinskih ceremonij za pripravo na končni, poslovilni obred. Ali v moderni družbi denar prevzame terapevtsko vlogo in zaceli bolečino, ki se je zarezala ob izgubi? Bi pogrebna industrija res lahko nemoteno cvetela v svojem profitu na tako očiten način, če ne bi držala v svojih krempljih umazanega dela - tabuja smrti, mrliča, trupla... - nad katerim si akter moderne družbe z denarjem umije roke?!

## 5. Postmoderna družba, novi obredi in novo razmerje procesov

Renoviranje starih tradicionalnih obredov, ki se s svojo 'mašinskostjo', hitrostjo... prilagajajo moderni, kompleksni družbi in modernemu načinu življenja, in nastanek (pojav) modernih, povsem novih obredov, kot sta npr. kremiranje in kiber-spominki, s sabo prinašajo nove procese tako v načinu izvedbe obreda kot tudi v načinu spreje-

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/WPlate/1998-08/02/0281-080298-idx.html>

<sup>38</sup> Navajam jih le nekaj: The High Cost of Dying, Ruth Harmer (1963); The Truth About Funerals: How to Beat the High Cost of Dying, Donald Flynn (1993), Canada: Dealing Creatively With Death: A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial, Ernest Morgen (1994), Profits of Death, Darryl J. Roberts (1997)...

<sup>39</sup> Več o Žalah d.o.o v Mladini (1998), 40, str. 24-25.



manja 'izgube'. Gre za nova razmerja naslednjih procesov ali elementov, ki med sabo sovpadajo, se prepletajo in dopolnjujejo:

- (de)personalizacije
- (ne)formalnosti
- (aktivne/pasivne) participacije
- sekularizacije
- inkluzivnosti/ekskluzivnosti
- ritualizacije/reritualizacije/deritualizacije
- (de)teritorializacije

Pri obredu pogreba gre danes tako za proces personalizacije kot tudi depersonalizacije. Na eni strani Amerika z visoko razvito pogrebno industrijo, kjer si danes lahko posameznik pred smrtjo ali njegovi svojci po smrti privoščijo na pogrebu katero koli zvrst glasbe, katero koli znamko avtomobila ... Ker je smrt najbolj oseben in ireverzibilen akt, svojci želijo pogostiti sebe in svojega preminulega s spoštljivim, osebnim in ne-standardiziranim, spontanim pogrebom.<sup>40</sup> Kitajsko verovanje, da so mrtvi še vedno živi, samo v drugem svetu, lepo ilustrira daoistična praksa sežiganja potrebščin iz papirja. Le-te naj bi umrli uporabljali v postmodernem življenju: papirnate avtomobile, hiše, celo služabnike. To nima nič opraviti z vraževernostjo, na to gledajo kot na obred, ki pokaže njihovo skrb in spoštovanje do umrlih.<sup>41</sup> Personalizacija se kaže tudi na nagrobnikih. Nekdanje verske simbole danes pogosto nadomeščajo kipi, skulpture..., ki simbolizirajo pokojnikov karakter ali njegov hobi oz. stvari, ki ga kakorkoli označujejo, ali preprosto stvari, ki jih je imel rad.<sup>42</sup> Vsi ti novi simboli hočejo poudariti mogočnost, trdnost in karakter umrlega. Personalizacija nagrobnikov je še bolj očitna pri otroških grobovih, ki so polni raznovrstnih igrač, kar bi bilo skozi očala tradicionalne družbe prej nespodobno kot želeno.

Opisana personalizacija je neke vrste upor rutinskim, depersonaliziranim pogrebom in depersonalni, standardizirani družbi. Proces personalizacije v pogrebnih obredih, ki je danes prej izjema kot pravilo in od svojcev terja znatno vsoto denarja, se navadno odvija pri pogrebih slavnih oseb, kjer ne manjka emocionalno nabitih poslovnih govorov in vseh ugodnosti pogrebne industrije,<sup>43</sup> po drugi strani pa je neke vrste personalizacija prisotna tudi na vaških pogrebi. Danes se je kot pravilo, skladno z množičnim mašinskim, serijskim pokopavanjem in časovno in prostorsko stisko moderne družbe, uveljavil proces depersonalizacije. Serijske pokope v Trstu izvajajo vsakih 5 minut, na Žalah vsake pol ure. Sorodniki, svojci pri obredu ne sodelujejo, pač pa se sku-

<sup>40</sup> Npr.: v Ameriki zalujoči ob raztresanju pepela spontano izrekajo govore - povsem osebne - svojemu pokojnemu in s tem aktivno in osebno kreirajo pogrebni obred.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.cuhk.hk/journal/varsity/9503/dead.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Npr. na ljubljanskih Žalah lahko opazimo kipece ali skulpture: nogometno žogo, letalo, violino, doprsne kipe, orle - vendar so le ti, vsaj za Slovenijo izjemni. Personalizacija se je kazala na amsterdamskem pokopališču, predsem na novejših grobovih. Tu ne gre več za nagrobne spomenike, pač pa za 1x1m velike 'vrtičke', posute z najrazličnejšimi kamni, porasle z različnim cvetjem, polne kipecev, predmetov, igrač, školjk - ki naredijo na obiskovalca simpatičen in prijeten vtis - in so daleč od kiča...

<sup>43</sup> O personalizaciji pogrebnega obreda lahko govorimo v primerih, ko si svojci to lahko privoščijo, oz. glede na status.

šajo prilagajati standardiziranemu vzorec obreda, ki ga vodi ali duhovnik ali pogrebni direktor ali (npr. v Trstu) kar navaden delavec v umazani delavski obleki. Obredi postajajo hipni, momentalni. Pri cerkvenih pogrebnih maše časovno več ne sovpadajo s pogrebom, ampak so nekaj ur kasneje ali jih sploh ni.

Depersonalizacija sovpada tudi z večjo stopnjo formalnosti, kar zadeva potek obreda in govore. Gre za točno določen vzorec obreda, ki ga navadno pozna le pogrebni direktor in njegovi pristaši, svojci pa kot izgubljene ovce sledijo njihovim zahtevam. Neformalni, spontani govori ob posipanju pepela in medsebojna izmenjava lepih spominov ali dogodkov pokojnega so spet prej redkost kot pravilo. Na drugi strani pa je vse nižja stopnja formalnosti vidna v oblekah, načinu obnašanja svojcev in tudi prostor - nekdanj cerkev ali kapelo - danes pogosto zamenja zunanji ozvočeni prostor, namenjen predvsem za žarne obrede.

Pasivna vključenost v obred ali neparticipacija pri obredu je ena od naslednjih smernic, ki se kažejo pri modernih obredih. Le redko<sup>44</sup> je zaslediti obrede pokopa, kjer svojci želijo ali potrebujejo aktivno participacijo in kreiranje pogreba. V ZDA so nekatere tradicionalne obrede priredili tako, da lahko svojci umrlega v njih sodelujejo: za- pojejo, preberejo pesem, ki so jo napisali posebej za to priložnost, povedo anekdoto o umrlem... Danes pobudnik ceremonije nastopa predvsem kot organizator ter nima osrednje vloge pri samem dogodku. Pa vendar so to spet redkejši primeri, kot pa vsakodnevni neparticipativni, mašinski pogrebi. Iz besedil Jessice Mitford je več kot očitno, da so subjekt pogrebnih obredov mnogokrat direktorji, in ne svojci oz. umrli, katerim naj bi bil dejansko obred namenjen.

Naslednji element sodobnih tako pogrebnih obredov kot tudi nagrobnih spomenikov je sekularizacija. Pogrebi se odvijajo na posvetnih lokacijah, brez prisotnosti duhovščine, brez verskih liturgij, glasbe in simbolov. Prav tako prihaja do mešanja posvetne in posvečene zemlje. Maše kot sedmina in trideseti dan se v mestih le redko opravljajo, navadno v primerih, ko svojci za to zaprosijo, pa tudi takrat navadno duhovniki mašujejo 'prazni cerkvi'.<sup>45</sup> Sekularizaciji se zoperstavlja strah pred smrtjo, neznanim, bogaboječnost..., kar se je pri Slovencih pokazalo v raziskavi SJM (91/1), kjer je 73% anketirancev menilo, da je ob smrti potreben verski obred, pa čeprav jih je le 23% verjelo v življenje po smrti oz. 37% v dušo oz. 55% v Boga.<sup>46</sup>

Glede na zapletena razmerja v sodobni družbi ter naraščujoče verske, rasne, etnične in kulturne razlike, današnje ceremonije in rituali vključujejo čedalje več žalujočih. Če so nekdanj mrtvega na zadnji poti pospremili družina, sorodniki in vaščani ali sosedje iz bližnje okolice, ki so ga poznali, je današnja pogrebna 'povorka' med sabo povsem heterogena, večidel tuja in 'skregana' (npr.: tretji mož, polsestra, mešane

<sup>44</sup> Spet sem tu zasledila v glavnem primere iz Amerike ali primere slavnih oseb. V Sloveniji svojci pogreb na različne načine kreirajo predvsem na vaseh. Kot specifičen primer lahko nevedem vasi v Brkinih, kjer imajo navado, da ob slovesu od doma vsakega pozdravijo z "Zbogom!", predno vaščani sami pokopljejo rajnega. Zavodi imajo zgolj postransko vlogo (npr.: pripeljejo rajnega iz bolnišnice).

<sup>45</sup> Danes se samo krščanstvo sooča s t.i. "osebno vero" oz. ne gre več za vero v občestvo. Individualistično življenje pogloblja osebno vero, kar se kaže tako v številčnosti ob obredu, simbolih...

<sup>46</sup> Niko Toš: Center za raziskovanje slovenskega javnega mnenja (SJM 1991/1).

družine, sodelavci iz različnih služb...). Zaradi geografske in družbene mobilnosti, integriranih delovnih mest, vedno večjega števila večrasnih družin ter imigracij z vseh koncev sveta obstaja čedalje večja verjetnost, da bodo tudi žalujoči oz. pogrebci drugačnih veroizpovedi, nacionalnosti, etničnega porekla... kot pokojnik. Družbena in geografska mobilnost (globalizacija, reteritorializacija) oddaljujeta in odtujujeta sorodstva in zahtevata razumevanje družbene tradicije. Spremembe dovoljujejo ali zahtevajo prevrednotenje kulturnih vrednot. Ideologije in institucije so pogosto postavljene pod drobnogled in pogosto ne zadovoljujejo potreb.

176

Deritualizacija ali vsaj reritualizacija, je naslednji proces, ki ga lahko zaznamo tako v pogrebni industriji kot tudi v serijskih, mašinskih pogrebi. Razvrednotenje ali prevrednotenje pogrebnega obreda, ker obred postaja zgolj nuja, ker je bil tak tradicionalen način slovesa in ga danes zgolj mehansko opravimo. Deritualizacija ali reritualizacija, depersonalizacija, formalnost, departicipacija, sekularizacija, reteritorializacija in ekskluzivnost so le nekateri od procesov, ki jih ne gre posploševati za celotno moderno družbo, pač pa so sestavni del moderne, postmoderne družbe in sodobnega človeka in se zrealijo tudi v pogrebnih obredih. Moderni, mašinski pogrebni obredi s konfužno in hitrostno 'ritualizacijo' imajo priokus moderne družbe. Zadržati staro obliko in prilagoditi se novim okoliščinam, na nov način, v razpoložljivih prostorskih in časovnih razmerah, terjata nove procese, nov način akomodacije, 'sprejetja' smrti oz. nov način prijaznitve ali pomiritve z 'izgubo'. Smrt gre, kot tudi sam mašinski pokop, hipno, nezavedajoče mimo svojcev. Smrt se je nekdanj nahajala v središču življenja, kot se je pokopališče nahajalo v središču mesta. Smrt je bila dih vsakdana. Danes smrti ni!

## **6. Smrt - tabu postmoderne družbe - se kaže tudi skozi pogrebni akt**

Kolektivnemu duhu v tradicionalni družbi, kjer je smrt razložena, umeščena, opredeljena in obvladana, se zoperstavlja sicer svobodni individuum, ki pa je pri operacionalizaciji smrti prepuščen sam sebi. Zastarelost starih razlag in neprepričljivost novih sprožata krizo posameznikove eksistence. Avtonomnost nad naravo in višjimi silami, dinamičnost, diferenciacija, kompleksnost, formalizacija in univerzalizacija spreminjajo mrtve v obsesijo podzavednega. Po Geoffreyju Gorerju se smrt skriva za zaprtimi vrati, Aries vidi družbeni sram in strah pred smrtjo v ne-obstoju smrti. Carl Gustav Jung, oče psihoanalize, je zdravil licemerce in neumneže, ki se niso spraševali o smrti in njeni dramatičnosti, pač pa so se delali 'odrasle', 'moderne' in 'elegantne' v pretvarjanju, da smrti ni. Danes bi moral zdraviti celotno družbo! In kaj bi Jung imel povedati danes, ko 'izgubo' (ne)uspešno nadomešča novo terapevtsko sredstvo - denar? Smrt je danes strašljiva, zanikana in sramotna. O njej ne velja govoriti, sicer te lahko označijo še za frommovskega nekrofila. Po Frommu osebe z nekrofilno orientacijo privlači neživo, mrtvo, trupla, gniloba, razživijo se ob pogovorih o bolezni, smrti, pogrebi in ljubijo smrt. Za tako osebo je Fromm poleg ideala - Hitlerja označil tudi Carla Gustava Junga.

V pričujočem članku želim opozoriti na 'radikalne' pogrebne obrede (in z njimi povezano 'industrijskost'), ki odpirajo nekatera nova razmerja procesov, ki se pojavljajo

sočasno s hitro spreminjajočo se družbo in so v veliki meri odsev le-te. Razvrednotenih, mašinskih pogrebov in plitvega ali vse plehkejšega 'slovesa' od umrlih ne gre jemati kot splošno ali bodočo smernico, pač pa kot opozorilo, da v moderni, postmoderna družbi sami fizični, nujni procesi (modernizacije, urbanizacije) zahtevajo ali vodijo v nesprejemanje smrti, skrivanje bolečine, ki se ob deritualizaciji (ali reitualizaciji) niti ne porodi, pač pa skriva, potlači, ali v pomiritev, ki sploh ni bila vznemirjena. Zato se prevrednoti tudi sam občutek izgube, ki dejansko to več ni. Ne gre več za sprjaznitev s smrtjo, ampak za obsesijo. Smrt ni več izguba, jasno tudi ni dobiček (z izjemo pogrebnih servisov), pač pa je ni. Je ne vrednotimo, o njej ne govorimo, se ne srečamo z mrtvecem, s truplom, z umazaniam delom, kajti mrtveci preprosto izginejo, sama smrt pa nas zadene le še finančno in v 'hipnem obredu'.

Če postmoderna družba spreminja način gledanja na smrt, bi se lahko vprašali tudi, ali smrt spreminja postmodernizem. Ali resnično obstaja postmoderna smrt, katere značilnosti so ironija, paradoks in igrivost postmodernega življenja? Ali pa smrt razkriva željo za iskanjem smisla, ki spodkopava postmodernizem? To je vsekakor pomembno vprašanje za teoretike postmodernizma, prav tako pa tudi za vse, ki jih zanima družbena konstrukcija smrti in umiranja (Walter, 1993: 267). Smrt je izziv postmoderna družbi. Ali bodo pokopališča postala le še draga odlagališča odpadkov in zarjavelih kosti? Ali bomo smrt prepustili toku hiper-modernizacije, njenih urbanih, kulturnih, socialnih in globalnih prisil? Ali bo šlo vse bolj za (že zdaj očitno) vrtičkarstvo, tekmovanja v nagrobnikih, skulpturah...? Ali bodo mrtveci še kdaj zaživel v naših spominih ali jih bomo razvrednotili dostojanstva, ki so jim ga nekoč izkazovali?

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## OUT OF TEARS

### Conceptualization of the Phenomenon of Death through the Time-Space Dimension and the Dichotomy between Traditional and Postmodern Funeral Rites

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Marta Gregorčič

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179

**Key words:** death, funeral rites, tradition, Jessica Mitford, Internet, the postmodern society

#### 1. Introduction

Death has replaced sex as the taboo subject of our times. People compete to discuss the most intimate details of their sex lives, but they have nothing to say about dying, which in its immensity dwarfs the momentary pleasures of sex. Our beliefs about the afterlife and the relationship between the living and the dead, the desire to respect, honour and remember the deceased, the mystery and fear surrounding the unknown, and the disruption and grief that occurs when we die, all contribute to keeping funeral customs from changing much. In the face of deeply entrenched values, beliefs and emotions, we don't change the rites that we believe are necessary to not only fulfil our responsibilities to God and the deceased, but that helps us and our society to heal. Funeral customs are inherently conservative, traditional. Ordinarily they change very little across time. But when they change extensively and quickly it can reflect dramatic material, behavioural and even ideological changes in the broader society. Modernization, industrialization, the increase of high technology, secularization, globalization and the increase of mobility are but a few elements of the postmodern society that are demonstrated throughout the act of the funeral. In the first three sections of the paper an overview has been made of funeral rites and related customs, the funeral industry as featured on the Web, and personal observations made through interviews and visits to cemeteries.

The main point of interest was the time, duration and pace of funeral, as well as the appearance of the funeral site itself. Attempts were made to extract the characteristics of the traditional and the contemporary funeral rites on the examples of old Greece and Rome, Zoroastrianism, the Aborigines and old Slovene Christian funerals, contrasted

with the M.O. at Ljubljana, Trieste and Amsterdam cemeteries, alongside with the source on the Web. The comparison of the traditional and the contemporary was neglected, as the goal was to demonstrate the characteristics of the latter through the characteristics of the former, with emphasis on the “saying farewell” and “finding peace” components.

Describing the funeral rites I drew on Van Gennep's conceptualization of the rites of passage:

Rites	The Dead Person	People who are Bereaved
SEPARATION	From the living members of society	From the living members of society
TRANSITION	From the world of the living towards the world of dead	From the world of dead towards the world of the living
INCORPORATION	Into the world of dead	Into the world of the living

‘Separation’ (in contrast to Van Gennep) was understood as the actual event of death and related rites. ‘Transition’ was understood as the act of the funeral (burial, cremation), and ‘incorporation’ as the post-funeral customs and rites, the memories of the deceased and the return of the mourners to everyday routine.

Cremation was not dealt with in detail although it represents an interesting contemporary phenomenon. Also some elements which are undoubtedly relevant to the research of funeral rites (the difference between the urban and the rural; gravestones, obituaries, burials of children and those who had suffered a violent death) have been omitted as the paper focuses on the reception of death, and on new practices involved in the act of the burial.

## 2. Traditional funeral rites through space and time dimension, viewed in three key moments

There are certain similarities between old Greek and Roman concept of death. For Romans, however, death and burial represented complex and solemn occasions, while in the Greek mythology death was unfortunate as it was impure which brought on a series of measures (prevention) in the community.<sup>1</sup> The funeral rites of zoroastrianism<sup>2</sup> are also concerned with mythology. Death was thought of as the victory of the devil over the universal good and the dead body as the sanctuary of demons, and as such impure. They did not allow the body to be buried or cremated as it might dishon-

<sup>1</sup> For ancient Greek and Roman funeral rites, see Toynbee, J.M.C. (1996): “Death and Burial in the Roman World”. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press; Vernat, Jean-Pierre (1991): “Mortals and Imortals: Collected Essays”, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Janičević, Jovan (1986): “U znaku Moloha: antropološki ogleđ o žrtvovanju”. Beograd: Vajat.

<sup>2</sup> For Zoroastrian funeral rites, see Hinnells, John R. (1985): Persian Mythology. Peter Bedrick Books, New York.

our the Earth or the Fire. Aborigin tribe<sup>3</sup> feels that death is always a murder, there are no natural causes. "How else could you explain how a person died so suddenly, who before had been so full of life?" was their reasoning. The relatives of dead are responsible for finding the murderer. They would have to question everyone. After a person dies, everyone in the camp raises up a wailing, and shows their pain of mourning. Sometimes they would do this so they would not be suspected of the murder (Turner, 1976: 69). The Christians, who are according to their belief, one in Christ, cannot be separated, not even by death.<sup>4</sup> Christian burials differ according to the regions, but on the whole Christianity preaches a respectful attitude towards the body and considers the cemetery a holy place.

### a) "A body in the house" - separation

In ancient Rome, the dying was laid on the bare floor. Their closest relative caught their final breath with a kiss and closed their eyes. Everybody present started loudly calling the deceased's name<sup>5</sup>, the deceased family, in the special clothes for the occasion, washed the body with warm water and dressed it in a toga. The body was then laid out<sup>6</sup> on a bier in the atrium, surrounded by burning oil-lamps and covered with flowers. They put a coin under the deceased's tongue, to pay the fare to Haron and ensure the deceased's soul would be able to enter the world beyond. As a sign of mourning, the fire was put out in the fireplace, the women were crying, pulling their hair, tore their clothes and beat their chest. Ancient Greek customs were very similar. The body was laid out in the hall, with the feet towards the door, for a day or two. Greek women were also loud in their lamentations, beat their chest, sprinkled ashes over their hair and protected the deceased's face from sun and fries with specials fans. As a sign of mourning Greek men cut their hair. Hired mourners of both sexes were singing laments. There was a jug of water put in front of the house door as a purifying symbol and to show that there was a body in the house.

In Zoroastrism, the dead body has to be washed with gomez<sup>7</sup>, dressed in a clean sudre<sup>8</sup> and tied with kusti<sup>9</sup>. Mourners do not approach the body because it is possessed by the demon of rot and decay Nasu; it is handled by the pallbearers, who are called naras-salas. They make a circle of nails around the body and bring a dog which confirms death (sagdid). Everybody present then joins in prayer until the funeral which takes place before the sunset, because in the dark demons pray on the mourners. Ac-

<sup>3</sup> For Aborigine's funeral rites, see Turner, Ann Warren (1976): Houses for the Dead. New Yourk.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Simon Solunski, PG 155, 685 B v Krščanski pogreb: Slovenski obred: Rimski obrednik kakor ga je prenovil drugi vatikanski cerkveni zbor in ga je razglasil papež Pavel VI. Ljubljana, 1970. For further information on Christian burials, see 'Kujžice' - časopis za duhovno probudo in prosveto (1938, let. 5, št. 119).

<sup>5</sup> An ancient custom called conclamatio. Homer mentions it in his "Odyssey".

<sup>6</sup> The body was laid out for a week at the most. This applied to distinguished men only - the children and the poor were buried, not cremated, on the same day, usually in the middle of the night.

<sup>7</sup> Cow's urine (believed to be the strongest purifying means know to man).

<sup>8</sup> A holy shirt, made of white cotton.

<sup>9</sup> A long woven wool rope.



cording to Solon's law, the body has to be removed day after being laid out before the sunrise, otherwise it might contaminate the sunrays. Aborigine - once the person is dead, they spread red earth on the body, which looks like the blood shed at birth (Turner, 1976: 70). This indicates that the dead person is being reborn into another world. They paint the design of the clan in white and yellow on the chest and stomach. They believed that "these signs would change the dead man into a sacred being who could then enter the world of the spirit" (Turner, 1976: 71).

The death of a catholic in the Dolenjsko region in Slovenia was announced by the church bells.<sup>10</sup> The family stopped the wall clock and prepared the largest room in the house to host a bier. Walls were covered with black fabric, and wreaths were hung on them. The deceased's clothes were changed and he or she was placed on a bier, holding the rosary in his hands. In front of the bier there was a table with flowers, the cross and holy water. The body lay in the house for 48 hours so there was no doubt as to his/her death. The family prayed, sung psalms or read the Bible during the wake. Sometimes the priest came to the house and escorted the funeral procession to the church, at other times the priest met the procession in front of the church or at the church entrance.

#### **b) "The act of the funeral" - transition**

For Romans, the funeral was a solemn occasion. The funeral procession was led by whistlers, flute players, horn players and trumpet players. Then followed 'naenia', a woman singing praise to the deceased, a group of women crying out laments, carrying bundles soaked in scented pitch, actors who mimed the character traits of the deceased. Immediately preceding the bearers of the body, there were mourners carrying wax masks of the ancestors. Liktors, clad in black, carried the body, followed by the deceased's family, also wearing black. Burial or cremation took place outside the settlement<sup>11</sup> where bustum<sup>12</sup> was ready. It was customary to open and close the eyes of the deceased; afterwards the next of kin set fire to the stake while the rest of the mourners threw flowers, jewellery, food and spices into the fire. The amber was put out with wine, with which they also washed the bones. They put it in the urn together with honey and spices. During the funeral the family presented it as a sacrifice to gods. The site of cremation was later on decorated by an altar, surrounded by cypresses (aro). Paintings and statuettes were placed on the altar, while the urn was placed into a colombarium bearing the name of the deceased. The Romans buried their dead in the catacombs as well. In the catacombs, there were marble sarcophagus or vaults in which jewellery, ceramic figures, jade rings (to protect from evil spells) were put...<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is still true of the larger part of the Dolenjska region (Southern Slovenia). If the deceased is a priest, the large bell rings three times; if he is a man, the small bell rings three times, and if she is a woman, it rings twice. This is repeated three times a day.

<sup>11</sup> Necropolies was usually positioned by the main road leading into the city.

<sup>12</sup> Romans distinguished between different types of stakes. A 'bustum' was a niche over which wood was placed. On it, they put the body and burnt it. The remains were then covered with soil.

<sup>13</sup> More about diverse objects put into Roman graves in Jančićević, Jovan (1986): "U znaku Moloha: antropološki ogleđ o žrtvovanju". Beograd:Vajat.

A Greek funeral procession was led by a woman carrying the sacrifice receptacle. She was followed by men and women<sup>14</sup> and the musicians. The body was carried by the relatives or the slaves or it was transported by a cart. Greek cemeteries, like Roman, were situated outside the settlement. The body was either buried or cremated. After the cremation the ashes and bones were gathered into a handkerchief and put into an urn. A Persian funeral procession is led by *nasar - salas* who are carrying the metal bier and the body covered with a cloth. They are followed by two priests and the mourners, walking in couples and holding a white cloth protecting them from evil. When they arrive to *dokhm* (the tower of silence), the body is put onto a marble platform. The mourners say goodbye to the deceased by looking at him/her one last time; they once more perform the *sagdid*. Then they lay out the body to the vultures. The mourners pray for purification and wash themselves on their way home. *Nasar - salas* have to perform a nine-day purifying ritual to be able to become a part of the community again.

Aborigine placed the dead body in a tree. After three months, the body is removed, and the bones are cleaned. They then watch the bones for 2-3 months, to make sure the spirit is gone. Then the bones are placed in a log in the centre of the camp (Turner, 1976: 76). The Christian funeral procession was headed by the priest with acolytes bearing the cross, the holy water, the incense and the sanctuary lamp. They were followed by the pallbearers; the coffin was sometimes transported on a cart, later on by car or a tractor. Family and friends followed the coffin. There are different customs concerning the order of the mourners.<sup>15</sup> They sang and prayed on their way to the cemetery. The procession went to the church first, where there was a sermon, an eucharist and the farewell to the deceased. They performed Absolution ceremonies as well - a sort of forgiveness of the deceased's sins by the Christendom. This ceremony often took place at the cemetery. The priest made the sign of the cross with holy water over the grave (he blessed it), then he blessed the body. The coffin was then lowered into the ground.<sup>16</sup> The funeral might conclude with a song.

### c) "Post-funeral rites" - incorporation

The Romans performed various rituals in the memory of the deceased: they brought flowers and presents to the grave, carried out rites and ceremonies. They pushed a small tube down into the pit, which they used to bring food and drink to the deceased.<sup>17</sup> The Greek went to the house of the deceased after the ceremony took place; there they had to carry out rituals of purification, then followed the funeral repast. On the following day, the house was cleansed with water and spices. The honour the cult of the deceased, they held a mourning feast again on the third, the ninth and the thirtieth day after the burial and at the anniversary of his death.

<sup>14</sup> Greek women never appeared in public; only the closest female relatives attended the service.

<sup>15</sup> There were no particular habits concerning this in the Dolenjska region. Elsewhere in Slovenia, the family was followed by young men, married men with their families and women.

<sup>16</sup> The blessing, the water and the soil have a symbolic meaning in Christianity.

<sup>17</sup> This is the custom of the Orthodox in Eastern Europe.

Zoroastrians pray and perform special rituals together with their priest during the first three days when the soul travels into eternity. Special ceremonies take place over the entire year after the funeral, in exactly timed intervals, when they invite the dead to celebrate the living. The aborigines try to help the dead on their way to the spirit world, and they continue watching to make sure that the spirit has made it. Through this, and in the treating of the dead's remains with respect, they show caring towards the dead or their tribe. It was customary for the Catholics that after the funeral and the feast, they gathered for seven days at the home of the deceased. They gathered on the seventh, the thirtieth day after the funeral, and on the anniversary of the death. They have also remembered those who have passed away on religious holidays, e.g. at Easter when they encouraged each other in faith into resurrection and afterlife.

### 3. Contemporary funeral rites through space and time dimension (separation - transition - incorporation)

Nowadays, death does not take place at one's home any more. It takes place in hospitals and other institutions. The family does not need to deal with the body as funeral companies take care of it. The first stop for the body is the cool-room where the body waits, as is the case at the Ljubljana cemetery "Žale"<sup>18</sup>, up to one week to be cremated. The family cannot see the deceased and their farewell is limited to the last hour or the last minutes of the ceremony. In spite of the time shortage at "Žale" (funerals take place on the hour, or, if it's necessary, every half an hour<sup>19</sup>), the Christian burial retains all three parts: the first part, which used to take place at home, is now performed in front of the funeral home, the second part in the church or outside Plečnik's chapel, and the third part on the grave itself. At urn burial, Slovenians omit "the farewell" and only hold "the funeral".<sup>20</sup>

With Christian burial, another change has to be pointed out - it was introduced by the second Vatican council in 1970. Death was not to be made out in black and despair. Belief in resurrection is to be emphasized, despair should be replaced by hope. This was reflected in the clothes, prayers, speeches... "Žale" is a rare exception in this respect: thirty years prior to the Vatican council, the architect Plečnik has sensed not only the architectural but also religious "shift" and substituted the black marble for white stone. At "Žale" they try to keep the ceremonies "humane", which is no longer true of the cemeteries of some other European cities.

One look is enough to establish the lack of space at Santa Anna cemetery in Trieste. The graves are squeezed together to the greatest extent. There is a great mixture of styles

<sup>18</sup> Details of burials and cremations at "Žale", the Ljubljana cemetery, were kindly provided by Mr. Anton Rojc.

<sup>19</sup> Between winter and spring, sometimes during a very hot summer.

<sup>20</sup> Only the funeral part is held; exactly the opposite as elsewhere in the world.

and shapes. Contemporary “serial graves” are a competition to the mighty family vaults and chapels. Into the “serial graves” up to 48 John Does are buried, who have nothing else in common but the time of death. The new grave sites take the form of concrete platforms, for they do not perform traditional burials any more, they put the coffin onto the underground platform. Instead of a gravestone, there is a concrete flower box shaped as a cross or the letter T (at the end of the row), 2 x 7 meters in size. They are often empty, or overgrown with grass. Every flower box has 48 serial numbers which correspond to the numbers of the coffins. Each deceased is given a plate with his/her name, date of birth and death, usually a picture of the deceased as well. Next to every serial number is a circle-shaped hole where one can put a vase with flowers. Flower boxes are a metre apart. Between parallel rows of graves, there are (covered) underground passages down which a coffin is lowered onto a platform. Ten to fifteen years after, the burial coffins are lifted<sup>21</sup> and burnt. Thus space for new coffins is provided. Only if the family of the deceased pays the fee again, his/her name-plate does not disappear.<sup>22</sup>

There is also lack of time at Santa Anna cemetery in Trieste. At funerals where there is no religious service, the family accompanies the coffin from the funeral home to the grave site. There it is lowered down onto the platform; two workers descend onto the platform and insert the coffin next to its serial number. One of the workers points out the serial number to the family; a plate containing the personal information on the deceased is fastened on next to it, and the ceremony is over. As myself, also the family of the deceased (obviously not used to the “modern funeral”) were surprised not only by the briefness of the ceremony but also by the fact that they had to get out of the way as quickly as possible since the next coffin was already being brought out. The funeral which includes religious service is only slightly longer; it last 3.48 minutes. After priest’s last words and his putting a spade of soil symbolically onto the coffin, the coffin is lowered down onto the platform, and the above described procedure takes place.

An absolute contrast to these modern, machine-like funerals with which the bereaved are faced at crowded city cemeteries, is the Amsterdam cemetery De Nieuwe Ooster. It is a 33 hectares large, architectonically constructed park and cemetery in one. Its intimate atmosphere and magnificent monuments offer much more than just a place to bury or remember your loved ones. The nature and monuments mirror the spirit of times in a social and cultural sense. Fields of grass, huge old trees and various shrubbery offer home to birds, hedgehogs, pheasants, rabbits... My attention was drawn to the great variety (not luxury!) of gravestones. The cemetery is divided into 82 zones by a gravel path. Zones differ in style and shape of gravestones, which are ordered by time of death, type of the funeral, nationality of the deceased... The range of funeral companies is similar to the one in the U.S.A. (described in the next chapter). Unfortunately there was no opportunity to actually observe the funeral there, still I strongly suspect it to be much different from the one in Trieste.

<sup>21</sup> I saw workers pulling decayed coffins out of the ground, with pieces of bones and other remains visible.

<sup>22</sup> The ashes are then probably placed into a special place on cemetery grounds.

#### 4. Funeral industry on Internet and the work of Jessica Mitford

Undertakers, as they were known back than before all the terminology changed, were not full-time morticians and usually had another job. Furniture makers made coffers and families took care of the bodies. Someone usually watched the body not for the "memory picture" but to make sure there were no signs of life. The modern funeral home was perhaps invented by so entrepreneur who realized he could make money from supplying all those service goods and service in one place. Once he had enough money he was then able to get the legislation to back up his rights as a businessman. Funeral industry? Doubtless! A book of Jassice Mitford: *The American Way of Death* uncovers the black sides of the funeral industry and a scepticism, which was raised in me by this shocking text, and it all went up in smoke when I checked the funeral industry on the internet. There are 1132 sites on the web where death is a focal point, 21772 webpages about burial, 13885 webpages about funeral service, 36711 about funeral home, 3827 webpages about casket... There you can find a mass of funeral services, funeral homes, funeral directors, memorial service, preplanning, postplanning,<sup>23</sup> embalming, musicians, florist, body donation, dressing, cosmetics, other body preparations, viewing, visitation,<sup>24</sup> ceremonies, churches, chapels, casket selection,<sup>25</sup> burial containers, cremation urns selection, refrigeration, mummification, automotive, remembrance items,<sup>26</sup> ...(Some of this stuff is not only for people but even for pets.)

If we were ignorant of the dark side of the funeral industry, the idea to help people in this time of need would be highly commendable. Yet in modern society every great idea is based on profit, and reality shows that the funeral industry is among the greediest as it makes money out of people's grief. The funeral industry managed to shift and change values around the funeral ceremony. Today it is more about finding your way between funeral companies' offers than parting from your loved ones. Firstly, I will point to a few irregularities and manipulations that I have observed reading the funeral companies' offers on the Web, and complaints concerning them. The findings will be backed up by Jessica Mitford's precise criticism.

Firstly, there is a huge discrepancy in prices for identical offers by different funeral companies.<sup>27</sup> Funeral businessmen keep trying to tell you what would your loved ones deserve or want. Some funeral services have designed "Funeral Packages" to

<sup>23</sup> Offered by post-need services, which support your needs at 'difficult' time. Some of the valuable post-need services offered include: providing information and completion of all Veteran, Life Insurance, and Social Security forms, a lending Library, Memorial Programs, assistance in arranging counseling and information on how to deal with your grief, Children's programs...

<sup>24</sup> (Private visitation \$185.00, half day visitation \$285.00, full day visitation \$385.00)

<sup>25</sup> For diverse offer of caskets, see Virgil T. GOLDEN Funeral Service casket price list: <http://www.goldenfuneralservice.com/cascets.html> - and find about the funeral industry.

<sup>26</sup> Acknowledgment cards, guest register book, memory folders, prayer cards, liminated obituary, crucifix, memorial tribute program, cemetery candle...

<sup>27</sup> There is up to 400% difference between various offers.

'help' you select appropriate last rites. The funeral director exerts a powerful control over the after-death system. As a key player in the funeral ceremony, trustee of the body, and coordinator of related agencies, knowledge of the occupational role of this deathworker is central to understanding death ritual in modern societies. The emphasis for the modern funeral director tends toward the application of 'scientific' techniques to enhance the perception of quality in the product.<sup>28</sup>

There is a paradox: on one hand, there are families which lose not only a loved one, and control of their own funeral activities to morticians (the right to celebrate or grieve as they wish) and on the other, the so-called 'traditional rites', created by businessmen whose bottom line is profit, control and status.<sup>29</sup> Once 'coffins', today 'caskets', in every shape, colour and material of 'surprising quality' which destroys a body fast; it is not eaten by worms and ants but by moulds in all shapes and colours.<sup>30</sup> Pre-pay<sup>31</sup> plan usually costs much more than funerals bought at time of death; many can't be cancelled or give little or no refund; many families don't get funerals they bought... Cybermemorials<sup>32</sup> should express our grief while honouring and commemorating the people we loved and respect who have died.

Funerals can be roughly divided into immediate (i.e. without ceremony) earth burials, traditional burials, cremation with ceremony and immediate cremations. Immediate burial is the most often occurrence in the case of indigents or others who are unable to pay for service. Cremation is forbidden by orthodox Jews, the Parses, Muslims and members of Greek orthodox church. It is customary with Hindus and increasingly so with Christians. With burial, the body decomposes slowly, in nature's time. With cremation, decomposition is rapid and corresponds to clock time. Natural processes are assumed to be slow, therefore cremation is an unnatural process. In traditional burial, the corpse is committed to God and the earth, combining the supernatural and natural dimensions. But modern cremation is a technological ritual which transfers the deceased from one life stage to another and transforms the status of survivors faster than ever before. Carl the Great forbade cremation in 789 under threat of capital punishment. Cremation was considered heretic, as it prevented resurrection. The first

<sup>28</sup> For further information, see *Death, Value, and Meaning Series* by John D. Morgan (1993).

<sup>29</sup> Morticians have destroyed and distorted religious rites and family traditions in order to benefit their profit-making.

<sup>30</sup> More about these Jessica Mitford. Can you really say that you are 'caring', 'honest' and 'reputable' when you internationally cause the destruction of most families' bodies, urge families to buy harmful caskets, charge exorbitant markups and prices of them, and don't warn families about the destruction?

<sup>31</sup> Or Pre-arrange your Funeral, Pre-Planning Services, Pre-arrangement On-line, Pre-financing your Funeral... The funeral industry leaders forced you many excellent reasons to participate in Pre-Need arrangements: to ease the pain and suffering of your loved ones, your funeral costs are guaranteed in today's money without inflation, you choose the extent, kind and cost of service you want, right down to the small detail, you are able to make your wishes known to your loved ones, your family is not only relieved of the financial responsibility, they are also able to participate in the planning, you will avoid conflicts that can arise between family members, you will relive a terrific burden on your family, you can bring peace of mind to yourself and your loved ones...

<sup>32</sup> Some examples: Highgate Cemetery, New Orleans, Online Memoria, The World Wide Cemetry, DeathNET, Rivendell In Memoriam, The Virtual Memorial Garden, The DAV Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire, New Mexico...

cremation in the U.S.A. was done in 1876 in Washington, the first one in England seven years later (Hatfield, 1993). This procedure was strongly condemned by the Catholic church (in 1886, 1918 and in 1926).<sup>33</sup>

Cremation is on increase in the U.S.A., not because it would be fashionable or because more people would express the wish to be cremated. The so-called "traditional" funerals are reserved for the elite, therefore more and more people decide for (cheaper) cremation. This being noticed by the funeral director, the cost of cremation is rising accordingly. "The vast majority of U.S. deaths are followed by a burial, but the trend is toward cremation. Between 1990 and 1995, the share of U.S. deaths handled by cremation increased from 17 percent to 21 percent, and the percentage of Americans who say they plan a cremation for themselves increased from 37 percent to 43 percent. Cremation is especially popular in trend setting states: 41 percent of deaths are cremated in California, where social trends are born, and 40 percent are cremated in Florida and Arizona, where death is almost as common as birth. Interest in cremation increased with age, education, and income... Cremation is also a lot less expensive than a traditional funeral... Ashes are returned to families in about 23 percent of cremations; 16 percent are buried or stored in a crematory, and 6 percent are scattered over land or water. In most cases (54 percent), the cremator simply leaves the ashes with the funeral director.<sup>34</sup> In a study of cremation in England Jupp states the individuals who choose cremation are urban, suburban or newly rural residents, whereas those who choose earth burial tend to be long-term rural dwellers.

Only a few instances of obvious manipulation by the funeral companies have been pointed out here; Jessica Mitford's findings are much more upsetting. Mitford's first investigative study, *The American Way of Death* (1963)<sup>35</sup> exposes the avarice, commercialism and abuses of the American funeral industry. It quickly became a bestseller and caused a vigorous national debate over the practices and morality of the funeral industry. It can be read (now reread) as a hilarious piece of satirical writing and muck-raking journalism, it exists at a deeper level as a relentless critique of the consumer society and the manipulation of supply and demand; how American funeral industry successfully turned the tables in recent years to perpetrate a huge, macabre, and expensive practical joke on the American public. She explored the changing lexicon of death, in which undertakers had come to call themselves "funeral directors" and "morticians", coffins had become "caskets" and hearses had become "professional cars". In the new terminology flowers were "floral tributes" and corpses were always called "loved ones", cremated ashes were "cremains", the corpse viewing room were "slumber room", "reposing room"... One of the results of all this was that the cost of dying was rising faster than the cost of living.

<sup>33</sup> More about it in 'Knjižice' - časopis za duhovno probudo in prosveto (1938/5, no. 119).

<sup>34</sup> By Brad Edmondson: *The Facts of Death* (American Demographics magazine, April 1997) - [http://www.demographics.com/publications/ad/97\\_ad/9704\\_ad/ad970427.htm](http://www.demographics.com/publications/ad/97_ad/9704_ad/ad970427.htm)

<sup>35</sup> Before that book she wrote an article ("St. Peter, Don't You Call Me") as a reaction on mortuary magazines (*The Mortuary Management, Casket and Sunny Side, The Journal of Creative Ideas for Cemeteries...*). After that a Saturday Evening Post writer called Roul Tunley wrote an article called "Can you Afford to Die".

Exactly thirty-five years after the original the edition *The American Way of Death Revisited*<sup>36</sup> is being published because a lot had changed in the funeral trade and not many of the changes were for the better. Developments in the industry since 1963, Mitford writes, fall into three broad categories: Cremation, once the best hope for a low-cost, simple getaway, has become increasingly expensive; furthermore morticians are fast developing techniques for upgrading this procedure into a full-fig funeral. The Federal Trade Commission's much heralded trade rule has huge loopholes. Most sinister of all is the emergence over the last 15 years of monopoly ownership of hitherto independent mortuaries and cemeteries. On top of all that, the price of mortuary services has risen dramatically; early 1960s figures from the original edition of the book, Mitford advises, "should be increased tenfold to reflect current costs", which is to say that the cost of the average funeral has risen from \$400 in 1961 to \$4,700 today. Funeral industry is a huge business, more and more dominated by huge corporations that "cluster" the "hearses, limousines, utility cars, drivers, dispatchers, embalmers", and a spectrum of office workers from accountants to data processors who are kept constantly busy servicing, at vast savings, the needs of a half dozen or more erstwhile independent funeral homes. The funeral industry may now be bigger than business than ever, and the cemeteries may have uncovered a rich new source of income in "the massive 'pre-need' sales campaign" pushing advance purchase of burial space - money tied up in such sales has risen from \$1 billion in 1961 to more than \$20 billion today - but the name of the game is still the same: a high-pressure business in which everything is couched in euphemism and evasions calculated to appeal to the American instincts for sanitation and fantasy. In a better and perhaps more sensible world, death would be accepted as part of life and treated accordingly; funerals would be humble and simple, as indeed they are elsewhere in the world, at least in those places not yet gilded by America's Midas touch (see Jonathan Yardley, 1998).<sup>37</sup>

Mitford wishes to dispel the myths surrounding funerals: that todays funerals are founded on American tradition; that the public is only being given what it wants - but the cost of a funeral almost always varies, not 'according to individual tastes' but according to what the traffic will bear; and finally there are the psychiatric theories behind the funeral industry for providing 'the lasting memory picture', or last view of the deceased as well as that of the mortician as a grief therapist. Not only Jessica Mitford, but also a number of articles and books were published, which point at the irregularities of the funeral industry and its managers.<sup>38</sup> We find an excellent example of funeral industry in Slovenia in the monopoly firm of Žale Ltd. Due to lack of space and for

<sup>36</sup> Most chapters (*A Global Village of the Dead, Pay Now - Die Poorer, New Hope for the Dead ...*) Jessica Mitford finished before her unexpected death from cancer in 1996 but what remained to be done was accomplished by her research and investigative assistant Karen Leonard, Lisa Carlson and Jessica's husband Robert Treuhaft.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/WPlate/1998-08/02/0281-080298-idx.html>

<sup>38</sup> A few of them are: *The High Cost of Dying*, Ruth Harmer (1963); *The Truth About Funerals: How to Beat the High Cost of Dying*, Donald Flynn (1993), Canada; *Dealing Creatively With Death: A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial*, Ernest Morgen (1994), *Profits of Death*, Darryl J. Roberts (1997)...



aesthetic purposes they rearranged some deserted grave sites and discovered that they can make a profit out of advance purchase of burial space.<sup>39</sup>

My own observations of the funeral industry, the literature and articles on the subject, alongside with information available on the Web, have led me to a conclusion that there is more to it than abiding to the market laws. The greediness of the funeral industry and the growing increase of its profit find the support in the bereaved families who wish to 'get it over with' as quickly as possible regardless of the price. They wish to dispose of the body quickly, without much mourning and elaborate preparations; following the advice of the funeral director they do exactly so. Does in modern society money assume the therapeutic role, healing the pain at the loss of a loved one? Would funeral industry make such a large profit if its job were not to do the dirty work dealing with the taboo of death, a dead body - over which people in contemporary society tend to wash their hands by paying for it?

## **5. The postmodern society: introduction of new rites and the newly established relationship between the key moments of the process**

The changes of traditional funeral rites which are becoming more machine-like and faster to adjust to the complex modern society and way of life, as well as the emergence of new rites (such as cremation and cybermemorials), brought about new relationships between the key elements of the process, both in the ceremony itself as well as in dealing with the loss:

- (de)personalization
- (in)formality
- (active or passive) participation
- secularization
- inclusion/exclusiveness
- ritualization/re-ritualization/de-ritualization
- (de)territorialization.

Today's funeral ceremonies are as much about the process of personalization as about depersonalization. In the U.S.A., where funeral industry is most developed, one can order a specific type of music to be played at the funeral, or choose any type of vehicle they want. Because death is the most personal and irreversible act, the family wishes to honour the deceased by a respectful, personalized, spontaneous funeral.<sup>40</sup> The Chinese belief that dead are still 'living' in another world can be illustrated by the Taoist practice of burning paper-made necessities for the dead. These objects are for the use of the deceased in the afterlife. People most order (paper)cars and houses and

<sup>39</sup> More about Žale, Ltd. in "Mladina" (1998/40, pp. 24-25).

<sup>40</sup> In the U.S.A., while the ashes are being scattered, the mourners make impromptu speeches - are active and creative in their approach to the service.

even servants and that's not a question of being superstitious or not. Rather people regard such practice as a necessary ceremony, through which they can show their care and respect for the dead.<sup>41</sup> The process of personalization is clearly observed in gravestones as well. Once religious symbols, today statues and sculptures are found there, which symbolize the character traits of the deceased, their hobbies and things they enjoyed.<sup>42</sup> These new symbols are here to emphasize the deceased as a person. This is especially true of children's graves which are often full of toys in different shapes in forms; this would probably be regarded as improper by the traditional society.

This type of personalization is a sort of rebellion against the routine funeral ceremonies and depersonalized, standardized society. It is more an example than the rule, as it usually costs more than the standard ceremony. It is typical of celebrities' funeral services, which abound with farewell speeches and everything the funeral industry has to offer.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, personalized elements may be found in village funerals as well. Alongside, and in accordance to the machine-like, serial burials and the ever-present lack of time in modern society, there is an increasing process of depersonalization. Funerals in Trieste take place every five minutes, and every half an hour at "Žale". Family and relatives do not take part in the ceremony, but adapt to the standard pattern of behaviour let by a priest, a funeral director or an ordinary worker (as in the case of Trieste Santa Anna cemetery). The ceremony itself is very brief, almost instantaneous. With church funerals, the mass takes place a few hours after the funeral, or not at all.

Depersonalization is parallel to the increasing degree of formality concerning the ceremony itself and the speeches. There is usually a standard pattern of the service known only to the funeral director and his staff, while the family follows it without doubting it. Informal, spontaneous speeches while scattering the ashes or an exchange of one's memories of the deceased is more an exception than the rule. On the other hand, we can observe an increasing informality of dress and behaviour of the family; also the setting of the service is no longer a church or a chapel but an outside setting, especially for urn burials.

Contemporary funeral rites also show the trends of passive participation or the lack of participation. Only seldom<sup>44</sup> the family wishes to participate in the service actively and creatively. In U.S. some traditional rites have been modified to include ways in which survivors can sing a special song, read a poem they've written for the occasion, tell a story about the deceased, or share some special experience they had

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.cuhk.hk/journal/varsity/9503/dead.htm>

<sup>42</sup> For instance, at Žale one can see statues and sculptures shaped as a football, an aeroplane, a violin, an eagle, or the bust of the deceased. But this is rare in Slovenia. The graves at the Amsterdam cemetery are more personalized, especially the recently built ones. There are not only gravestones but almost gardens, 1 m<sup>2</sup> large, with various types of decorations: pebbles, flowers, statuettes, toys, sea-shells,... which are pleasant to look at and not at all kitschy.

<sup>43</sup> A funeral ceremony is personalized when the family can afford it.

<sup>44</sup> This is mostly the case in the U.S.A. In Slovenia, it occurs mostly in rural areas, in a village in the Brkini area for instance, the whole village bids farewell to the deceased and organizes the funeral. Institutions play only a minor part (arrange the transport of the body from the hospital, for instance).

with the deceased. In some instances today, especially in cremation ceremonies where the ashes are scattered, the ceremony's officiator may do little more than coordinate the logistics of everyone's participation rather than be the center of ceremony. Yet again this is far less common than the everyday unparticipatory, machine-like funerals. Jessica Mitford's texts show that it is the funeral directors that are often the subject of the ceremony, not the deceased themselves or their families for whose sake it actually takes place.

Another element of contemporary funeral rites, as well as gravestones, is secularisation. Funerals are held in secular locations, without the presence of clergy, without religious liturgies, music, and symbols. No distinction is made between consecrated and secular ground. Masses like *The Seventh Day* or *The Thirtieth Day* are rarely served in the cities, usually by request only, and even then the church is more or less empty.<sup>45</sup> Opposed to secularization are fear of death, of the unknown, fear of God, which was clear from the 1991 Public Opinion Poll: 73% considered some sort of religious service to be necessary at a funeral, even though only 23% claimed they believed in life after death, 37% in the eternal soul and 55% believed in God.<sup>46</sup>

Reflecting our society's complex relationships and increasing religious, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity, some of our ceremonies and memorials are today more inclusive. Today's funeral processions are by far more heterogeneous than they used to be; its participants are often strangers to each other or are even involved in some 'dispute' (e.g. the third husband, a half-sister, mixed families, co-workers from different jobs, etc.). With geographic and social mobility, integrated workplaces, an increasing number of multiracial families and individuals, and immigration from all parts of the world, survivors also are more likely to be of different religions, nationalities, ethnicities or regions than the deceased. Social and geographic mobility (globalization, re-territorialization) set distance between various parts of the family and demand the understanding of social tradition. The changes allow or demand a shift in cultural values. Ideologies and institutions were scrutinized and often found lacking.

Deritualization or at least re-ritualization is another process which has its source in the funeral industry, as well as serial, machine-like funerals. The change of values concerning the funeral rites brings about people's view of a funeral as being the necessary evil - this used to be a tradition, so we put up with it and carry it out mechanically. Deritualization (or re-ritualization), depersonalization, formality, de-participation, secularization, reterritorialization and exclusiveness are an integral part of the modern and the postmodern society and as such of affect the course of the funeral service as well. Contemporary, machine-like funeral rites with their speedy, confusing 'ritualization' reflect the state of the modern society. To hold on to the old forms and adjust then to the new circumstances, the lack of time and

<sup>45</sup> Nowadays, Christianity is facing the so-called "personal belief". A more individualized way of life deepens this belief, which then affects the presence at the service, the symbols...

<sup>46</sup> Toš, Niko: Public Opinion Research Centre (Slovensko javno mnenje 1991/1).

space, new processes, a new manner of accommodation, acceptance and dealing with the loss. As the funeral itself, death does not hold our attention for long. Death used to be the centre of life, as the cemetery used to be in the centre of the city. It was a part of the everyday life. Death today does not exist!

## **6. Death - the taboo of postmodernity - as it shows itself through the act of the funeral**

Contrasted to the collective spirit of the traditional society (in which death is explained, classified, defined and placed under control) there is the individual; left entirely to his own resources in operationalizing the phenomenon of death. Old explanations appear to be obsolete, the new ones unconvincing. This brings about an existential crisis. Autonomy of nature and higher forces, dynamism, differentiation, complexity, formalization and univerzalization transform the dead into an obsession of the subconscious. According to Geoffrey Gorer death is hiding behind closed doors; Aries sees the shame and fear of death in its non-existence. Carl Gustav Jung treated people who did not ask themselves questions about Death and its dramatic effects but pretended to be 'mature', 'modern' and 'smart' in believing that Death does not exist. Today Jung would need to treat the entire society? And what would he say to the contemporary therapy - money, which (un)successfully treats the sense of loss. Death is perceived as frightening and shameful, one is not supposed to talk about it if one does not want to be classified as a Frommian necrophile. Fromm's definition of a necrophile states that one is attracted to everything dead, decaying; one is interested in disease, death and funerals. Fromm characterized Hitler as an ideal of a necrophile, and claimed Carl Gustav Jung was one, too.

"Radical" funeral rites and "the industry" behind them were the main focus of this paper. They introduce new relationships between the processes occurring simultaneously with the changes in the society and to some extent resulting from them. Machine-like funerals, devoid of values and the shallow farewell from the deceased cannot be regarded as a future trend but as a warning that in the contemporary postmodern society the processes of modernization and urbanization lead to unacceptance of death and to denial (or, with the growing deritualization or re-ritualization, non-existence of) of pain. There is, in fact, no sense of loss any longer. Finally, death ceases to exist as itself. It is not an object to values, we do not speak about it, do not see the body - the dead simply vanish, and the only consequence of it is the cost of the funeral.

"But if postmodernity transforms the way we approach dead, one might also ask whether death challenges postmodernity? Can there really be a postmodern death, characterised by irony, paradox and playfulness of postmodern life, or does death reveal a more serious need for meaning the undermines postmodernity? This should surely be an important question for theorists of postmodernity, as well as for those concerned to understand the social construction of death and dying" (Walter, 1993:267). Death presents a challenge to the postmodernity. Will cemeteries turn into expensive

waste disposals? Will death be left to the mercy of hiper-modernization, its urban, cultural, social and global effects? Are we going to go on gardening and competing about the size, quality, etc. of gravestones, sculptures...? Or will the dead come to life in our memory, with their dignity restored?

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LITERATURE see page 177

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# VEROVANJE O VODI KOT O MEJI MED SVETOVOMA ŽIVIH IN MRTVIH\*

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Mirjam Mencej

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195

**Ključne besede:** smrt, dežela mrtvih, voda, ločnica med svetovoma živih in mrtvih, verovanja

V tem članku bom pisala o verovanju, ki je razširjeno v mnogih deželah sveta, najdemo pa ga tudi pri Slovanih, namreč o verovanju, po katerem gre duša na svoji poti na drugi svet prek neke vode, kar pomeni, da je voda pravzaprav ločnica med svetom živih in svetom mrtvih.

To verovanje se kaže iz mnogih ljudskih pesmi, zagovorov, molitev, rekonstruiramo ga lahko tudi iz šeg ob smrti, na tem mestu pa se bom omejila prvenstveno na zapise *verovanj* oziroma na tisto slovstveno folkloro in šege, ki so s tem verovanjem neposredno povezani.

EksPLICITNO lahko najdemo tako predstavo zapisano recimo v Bolgariji, kjer menijo, da duša »potem, ko pride do polja, pride do neke široke in globoke reke, ki je že meja med tem in onim svetom« (Marinov, 1994: 331). Prav tako poznajo Srbi predstavo o Jovanovi strugi kot vhodu na drugi svet (Čajkanović, 1994: 42). V vologodski pokrajini pa so verjeli, da duša na štirideseti dan po smrti prečka t. i. »Pozabiti reko« in tedaj pozabi vse, kar se je dogajalo na tem svetu (Uspenski, 1982: 56). Večinoma pa lahko najdemo to verovanje povezano z določenimi šegami in raznimi sorodnimi verovanji. Pogosto jo najdemo povezano s šegami *prilaganja denarja umrlemu*. Tako so v Odrancih v Prekmurju v Sloveniji umrlemu otroku dali drobiž v pest, ker ga bo »potreboval za brod, če se bo na onem svetu peljal čez vodo« (Rešek, 1979: 56). Tudi v Bosni, Srbiji in Črni gori so prilagali kovanec umrlemu kot »plačilo za prevoz na otok blaženih« (Drobnjaković, 1960: 161). Na Poljskem vsi zbrani na pogrebu prestopijo potok in vržejo v vodo kak kovanec za prevoz, da bi imel umrli s čim plačati prevoz na drugi svet za morje. Prav tako v Ukrajini, ponekod tudi v Rusiji, denar darujejo za prevoz prek reke (Fischer, 1921: 176).

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\* Članek je skrajšano poglavje iz knjige z naslovom *Voda v predstavah starih Slovanov o posmrtnem življenju in šegah ob smrti*, ki je izšla v Ljubljani leta 1997.

Drugo področje, kjer lahko najdemo to predstavo, predstavljajo verovanja o *mostu, brvi oziroma dlaki*, prek katerih gre duša na drugi svet. To je sicer zelo razširjen motiv, ki ga najdemo tudi v krščanskih in islamskih apokalipsah in v tradiciji srednjeveškega Zahoda, najdemo pa ga tudi v Srbiji (na primer v banatski Klisuri, banatski Črni gori, v južnem Banatu, pri Srbih v okolici Šikloša in v Romuniji ter južni Madžarski, v Leskovački Moravi in okolici Svrlljiga, v Užicah, okolici Kosjerića in vaseh okoli Požege) in ponekod v Bolgariji (podonavske vasi), kjer verjamejo, da pride duša v raj prek mosta/brvi/dlake (Zečević, 1975: 151; 1982: 28, 29).

196 V teh verovanjih sicer ni eksplicitno povedano, da most/brv/dlaka vodijo prek vode, lahko pa potrditev za to morda najdemo tudi v šegah zlasti v vzhodni Srbiji, čeprav je po drugi strani res, da je prebivalstvo vzhodne Srbije narodnostno zelo mešano in da iz poročila ni jasno, kdo so akterji te šege: tam namreč na štirideseti dan po smrti (to je dan, ko duša po verovanju odide iz območja živih) oziroma kadar spuščajo vodo za umrlega, polagajo brv prek vode, in sicer zato, da bi duši olajšali pot in bi lažje prišla na drugo stran (Zečević, 1975: 151; 1982: 29).

Deloma se verovanje o prehodu duše prek mostu/brvi/dlake na drugi svet navezuje tudi na drugi sklop verovanj, v katerem je po mojem mnenju prav tako skrito verovanje o vodi, ki ločuje oba svetova med seboj - to so deloma že krščansko obarvana verovanja o peklu in nebesih, ki sta locirana drug ob drugem, duša pa prek pekla (včasih spet po brvi/ dlaki/mostu) pride (ali ne pride - odvisno pač od teže grehov) v nebesa. Taka verovanja najdemo na primer v Črni gori in Srbiji (Vukanović, 1935: 127-128; Nodilo, 1981: 39; Zečević, 1982: 28-29), razvidna pa so tudi iz nekaterih, tudi hrvaških, ljudskih pesmi, kot na primer Ognjena Marija v peklu (Karadžić, 1969/2, str. 13-15; št. 4; Črna gora), Mati svetega Petra (Karadžić, 1969/1: 100-101; št. 208), Mačuha u peklu (Hrvatske narodne pjesme kajkavske 1950: 279; št. 334; pri Ozlju) idr.

Toda, če v vseh teh pesmih in verovanjih o prehodu na drugi svet (raj) prek pekla, ki je pred nebesi, voda ni omenjena, pa jo najdemo v predstavi o poti duše v onstranstvo na praktično istem območju:

*“U istočnoj Srbiji, gde je kult mrtvih do naših dana dobro očuvan u svojim starijim varijantama, narod je verovao da se posle prolaska kroz opisani međuprostor (v katerem človek vidi slike iz svojega življenja - op. M. M.) stiže do ulaza na drugi svet. Tu se prelazi preko uskoga brvna koje premošćuje duboku provaliju. Kod mosta čekaju sudije koje rešavaju o daljnjoj sudbini prispelog pokojnika. Zatim duša stupa na brvno koje je ovde nazivano i “rajski most”. Ako je duša pravedna, lako prolazi u večito boravište, a ako je grešna, gubi oslonac i pada u ambis. Na dnu provalije je “jad” - zagadena voda puna svakojake gamadi. U njoj se duša muči i čisti pa posle očišćenja i ona prolazi u večno boravište (...) Opisano verovanje bilo je opšte poznato kod svih etničnih grupa istočne Srbije, a bilo je rašireno i među srpskim življem u Madarskoj i Rumuniji, gde se pod pritiskom Turaka naselio.”<sup>1</sup>*

V teh pričevanjih se na tistem mestu, kjer se je v prejšnjih poročilih nahajal pekel (prek katerega mora duša v nebesa), nahaja “jad” - voda, čeprav zastrupljena in polna

<sup>1</sup> S. Zečević, 1982, str. 27-28.

golazni. Beseda *jad*, ad je izpeljanka iz starogrškega *Had(es)* - podzemni svet. Pri nekaterih pravoslavnih Slovanih (npr. Bolgarih, Rusih) je beseda postala sinonim za pekel (Skok, 1971: 8). Enak pomen lahko zasledimo tudi v tem srbskem verovanju. Beseda *jad* in hkrati z njo morda tudi voda (v grškem mitu mora tisti, ki bi rad dospel v *Had*, prepluti reko v *Haronovem* brodu) v tej predstavi sta torej posledici grškega vpliva, vendar pa je za nas zanimivo to, da je beseda *jad* (ki je tu predstavljena kot voda) postala sinonim prav za besedo *pekel*. Zdi se, da je "pekel" prekril stare slovanske predstave o vodi oz. onstranstvu. Jezikoslovno tega sicer ni mogoče potrditi. Beseda *pekel*, ki je veslovanska in praslovanska, pomeni pa "smolo, katran", izhaja po Skokovem mnenju iz indoevropskega korena \**poi-*, ki pomeni "Feuchtigkeit, Saft, Fett, Harzstrotzen itd." (Skok: 1972: 58, 8), po mnenju F. Bezlaja pa iz ide. osnove \**p-k-* in ne kaže na etimološko zvezo z besedo *voda* (Bezljaj, 1995: 22). Po mnenju Pokornýja izhaja morda iz iste ide. osnove \**pi-k-* kot *pekel* tudi beseda *víg*, *vihe* v srednje nižji nemščini s pomenom "Sumpf, Bruch" (močvirje). To je edina jezikovna paralela med peklom in vodo (Pokorný, 1959: 793-794; za podatek se najlepše zahvaljujem gospe Metki Furlan).

Domnevo, da sta se predstavi o peklju in vodi združili, pa morda potrjujejo primeri iz slovstvene folklore, npr. pesmi o Mikuli - Nikoli, ki je v ljudskem verovanju ponekod očitno predstavljal vodnika na drugi svet. V ukrajinski folklori, na primer, lahko nastopa v vlogi vodnika duš (nekdanj *Velesa*) sv. Nikola ali hudič (Uspenski, 1982: 57):

V srbski različici Ilija pozove Nikolo:

*"Ta ustani, Nikola,  
da idemo u goru,  
da pravimo korabe,  
da vozimo dušice  
s ovog sveta na onaj!..."*

(Najveći grijesi, Karadžić, 1969/1: 101-102, št. 209)

Medtem ko je v srbski različici omenjena voda, prek katere vozi Mikula duše na drugi svet, pa se v hrvaških različicah smisel Mikulinega potovanja sicer izgubi, v vodi pa se pojavi predstavnik pekla - hudič, ki prebiva "doli" - v vodi, o katerem ni v srbski pesmi ne duha ne sluha:

*"Sveti Mikula slatko spi  
na srdajcu knjigu šti.  
Njemu Diva dohodi  
Pa Mikuli besidi:  
"Ustaj, ustaj, Mikula,  
uzmi teslu i bradvu,  
pa ga hodi u goru,  
pa posici zelen bor,  
pa ga nosi u Isusov dvor,  
pa udilaj barkicu,  
napuni ji kamena  
i božjega rumena."*

*Počne kamen tonuti  
i rumelje plivati.  
Skoči Mikula na jarbor,  
na jarboru huda stvar:  
"Hodi doli među nas!"  
"Očenaša ne umim,  
"Zdrave Marije" ne umim,  
i hudog sam meštra bija,  
i hudo me naučija."*

(Delorko, 1982: 330; št. 52; otok Zlarin)



198 — “Svet’ Mikula sanak sni,  
na srdajcu knjigu ští,  
k njemu Gospe dolazi  
i Mikuli govori:  
“Stan’, Mikula, sinko moj,  
uzmi teslu i sikiru,  
pa ti pojdi u goru  
i prisiči zelen bor,  
svetog Petra vičnji dvor,  
pa uzmi korablju  
i š njon plovi po moru!”  
Kada Miko uz jarbol,  
na jarbolu huda stvar:  
“Sađi doli, huda stvar,  
sađi doli među nas

i govori Oče naš!”  
“Očenaša ja ne znan,  
Zdravu Mariju ne umin,  
hudobna san meštra stala,  
nisan mu se deletala!”  
Pa je čapa za kose,  
pa je baca na brode  
pa je siče na peče  
pa je sunu u more;  
kuj su peče padale,  
pijavice igrale,  
kuj Mikula idaše,  
tu bonaca bijaše!”

(Sveti Nikola i sotona,  
Delorko, 1969: 85-86; Dalmacija)

Deloma je morda ohranjena pot v raj prek vode, v kateri se pojavi “hudo stvor” (prim. še slovenske različice pesmi Sv. Miklavž in hudoba; Slovenske ljudske pesmi, 1981/II., 420-425; št. 125), še v različici z otoka Visa:

“Sveti Mike dite bise,  
Sridu i petak zezinase.  
Zato niko ne znadijase  
Nego mojka ko ga rodi  
I babica ka ga doji.  
Kad je Mike ponarasta,

Pa poj vodit rumuniju  
Sveton Petru rojskin puten.  
Vazme Mike sikiricu  
I ubere jedan bur  
Za napravit dvo veslića!  
Barkica se ucinila,  
Barkica se porinila.  
Isol Mike s njon plovit,  
Al barkica pocne tonit!  
Obazre se Mike na jorbul,  
Na jorbulu hudo stvor.  
I govori Mike non:  
Hodi doli, hudo stvor,  
I molimo Ocenos  
I Zdravo Mariju

Tad mu mojka progovara:  
Idi, Mike, u goricu  
Pa posici jedon bur  
za izgradit moli brud,  
I posici dvo borića  
Za udilat dvo veslića,

Za Divicu Mariju!  
Al govori hudo stvor:  
Ne znan molit Ocenos,  
A Mariju ne poznajen!  
Jo son s huden mestrun stola  
I hudu son skulu naucila.  
Kad to cuje Mikula,  
Un je isol na jorbul;  
Uze hudu stvor za vlose  
I baci je u more.  
Kako hudo stvor tonuse,  
Tako barkica cvotuse!  
Onda pojde vodit rumuniju  
Sveton Petru rojskin puten.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> M. Oreb, 1979, str. 189-190 (otok Vis).

Če bi hoteli dejansko potrditi domnevo o tem, da je pekel sčasoma izrinil oziroma nadomestil vodo kot vhod oz. prehod na drugi svet, bi morali seveda narediti o tem širše raziskave. Vendar pa je zanimiv že površen pregled krajevnih imen Pekel v Sloveniji – kraji, ki nosijo to ime, so namreč zelo pogosto povezani z vodo.

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## BELIEFS ABOUT WATER AS A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE WORLD OF THE LIVING AND THE WORLD OF THE DEAD\*

Mirjam Mencej

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200

**Key words:** death, the country of the dead, water, the border between the worlds of the living and the dead, the beliefs

In this article, I'm going to write about a belief that is widespread in many countries throughout the world and can also be found among Slavic peoples. According to this belief, the soul, on its way to the other world, passes across some water, which means that water is in fact a separating line between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

This belief is evident in numerous folk songs, chants, and prayers and can also be reconstructed from funerary rites and customs. In this article, I will confine myself primarily to written accounts of *beliefs* or to that folk literature and folk customs that are directly connected with this belief.

Such a notion can be found written down explicitly in Bulgaria, for example, where people reckon that the soul, "after reaching a field, arrives to some kind of wide and deep river, which is the boundary between this and the other world" (Marinov, 1994; p. 331). Similarly, Serbs are familiar with the notion of Jovan's river (Jovanova struga) as being the entrance to the other world (Čajkanović, 1973, p. 328). In the Volgodskaja region in Russia, it was believed that on the 40th day after death the soul of the dead crossed the so-called "Forget River," thereby forgetting everything that had happened in this world (Uspensky, 1982, p. 56). Most often, however, this belief can be found in connection with particular customs and related beliefs. Frequently, this idea is linked with the custom of *giving money to the dead*. In Odranci, in Slovenia's region of Prekmurje, coins were placed in a deceased child's feast because the child would need them "for the boat, if in the other world he or she crossed the water" (Rešek, 1979, p. 56). In Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro a coin was also given to the dead as "payment for transportation to the island of the blessed" (Drobnjaković, 1960, p. 161).

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\* This paper is an abridged version of a chapter from the book entitled *Water in the Concepts about Life after Death and Funerary Rites of Ancient Slaves*, published in Ljubljana in 1997.

In Poland, all the people gathered at a funeral cross a creek and throw a coin in the water so that the deceased would have something to pay for being ferried across the sea to the other world. In Ukraine and some parts of Russia, too, money is given to the dead person for transportation across the river (Fischer, 1921, p. 176).

Another area where this notion can also be found is represented by the beliefs about a bridge, a footbridge or a hair over which the soul of the dead passes to the other world. This motif, which is very widespread in Christian and Islamic apocalypse narratives and in Western medieval traditions, is also found in Serbia (for instance in Klisura and Crna gora in the Banat region, in southern Banat and among the Serbs living in the vicinity of Sikloš, in Romania and southern Hungary, in Leskovačka Morava, around Svrlijig, in Užice, in the vicinity of Kosjerić, in the villages around Požega) and in some places in Bulgaria (villages along the Danube) where people believe that the soul comes to paradise over a bridge/footbridge/hair (Zečević, 1975, p. 151; 1982, pp. 28, 29).

These beliefs do not state explicitly that the bridge/footbridge/hair leads over water, but an affirmation of this may perhaps be found in the customs practiced chiefly in eastern Serbia (although it is true that the population of eastern Serbia is highly mixed ethnically and that the report in question does not make it clear who are the practitioners of this custom). There is a custom in these parts to lay a footbridge across water, on the 40th day after one's death or when water is »let« for the deceased, so as to make it easier for the soul to reach the other side (Zečević, 1975, p. 151; 1982, p. 29).

The belief that the soul passes to the other world over a bridge/footbridge/hair is partly linked with another body of beliefs that, in my view, also cloak the belief about water separating the two worlds. These are beliefs, already partially tinted by Christianity, about hell and heaven, located side by side, and through hell (sometimes over a footbridge/hair/bridge) the soul goes to heaven (or not, depending on the gravity of its sins). Such beliefs are found, for instance, in Montenegro and Serbia (Vukanović, 1935, pp. 127-128; Nodilo, 1981, p. 39; Zečević, 1982, pp. 28-29). They are also evident from some Croatian and other folk songs, such as *Fiery Marry in Hell* (Karadžić, 1969/2, pp. 13-15; no. 4; Montenegro), *St. Peter's Mother* (Karadžić, 1969/1, pp. 100-101; no. 208), *Stepmother in Hell* (Hrvatske narodne pjesme kajkavske, 1959, p. 279; no. 334; near Ozelj), etc.

While in all these songs and beliefs about the passage to the other world (paradise) through hell, which is before heaven, water is not mentioned, the latter, however, can be found in the notion about the soul's journey to the other world that was held by people living in practically the same territory:

*»In eastern Serbia, where the cult of the dead has been well preserved in its older variations till the present day, people believed that after passing through the described »interspace« (in which man sees the images of his life – note by M. M.) a deceased person arrives at the gate to the other world. Here, the soul of the dead passes over a narrow bridge across a deep chasm. At the bridge, judges are waiting who decide the future fate of the deceased. Then the soul steps onto the bridge, which is also called »the bridge of paradise« here. If the soul is righteous, it can proceed to the eternal dwelling, but if it is sinful, it loses support and falls into the abyss. At the bottom of the chasm, there is »jad« – dirty water full of vermin of all kinds. In it, such a soul is tortured and purged, and when*

it is purified it too can pass into the eternal dwelling... The described belief was generally known to all ethnic groups in eastern Serbia, but it was also spread among the Serbian population in Hungary and Romania, where it settled under the pressure of the Turks.<sup>1</sup>

In these accounts, »jad« – water, although poisoned and full of vermin – is found in places where previous reports mentioned hell (through which the soul must go in order to reach heaven). The word *jad* or *ad* is a derivative from the old Greek word Hades – the underworld. Among some orthodox Slaves (e.g. Bulgarians, Russians) the word has become a synonym for hell (Skok, 1971, p. 8). The same meaning is also found in this Serbian belief. The word *jad* and perhaps also water (in Greek mythology the one who would like to come to Hades has to cross the River Styx in Charon's boat) in this notion, are therefore a consequence of Greek influence. For us, it is interesting that the word *jad* (which is represented here as water) has become a synonym for hell. It seems that »hell« has superseded the ancient Slavic ideas about water and the other world. This, however, cannot be confirmed linguistically. The word »pekel« (which is Slovenian for hell) is a pan-Slavic and ancient-Slavic word meaning »resin, tar« and derives, according to Skok, from the Indo-European root \*poi-, which means »Feuchtigkeit, Saft, Fett, Harzstrotzen etc.« (Skok, 1972, pp. 58, 8). According to F. Bezlaj, however, it derives from the Indo-European basis \*pi-k- and does not point to any etymological link with the word water (Bezlaj, 1995, p. 22). In Pokorný's view, the word *vi(g)*, *vihe*, meaning »Sumpf, Bruch (swamp) in middle Low German, may derive from the same Indo-European basis \*pi-k- as the Slovenian word »pekel.« This is the only linguistic parallel between hell and water (Pokorný, 1959; pp. 793-794; for this data we thank Ms. Metka Furlan).

The assumption that the notions of hell and water might have merged is perhaps confirmed by examples from Slovenian folklore, e.g. from the song about Mikula – Nikola, who in popular beliefs in some areas apparently represented the guide to the other world. In Ukrainian folklore, for instance, either St. Nicholas or the devil can have the role of the guide of souls, which was previously played by Veles, the ancient Slavic god of death (Uspensky, 1982, p. 57):

In the Serbian version, Ilija summons Nikola:

*»Ta ustani, Nikola,  
da idemo u goru,  
da pravimo korabe,  
da vozimo dušice  
s ovog sveta na onaj!...«*

(*Najveći grijesi*, Karadžić, 1969/1, pp. 101-102, no. 209)

While the Serbian version mentions water, across which Mikula drives souls to the other world, in the Croatian versions of the same song the sense of Mikula's travel is lost but in water the representative of hell – the devil, who resides »down there,« in water – appears, of whom there is no mention in the Serbian version:

<sup>1</sup> S. Zečević, 1982, pp. 27-28.

»Sveti Mikula slatko spi  
na srdajcu knjigu ští.  
Njemu Diva dohodi  
pa Mikuli besidi:  
»Ustaj, ustaj, Mikula,  
uzmi teslu i bradvu,  
pa ga hodi u goru,  
pa posici zelen bor,  
pa ga nosi u Isusov dvor,  
pa udilaj barkicu,  
napuni ji kamena  
i božjega rumena.«

Počne kamen tonuti  
I rumelje plivati.  
Skoči Mikula na jarbor,  
na jarboru huda stvar:  
»Hodi doli među nas!«  
»'Očenaša' ne umim,  
'Zdrave marije' ne umim,  
i hudog sam meštra bija,  
i hudo me naučija.«

(Delorko, 1982, p. 330; no. 52; 203  
the island of Zlarin).

»Svet' Mikula sanak sni,  
na srdajcu knjigu ští,  
k njemu Gospe dolazi  
i Mikuli govori:  
»Stan', Mikula, sinko moj,  
uzmi teslu i sikiru,  
pa ti pojdi u goru  
i prisiči zelen bor,  
svetog Petra vičnji dvor,  
pa uzmi korablju  
i š njon plovi po moru!«  
Kada Miko uz jarbol,  
na jarbolu huda stvar:  
»Sadi doli, huda stvar,  
sadi doli među nas  
i govori Oče naš!«

»Očenaša ja ne znan,  
Zdravu Mariju ne umin,  
hudobna san meštra stala,  
nisan mu se delatala!«  
Pa je čapa za kose,  
pa je baca na brode  
pa je siče na peče  
pa je sunu u more:  
kuj su peče padale,  
pijavice igrale,  
kuj Mikula idaše,  
tu bonaca bijaše!«

(Saint Nicholas and Satan,  
Delorko, 1969, pp. 85-86; Dalmatia)

The path to paradise across water in which »hudo stvor,« a wicked creature, appears (see also the Slovenian version of the song called St. Nicholas and Fiend, in Kumer et al., 1981/II, pp. 420-425; no. 125) is perhaps also partly preserved in the version from the island of Vis:

»Sveti Mike dite bise,  
Sridu i petak zezinase.  
Zato niko ne znadijase  
Nego mojka ko ga rodi  
I babica ka ga doji.  
Kad je Mike ponarasta,

Tad mu mojka progovara:  
Idi, Mike, u goricu  
Pa posici jedon bur  
Za izgradit moli brud,  
I posici dvo boriča  
Za udilat dvo vesliča,

Pa poj vodit rumuniju  
 Sveton Petru rojskin puten.  
 Vazme Mike sikiricu  
 I ubere jedan bur  
 Za napravit dvo veslića!  
 Barkica se ucinila,  
 Barkica se porinila.  
 Isol Mike s njen plovit,  
 Al barkica pocne tonit!  
 Obazre se Mike na jorbul,  
 Na jorbulu hodo stvor.

I govori Mike non:  
 Hodi doli, hudo stvor,  
 I molimo Ocenos  
 I Zdravo Mariju  
 Za Divicu mariju!  
 Al govori hudo stvor:  
 Ne znan molit Ocenos,  
 A Mariju ne poznajen!  
 Jo son s huden mestrun stola  
 I huda son skulu naucila.  
 Kad to cuje Mikula,

Un je isol na jorbul;  
 Uze huda stvor za vlose  
 I baci je u more.  
 Kako hudo stvor tonuse,  
 Tako barkica cvotuse!  
 Onda pojde vodit rumuniju  
 Sveton Petru rojskin puten.<sup>2</sup>

If we really wanted to confirm the assumption that hell gradually ousted or replaced water as the entrance or passage to the other world, we would have to make more extensive research into this topic. But even a superficial survey of the places in Slovenia bearing the name Pekel (hell) is very interesting: it reveals that these places are very often linked with water.

REFERENCES see page 199

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Mirjam Mencej, mag., je magistrirala s področja primerjalne slovanske mitologije. Kot mlada raziskovalka je zaposlena na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani, kjer pripravlja doktorsko nalogo. Izdala je knjigo Voda v predstavah starih Slovanov o posmrtnem življenju in šegah ob smrti (1997) in objavila več člankov o slovanski mitologiji.

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Mirjam Mencej got her M.A. in the field of the Comparative Slavic Mythology. She is employed as a junior research fellow at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana. She is preparing her Ph.D. at the same department. She has published a book Water in the Old Slavic Notions of Life after Death and in their Customs at Death (1997). She has also published several articles about Slavic mythology.

<sup>2</sup> M. Oreb, 1979, pp. 189-190 (otok Vis).

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# THE EARTHLY LOCI OF DEATH: THE COFFIN, THE GRAVE, THE CEMETERY

Anna Plotnikova

205

## IZVLEČEK

### **Zemeljski prostori smrti: krsta, grob, pokopališče**

V pričujočem članku avtorica preučuje različna ljudska verovanja in obrede, povezane s krsto, grobom in pokopališčem. Tipično arhaično slovansko dojemanje življenja po smrti je delitev na dva svetova. Ljudje verjamejo, da gre umrli "stran" na "drugi svet", kjer najde svoj prostor: "dom", "vas umrlega". Utelesenje takšnih podob so prostori, povezani z umrlim: krsta, grob, pokopališče, ki jih označujejo poteze posameznika in kolektivnega doma umrlega. Pogrebne šege, ljudska verovanja in uporaba besed, povezanih s smrtjo, potrjujejo tezo, da so krsta, grob in pokopališče slovanski simboli sveta na drugem svetu. Ujemajo se z bivanjem v življenju.

Krsta (v ruskem dialektu – dom, domovina, domovišče, horomina) je včasih urejena kot hiša: ima luknje ali okna ter sliko z izvezeno brisačo, ki je v njenem kotu. Grob je pogosto urejen kot hiša (rusko hatka), vrt ali dvorišče. Vedenje, predpisano na pokopališču, je pogojeno s tveganjem ostajanja na območju umrlega, kjer vse pripada umrlemu: tla, rože, drevesa, sadje in drugo. Ljudje verjamejo, da umrli v določenem času hodijo in obiskujejo drug drugega na ozemlju pokopališča. Tako je pokopališče kot območje umrlih v nasprotju z vasjo – naseljem živih. V članku avtorica opisuje tudi kompleksne odnose med prostori življenja in smrti, pa tudi način njihove medsebojne povezave.

**Ključne besede:** pokopi, krste, grobovi, pokopališča, domovi, etnolingvistika

**Key words:** funerals, coffins, graves, cemeteries, homes, ethnolinguistics

In Slavic folk perceptions man's departure from life has been understood as a passage to "another" world (going to the "other world"), where he is supposed to acquire his place, his home and his socium (see eastern Slavic phraseology connected with the metaphor of death as the "way home", "preparations to go home": in the Polesye dialect *идѣ до дому, собиравеица до дому, поглядает до дому* – he is going home, he is preparing to go home, he is looking homewards) in the sense 'he is dying'. Loci of the "other world" are materialized in concrete "earthly" forms connected with burial places. According to the folk view of the world, the coffin is understood as a symbol of the house, the grave as a symbol of the dwelling, whereas the house, the courtyard or even the garden, as well as



the churchyard, are supposed to be the settlements of the dead. Such symbolism runs through the most diverse contexts of folk culture: it is reflected in burial vocabulary and phraseology, in folkloric genres (fairy-tales, lyrical songs, burial lamentations, riddles, proverbs), in folk beliefs and omens, burial customs and rituals.

For the Slavs the coffin, the grave and the graveyard are the symbols of home in the "other world"; by a series of signs they correspond to the characteristics of the dwelling, the person's home when he was still alive. Complex relations between the loci of man's abiding in "this" and in the "other" world as well as different possible connections between them (ancient burials inside the house, keeping one's own coffin in one's house, the living visiting the graveyard and the "walking" dead "coming back", protection of the house or of the village from a vampire and so forth) deserve special attention.

As is known, the most essential elements in defining the symbolism and semantics of the Slavic burial and funeral rite are the themes of "fate", "path" and "home", expressed in their functional, objective, actional and terminological systems (see [Sedakova 1990: 54]). Rich in their content and mythological contexts, these themes have time and again drawn the attention of scholars. We might mention just some of the works on these issues written by Russian scholars in recent years. O. A. Sedakova [Sedakova 1990] dedicated one of her works to the theme of "fate", moreover, each of the enumerated semantic blocks was described by her in her dissertation on rite terminology and structure of rite text from the materials of the Slavic burial rite [Sedakova 1983a]. Conceptions of the path to the next world in burial rites and in Russian funeral keening were explored by L. G. Nevskaya and A. K. Chistyakov, [Nevskaya 1980, Chistyakov 1982]. The semantics of the home in burial folklore and burial rites was addressed by L. G. Nevskaya [Nevskaya 1982] and A. K. Bayburin [Bayburin 1983: 133-176]. The theme of "home" and the "way" or the "way home" connected to it, as we can see, is not new in literature, yet nevertheless it is so all-embracing that it deserves to be referred to whenever the folk conceptions of the loci of death are being researched. In our case the subject is the material forms of "the next world" - the coffin, the grave and the graveyard.

When researching the theme of "home" it should be mentioned that the functions of the home in man's life are determinants for a number of family, calendar and occasional rites. A very special role has been acquired by the symbolism of home in burial rites, because in this case the greatest significance is held by the main features of the division of man's world into two parts, the transition from one world to the other, from one "home" to the other "home". Besides, the death of a member of the household, his "departure" from the home, according to Slavic beliefs devastates the home, because the dead can take from the home a part of his property, wealth, the fecundity of cattle and fertility of fields.

The complex of omens and auguries about a person's death are, above all, connected with the person's house, in particular with unusual events inside the house (the walls of the house crack, crockery breaks etc.) or with any special animals, reptiles, birds or insects appearing in the house (or near the house, on the roof, in the cellar, in the courtyard, by the window). For eastern Slavs death is foretold by a swallow or a bat flying into the house. According to various omens, death is predicted by the following:

a bird's knock on the window, the scream of an eagle-owl or an owl near the house, a crow on the roof, a cuckoo appearing on the house or uttering three cries above the house. The omen of the woodpecker pecking a wall or an angle of the house, and thus predicting a death in the house, is widespread among all the eastern Slavs. With eastern and western Slavs it is usual to think that a mole living in the house or burrowing in the soil under the house, in the cellar, under the threshold, under the window or beside the house signifies the death of one of the inhabitants [Gura 1997: 63, 271-272, 714]. According to the beliefs of the southern Slavs, a snake found in the house predicts that of one of the family will die.

In the interpretation of dreams the symbolism of death is characterized by the theme of building a house [Listova 1993: 50]. In the entire territory of Polesye a new house in dreams, sometimes a house without windows and doors, foretells someone's death [Svitelskaya 1995: 190]. In the Mogilevskaya oblast (province), Byelorussia, to see a new house in one's dreams means death. In south-east Bulgaria, if a man in his dreams cuts a tree, builds a house, plants flowers or starts a fire, it means he will die soon [Strandzha 1996: 293].

The mythological similarity between the notions of 'the coffin' and 'the house' is confirmed terminologically: Russian *домовина*, *домовище* meaning 'house', 'coffin', 'a structure in the form of a coffin, built on a grave'; Russian, in Pskov, Kostroma, Tver, Smolensk *дом*, *домовница*, *хоромина* meaning 'coffin', north Russian *домовьё* meaning 'coffin', particularly a coffin hacked from a tree trunk; in Polesye *дом* (*уж ему и дом привезли* - they already brought him to his house), *домоука*, *домовина*, *дамауё*, *хата*; *улез у свой дом* - (he crawled into his house) meaning 'died', Bulgarian *куца*, Macedonian *кука* meaning 'coffin' etc. Moreover, the term *дом* (house) and its derivatives are often expanded to the notion "the next world", "the other world".

The coffin, the grave and the graveyard as the symbols of the home of the dead on Earth are contrasted with the home of the living (the coffin and the grave are contrasted with the person's house and the graveyard with the village). This is also expressed in funeral terminology, folklore, rituals and folk beliefs. In Russian proverbs based on the play on words *дом* - *домовище*, *домовина*, the house is contrasted with the coffin: *Дома нет, а домовище будет*. (There is no house, but there will be a coffin). *Дом строй, а домовину ладь*, which means remember your "home" in the other world, in the future [Dal 1: 466].

A number of names for the grave express the perception of the grave as the "eternal" refuge of man, which he finds after death, in contrast to the "temporary" (earthly) one, for instance Serbian *вечна кућа*, Macedonian *вечна кука* (coffin), see also Polesyan *вечный дом* (the eternal home) meaning 'the other world'. In Russian burial lamentations the coffin is called *вековое домовищечко* (the centuries-long home), *вековечно хоромное строеньице* (the everlasting mansion). The Ukrainians call the coffin *нова хата* (the new house), which has analogies in the burial lamentations where the motif of a new home is present. Unlike the earthly human dwelling, the house-coffin is characterized as "cold", "dark": Serbian *ледна кућа* 'coffin'; in Russian lamentations the coffin is a "cold mansion, not covered with moss", where "there

is no glazed stove” [Afanasyeva, Plotnikova 1995: 553-554], see [Nevskaya 1982: 108]. The most characteristic feature of Slavic keening over the dead is the darkness of the new “home”. In Polesye funeral keening the coffin is called *хатинойка темнейка* (the dark house) [Svitelskaya 1995: 190], in Russian keening *темная хороминка*, where “the windows look as if they have been drilled through, as if the light has been brought in by a sieve”; “the triangular apertures have not been cut through, the little glass windows have not been made” [Chistyakov 1982: 115]. In Macedonian lamentations the grave and the coffin are *зда кука* (the ugly house), *темна кука* (the dark house) with “no windows and no doors” [Risteski 1998: 255]. In Russian riddles the coffin is “a house without windows and without doors”. A number of negative meanings associated with the coffin continues with the characteristics of a “strange”, a “different” house, according to the Russian proverb *На чужбинке, словно в домовинке* (In a strange land it is like in a coffin.) [Dal 1: 466].

Making a coffin is often interpreted as building a new house: the Guzuls call it *поставэне хаты* (building a house). In the north Russian, Carpathian and Polish regions openings resembling little windows were made in the sides of the coffin at the level of the deceased’s shoulders and a window pane was put in them. In a child’s coffin the Guzuls cut out one window, and for an adult two. A small window, sometimes an opening covered with a piece of wood was also made in the Russian log coffins. According to different explanations, the windows were made for the dead to see the living; for the soul to see its body from time to time; for the dead person to see the other deceased; for the dead person to “look out” from his “house” [Afanasyeva, Plotnikova 1995: 554].

The inner furnishings of the coffin and the grave often repeat the decoration and furnishings of the earthly human dwelling. In eastern Polesye an icon decorated with an embroidered towel was placed in the corner of the coffin, thus imitating the corner with icons in the house (*красный угол*) [Svitelskaya 1995: 190, 203]. Before laying the deceased (the coffin with the deceased) in the grave, the Bulgarians sweep it like a dwelling [Vakarelsky 1990: 125]. The elements of the interior of the deceased’s previous dwelling and items he needed when he was alive are put in his coffin: food, a beverage, linen, a change of underwear, clothes, towels, shoes, a switch of green birch trees, so that he will be able to take a steam bath in the other world, etc. The articles laid in the coffin were either connected with the deceased’s habits and liking, or they were indispensable when he was still alive. For instance a lame man was given his stick or his crutch, a smoker his pipe etc. Furthermore, the articles correspond to the deceased’s profession (a shoemaker gets an awl, a tailor is given a needle), and to his age and sex (a woman gets a shawl and a needle, a child gets a toy etc.).

In accordance with the universal Slavic conception of death as a sleep, a bed was made in the coffin. The eastern Slavs covered the bottom of the coffin with straw, hay, chips, shavings, dry switches of birch trees or leaves. The Bulgarians make in the coffin a specially prepared new bed or a homespun blanket, two beds or linen. The ancient Slavs also used to cover the bottom of the graves with bedding (fabric) or they made a kind of “floor” instead - from sand or colored clay and they strewed the bottom with ashes from the home hearth [Vakarelsky 1990: 127].

The outside of the grave was also shaped like a house. The Byelorussians placed rectangular wooden constructions on the graves - *прыклады, прыкладзіны*. As a rule, these were wooden buildings in the shape of a house, covering the whole mound: such an erection resembled the cover of a coffin, it often had small windows and a roof, it was called *хатка* (a little house) [Pahavanni 1986: 30]. The constructions on the graves in the shape of a house, or logs resembling a house in form, were known in western Polesye. The names of such constructions in the Byelorussian part of western Polesye are characterized by lexemes formed from the root *хором-* (*прыхором* etc.) [Svitelskaya 1995: 204-205]. Among the Russians, a cross with an icon on the grave covered with double-pitch roofing is sometimes called a "little chapel". In some cases, the small house on the grave with a double-pitch roof was crowned with a carved finial [Chistyakov 1982: 115]. In the Russian North it is possible to see, beside the ordinary cross, an oblong quadrangular construction (a "goloubets" or stuffed cabbage roll), open at the top or with a flat roof, on which a cross is placed [Zelenin 1991: 351].

The eastern Slavic constructions on the graves correspond to the southern Slavic burial rites. In north-west Bulgaria there is a custom of building on the grave a house-like structure from bricks and mortar or placing on it a miniature model of a house [Benovska-S'bkova 1995: 217]. As the researchers have noted, in eastern Bulgaria a "little house" (*къщичка*) can be either wooden, ceramic or even specially made of tin-plates, which is a product of local handicrafts. [EB: 198]. Building of similar "houses" and miniature models of houses on the graves is also known in southern Bulgaria and Macedonia. In Strandzha over a period of 40 days the relatives of the deceased every day bring to the graveyard 40 stones or tile plates, from which they build on the grave a construction called *къща, мъртъвската къща*, the house of the dead. The grave is often fenced with four big stones or stone plates, while in the area of Malkotyrново a "small house" (*къщичка*) is built from four thick boards [Strandzha 1996: 300]. In the Rhodope villages a house-like structure is build for the deceased twice. First, after lowering the coffin into the grave, it is covered with twigs, logs and stone plates. Afterwards a wooden house (*кукла, кошничка*) is placed on the grave with candles inside which are supposed to "light the dead person's way to the other world" [Rhodope: 202-203].

On the grave a peculiar garden is arranged: flowers and fruit-trees are planted and the place is fenced with a paling, stones or sticks. Russians used to put turf round the grave mound [Kremlyova 1993: 20]. In Polesye, in the region of Gomel, on the feast of St. Radunits a tree had to be planted on the grave and birch sticks were driven into the ground around it [PA]. In the region of Sofia, on the fortieth day the grave is fenced with stones and sowed with wheat [Sofia region: 228].

The system of the Slavs' mythological conceptions connected with the grave as the deceased's house can acquire specific forms in dreams and nocturnal visions. According to the records from Polesye, when the relatives take some sand from the grave on the twelfth day after the funeral and consecrate it in the church in order to take it back to the grave, in case of their forgetfulness, according to stories, the dead person "comes" to them in their dreams and demands that they return him "the corner of his house". *Бувае як не однесеш той песок, ноччу покойник буде сницца, да иче*

скажэ: “Чого ты мойй хаты вугол одорвала?” [PA, the Gomelskaya province, village of Stodolichi, recorded by L.N. Vinogradova].

Similar rituals and beliefs are connected with the graveyard as a whole, being the place where the dead or their souls abide. It is considered that the souls live in the graveyard and keep the habits from the times when they were still alive. According to the beliefs of the Bulgarians and Macedonians, at midnight the dead come out of their graves to take a walk around the graveyard and visit each other. In Bosnia it was believed that a man who was forced to sleep in a graveyard should not lie between two graves because the dead in the two graves would quarrel about “which of them he came to visit” and they could strangle the man for that [ZNŽO 27/1: 175]. The first deceased person buried in a new graveyard is believed to be the forefather of the whole graveyard community of “ancestors”. It is supposed that the whole “community” has a malevolent attitude towards those who had not died a natural death (those hanged or drowned), and they are not accepted into the community. This can be one of the many explanations of the typical burials of such dead outside the space of those deceased who died a natural death (see [Zelenin 1995: 92]).

The names of graveyards often express semantics defining them as ‘a dwelling, a settlement of the dead’. M. Fasmer connects Russian dialectal names *буѣ*, *буѣво* with that adopted from the Old Swedish *bó* “dwelling” and Old Slavic *bú* “dwelling” [Fasmer 1: 234]. The Russian word *нозочн* (the original meaning of which was “a coaching inn, where the prince and ecclesiastics stayed temporarily”) is used in dialects in the meanings ‘church community’, ‘parish’, ‘the center of the village area’, and also ‘graveyard’ [Fasmer 3: 295].

The plants and the trees within the boundaries of the graveyard are supposed to belong to the dead, and it is therefore forbidden in the graveyard to break twigs, to pick flowers or even inhale their fragrance lest one should lose one’s sense of smell. Such prohibitions are particularly common among the western Slavs. In Silesia it is believed that a man who smelled or picked a flower in a graveyard, will be visited at night by a dead person who will remind him that this is his property [Fischer 1921: 353]. In the Polish Beskidi it is thought that a person who picks flowers from graves will get sores and boils on his body as a revenge from the dead [Wierhy 1981/41: 226]. Among the Serbs it is forbidden to cut trees in a graveyard, otherwise the souls of the dead will not be able to rest in the shadow of the trees and eat their fruit [SMR: 136]. According to Bosnian beliefs, a man who has eaten fruit in a graveyard will fall ill with dropsy [GZM 1995/10: 133] etc.

Breaches of etiquette during any time spent in a graveyard (in other words, in a settlement of the dead) entail a punishment, often in the form of the unexpected appearance of the dead in the settlement of the living. According to the beliefs in Polesye, if a housewife breaks a stick in the graveyard and sweeps the ashes from the stove with it, the dead will roam inside the house and under the window for the whole night [Sedakova 1983b: 253].

At the same time, the graveyard as a sacred locus indicating the earthly location of “the other world” becomes a legitimized place of meeting between the living and the

dead: people come to the graveyard on the days of remembrance of the dead in prayer, they leave food for the souls; they bring them presents of clothes; they greet them as if they were alive; they clean and decorate the graves, they bake a special sort of bread and so on. It is characteristic to invite the dead to a meal which takes place on the graves, as, for example, among the Byelorussians, on Tuesday of St. Thomas's week dedicated to the remembrance of the dead in prayer: "*Святые радзицели! Ходзице к нам хлеба-соли откушаць*" (Holy parents! Come to us and have some bread with salt.) [Tereschenko 1848/3: 122]. In a west Byelorussian ritual called *будить покойника* (to wake a dead man), a dead relative was 'hailed' and 'entertained' to ritual food in the graveyard on the second or third day after the funeral [PA]. In Ryazan province, the ritual food which was brought to the graveyard on the feast called Radunitsa (Tuesday of St. Thomas's week), seemed to be divided between the living and the dead, who came "from the dark" and invisibly attended the feast together with the living until sunset [Tereschenko 1848/5: 28-29].

The house is contrasted with the world ("home") of the dead and therefore it cannot be the place of a new meeting between the living and the dead, with the exception of the special feasts dedicated to the remembrance of the dead in prayer. These feasts are not celebrated on the graveyard but in the house to which the "ancestors" and "parents" are invited. The same status of a sacred time, when a meeting with the dead takes place inside the house, is connected with certain calendar feasts, above all the "svyatki" (Christmas-time) and some other days. For instance, in Byelorussian Polesye the "grandfathers" were invited to supper on the last day of "Maslenitsa" (Shrovetide - the week before Lent): in the evening everyone sat at the festive table. The housewife opened the window and called three times: "*Дяды, дзяды, ходзьце вячэраць!*" (Grandfathers, grandfathers, come to supper!) [Pahavanni: 163].

In everyday life the appearance of the dead in the house, not to mention demons such as vampires, was extremely undesirable. Therefore the protection of the house by means of various ritual and magical acts began immediately after a deceased person appeared in the house. While the dead person was lying in the house, it was forbidden to do any work in the house or in the garden. At the moment when the deceased's coffin - his "new house" was brought into the house, everyone went out, especially pregnant women. The carrying out of the deceased was done extremely carefully: they knocked with the coffin on the threshold, so that the deceased bade farewell to his "old" home and would not come back anymore; they turned over all the furniture in the house, they poured out water, they gave the remains of bread and other food to dogs, from the house they threw after the dead person a stone or smoldering pieces of wood from the hearth, they swept or washed the floor, they opened all the windows and doors, they took the deceased's effects out of the house and burnt them. In the Russian North, after the coffin has been taken out, rubbish from the street is swept towards the house so that all its inhabitants will stay in the house [Zelenin 1991: 349]. The Bulgarians do not spend the first night in the house where the deceased is lying. In various Slavic regions the fellow-villagers do not take anything from such a house, especially food (see, for example, [Romanov 1912: 309]). In the vicinity of Gevgelia (Macedonia)

after the deceased has been buried, every villager pours out all the drinking water he has (calling this water *мртвoвскa* 'belonging to the dead') and brings new water. The housewives also change the leaven for bread every time somebody has died in the village [Tanovich 1927: 258].

The path connecting two contrasted loci, the house and the grave (coffin), the village and the graveyard, becomes the concrete incarnation of the path to "the other world". A number of ritual and magical acts are carried out on the way to the graveyard and from the graveyard towards home. To avoid negative consequences connected with the returning of the dead to the house of the living, in various Slavic regions people take another route home from the graveyard, and they do not turn back on the way to the graveyard and from the graveyard home. On the way from the graveyard the Serbs tried not to go to other people's houses in order not to bring misfortune to the house. When they entered their own house they thoroughly shook off any soil from the graveyard. Graveyards are often situated on the other side of a river, a brook or another water barrier which the souls of the dead cannot overcome [Zechevich 1982: 61]. Among the Balkan Slavs, before going from the graveyard after the burial of the deceased it is customary to wash one's hands in the nearest water source. In the south-west of Bulgaria (the community of Petrich, village of Gega, record of E. S. Uzeneva [MDABIA]), after washing their hands each participant at the burial took a handful of water and threw it behind his back over the left and the right shoulders, "so that the deceased would forget his way home". For the same purpose in that area a fire was lit in front of the house entrance and everyone stepping over the threshold after the funeral took a piece of charcoal and threw it behind his back. In Strandzha after the burial every participant leaving the graveyard throws a stone behind his back, "so that the dead will not come back" [Strandzha: 298]. In Rhodope, after the burial people do not take home any items from the grave that had been brought to the graveyard [Rhodope: 202].

Special measures for protecting the house against visits from the walking dead, vampires, can also be connected with the route. Thus in eastern Serbia (in the region of Knjaževac, village of Donja Kamenica, record of the author [MDABIA]) people strew the way from the home to the graveyard with millet. Then they bestrew the grave and go on strewing millet on the way from the graveyard to the river in order to get rid of the vampire who has been coming to the house; in this way "drowning" him in the river. Here a quite typical system of protective acts is used: a demonic character from the other world, having visited the house of the living and going back to his dwelling-place, counts the strewed grains, yet his path suggested by people continues goes from his grave to the water.

Of course, the earthly loci of death understood as places connected with various kinds of conceptions of death are not limited by concrete and real places of burial. For instance, in Russian keening the localization of the other world envelopes the subterranean sphere, unknown and inaccessible places, water, "the sky" (the latter is less often expressed in lamentations) [Chistyakov 1982: 121-122]. In beliefs and rituals concerning human dwelling, the places connected with "ancestors" are the threshold of the house and the stove (see, for example, [Bayburin 1983: 138, 167]).

In this way, a complex of Slavic conceptions about the concrete (materialized, earthly) loci of death is realized in completely different forms: from the ways of naming the coffin, the tombstones and the graveyard to the beliefs and ritual or magical acts connected with the places of burial. These conceptions are also reflected in the motifs of oral folklore (mostly in lamentations and keening) where they acquire a special mytho-poetical appearance. An archaic system of beliefs about death can be brought to light through an analysis of the extensive body of Slavic ethnographical, linguistic, folkloric and general cultural contexts which are connected with the subjects themselves (in our case: the coffin, the grave and the graveyard) as well as with that object of research, whose concept constitutes the basic semantic dominant of the familiar beliefs and rituals; i.e. the actual human dwelling. Complex correlations between the two worlds (of the living and of the dead) are reflected in concrete rituals and beliefs concerning their materialized substances, therefore the complex of ritual and magical acts connected with the house on one hand, and with the coffin (the place of burial) on the other hand, become significant. The real connecting link between them is the path, the path from the village to the graveyard and back. Here an important role is played by "the landmarks on the way", its main points: the threshold of the house, the gate of the courtyard, the boundary of the village, crossroads, passages over water, the graveyard gate; however this theme deserves separate research.

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BESEDA O AVTORICI

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MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASPECTS  
OF PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT  
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

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# O VSEBINI SUICIDALNIH ZAPISOV SLOVENSКИH SAMOMORILCEV IN POSLOVILNIH PISEM RODOLJUBOV, USTRELJENIH MED DRUGO SVETOVNO VOJNO

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Robert Oravec

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219

**Ključne besede:** smrt, suicidalni zapisi, analiza vsebine, zanikanje, dekonstrukcija

Petdeseta in šestdeseta leta našega stoletja so bila zlata leta sodobne suicidologije. Shneidman, Farberow, Beck, Ringel, kot tudi mnogi drugi raziskovalci, so bili prvi, ki so prinesli nekaj svetlobe v neraziskano temo presuicidalnega dogajanja. Zahvaljujoč njihovim teoretičnim konceptom in empiričnim dosežkom je danes že splošno sprejeto, da čustva in manifestacije suicidalnega posameznika niso naključna. Očitno je, da presuicidalni proces kaže jasna pravila in ima določene vsebinske elemente. Torej lahko zagotovo rečemo, da obstaja določen diskurz suicida, ki se sicer razlikuje od kulture do kulture. Ta suicidni diskurz, v smislu "realnosti, ki se kaže v obliki znakovnega sistema" (Kézdi, 2) pomeni (v določenih okoliščinah) edini možen način govorjenja, razmišljanja ali pisanja o samomoru. Suicidološka tradicija določene kulture se kaže skozi semantične in sintaktične dimenzije tega diskurza. Presuicidalni proces torej ne vključuje le suicidalnega posameznika, ampak tudi vse "signifikatno" okolje, ki ga obkroža.

"Cry for help" fenomen (iskanje pomoči in podpore pred samomorilnim dejanjem) je dokaz za interpersonalno (konverzijsko) naravo presuicidalnega procesa. Teoretični koncepti, ki sta jih razvila Shneidman in Farberow, so v veliki meri prispevali k razvoju določenih preventivnih in terapevtskih metod, vendar so se ti koncepti pokazali kot neuspešni za pojasnitev nekaterih pomembnih vprašanj suicidologije. Vseeno so raziskave suicidalnih zapisov zelo pomemben del suicidološke tradicije 70-ih let.

Proti koncu 50-ih let sta Shneidman in Farberow konstruirala raziskovalni projekt za primerjanje "pravih" in "simuliranih" suicidalnih zapisov, ki so jih napisali zdravi prostovoljci. Na žalost rezultati teh sicer precej sofisticiranih raziskav niso veliko prispevali k razumevanju pojava samomorilnosti. Drugi avtorji so raziskovali demografske in druge razlike med subpopulacijo samomorilcev, ki so pustili za seboj suicidalne zapise, in tistih, ki tega niso storili. Tudi izsledki teh raziskovalcev so se pokazali nerelevantni.

Še najbolj zanimive so bile tiste raziskave, ki so temeljile na analizi vsebin suicidalnih zapisov. Te študije so namreč nastale pod vplivom teoretičnih konceptov in episte-

moloških značilnosti sodobnih humanističnih znanosti in pomenijo širitev teh paradigem na področje suicidologije. Eden od najbolj kreativnih suicidologov, ki se je posvetil raziskavi suicidalnih zapisov, je vsekakor Antoon Leenaars iz Kanade. Je avtor več pomembnih študij, ki potrjujejo prisotnost določenih kontekstualnih elementov in zrealijo intrapsihične in medosebne koncepte samomorilnosti. Leenaars je pomemben tudi zato, ker je eden od prvih raziskovalcev, ki so se posvetili transkulturalni analizi dokumentov, ki so povezani s samomorom posameznika. Primerjal je suicidalne zapise iz Kanade, Združenih držav in Madžarske. Suicidologija 80-ih in 90-ih let je prispevala tudi k razvoju kulturnoantropološko utemeljene suicidološke paradigme. Raziskave, ki temeljijo na tovrstni paradigmatški zasnovi, se posvečajo samomorilnim vsebinam, kot se manifestirajo v medijih, v literaturi ter v presuicidalnih fenomenih. Zdi se, da transkulturna primerjava postaja zelo pomembna metoda za razumevanje narave samomorilnosti.

Kézdi je bil prvi (madžarski) suicidolog v zgodnjih 80-ih letih, ki se je posvetil raziskavi jezikoslovnih elementov v besedilih, ki so povezani s samomorilnostjo. Njegova metoda analize vsebine temelji na teoretičnih konceptih "jezikovnega vedenja" (language behavior), semiotike in semantike. Vzorec raziskave je vseboval zapise dialogov s samomorilnimi posamezniki, suicidalne zapise in fragmente različnih besedil, ki so relevantni za samomorilnost. Kontrolni vzorec pa je vseboval zapise intervjujev z nesamomorilnimi posamezniki in besedila, nerelevantna za samomorilnost. Kézdi je identificiral zanikanje kot najbolj relevanten element samomorilnega diskurza. Pomemben del njegove raziskovalne dejavnosti je tudi interpretacija diskurzivne vloge zanikanja v kontekstu kulture in tradicije.

Fekete, drugi madžarski suicidolog, je uporabil Kézdijevo metodo za transkulturno primerjavo suicidalnih zapisov. Analiziral je madžarske, nemške in angleške zapise. Kulturnoantropološko zasnovani suicidološki koncepti (med katere sodi tudi znanstveno delo Kézdi) so se pojavili v 80-ih in 90-ih letih, kot odgovor na pomanjkljivost moderne suicidologije in suicidološko utemeljenih konceptov. Že omenjene sociološke in psihološke teorije, ki so se pojavile v 60-ih in 70-ih letih, so bile nesposobne zadovoljivo pojasniti razlike v suicidalnosti kulturološko različnih populacij. Vsekakor pa so te (moderne) teorije prispevale k razvoju novih, interdisciplinarno zasnovanih paradigem, ki so sposobne odgovoriti na zelo pomembna vprašanja o naravi suicidalnega procesa. Na te koncepte so vplivale lingvistične teorije in hermenevitična znanost. Težišče teh raziskav se je premestilo z značilnosti suicidalnega posameznika na fenomenologijo samomorilnega procesa, ki se pokaže v samomorilnem diskurzu. Takšno razmišljanje je vsekakor interdisciplinarno in multidisciplinarno ter usmerjeno v medosebni prostor. "Opazovalec" ni več neodvisna in objektivna oseba, ampak je v času observacije popolnoma involviran v dogajanja. Hkrati vplivajo nanj jezikovno preneseni elementi "splošnega družbenega diskurza". Kot je namreč razvidno iz sodobnih konceptov kulturne antropologije, pripadniki določene kulture lahko izpeljejo določeno komunikacijsko dejanje o samomorilnosti le v "harmoniji" s splošnim družbenim diskurzom.

Kézdi in Fekete sta potrdila, da je zanikanje značilnost besedil, ki so relevantna za samomorilnost. Zanikanje se lahko kaže kot element vsebine besedila, vendar ima negacija obenem tudi sintaktično vlogo znotraj besedila. Večkratno zanikanje (npr. nikoli

ne, niti ne itd.) je npr. prisotno prav tako v slovenskem kot tudi v madžarskem jeziku, ne le v govorjenju suicidalno ogroženega posameznika. Iz kulturnoantropološkega zornega kota je smiselno predvsem odgovoriti na vprašanje "Kaj je namen pisanja suicidalnega zapisa in kakšen je pomen tovrstnih besedil?" Primerjanje suicidalnih zapisov s poslovilnimi pismi nesamomorilnih posameznikov je metoda, ki se lahko izkaže kot uspešna v razreševanju zgoraj omenjenih ugank.

Slovenska raziskava, namenjena preučevanju suicidalnih zapisov, je primerjala 50 tovrstnih besedil napisanih v slovenskem jeziku, s 45 poslovilnimi pismi slovenskih rodoljubov, ki so bili ustreljeni med drugo svetovno vojno. Suicidalne zapise je zbrala policije v letu 1994, poslovilna pisma pa so bila izbrana po naključju iz javno dosegljive zbirke tovrstnih besedil. Po preliminarnem branju teh besedil je avtor ustvaril sistem kriterijev, ki so se pokazali uporabni za detekcijo in interpretacijo psiholoških, semantičnih in semiotičnih značilnosti obeh vzorcev. Ti kriteriji zrcalijo določena intuitivna pričakovanja avtorja glede relevantnosti določenih variabel, vendar obenem zrcalijo tudi pozitivno tradicijo več suicidoloških teorij.

## Poslovilna pisma rodoljubov

Kot je to razvidno iz predstavljene raziskave, so poslovilna pisma talcev kazala precej homogen vzorec. Vsi ti spisi so približno enako dolgi, vsebujejo iste strukturne in vsebinske elemente, izražajo podobna čustva itd. Večina poslovilnih pisem je dolgih od 60 do 80 besed. Skoraj vsa so naslovljena na eno ali več znanih oseb in se končajo s frazo poslovitve in s podpisom. Prvi stavek pisma po pravilu sporoča dejstvo, da je avtor obsojen na smrt oz. da bo usmrčen. Emocionalna vsebina se deli na izraze ljubezni in krivde. Krivda se večinoma pojavi v kontekstu trpljenja, ki ga je avtor pisma povzročil svojim bližnjim s svojimi preteklimi dejanji. Avtor po tem velikokrat prosi za odpustanje ali se tega odpoveduje z izrazom "kako ni potrebno žalovati za njim". Večina izjav, ki tvorijo poslovilna pisma (kar 60 %), se nanaša na avtorja oz. na naslovnika. Zanimivo je le, da pri tem uporabljajo relativno malo osebnih zaimkov. Kar precej izjav (20 %) se ukvarja z odnosi med avtorji in naslovniki. Ti odnosi se pokažejo tudi skozi naravo avtorefleksij in refleksij. V kar 40 % vseh poslovilnih pisem se avtorji vidijo v negativni luči, vendar naslovnike skoraj vedno pokažejo v pozitivni luči. Zanikanja se po navadi nanašajo na zanikanje trpljenja avtorja ali na zanikanje namernosti v trpljenju, ki ga je domnevno povzročil svojim bližnjim. Več kot 60 % poslovilnih pisem vsebuje eno ali več neposrednih izrazov za smrt ali umiranje. Odgovornost za smrt se omenja zelo redko, če pa že se, potem le v smislu nepredvidljive usode, ki se je "poigrala" z žrtvijo.

Na podlagi opisanih značilnosti se pokaže, da poslovilna pisma rodoljubov enakomerno nosijo informativne izjave (o usmrtitvi, o zapuščini, o prisotnih osebah itd.) kot tudi "vljudnostne" izjave, ki temeljijo na določeni lojalnosti, pripadnosti ali na gestah "dobre volje". S pozitivno in z negativno samorefleksijo avtorji poslovilnih pisem sporočajo, da se zavedajo relevance splošnega družbenega diskurza in da imajo svoje (odporniško) delovanje za deviantno (v smislu greha ali napake). Na ta način se pravzaprav odrekajo pravici do "svoje" resnice. Iz tega lahko sklepamo ne le na to, da so (pred-



vsem mlajši ljudje) svojo konspirativno dejavnost opravljali proti volji svojih družin ali skupnosti, temveč tudi na to, da so se kar precej zavedali gorja, ki so ga povzročali svojim bližnjim.

Iz že opisanih značilnosti poslovilnih pisem jasno izhaja, da je večina teh spisov namenjena rekonstrukciji odnosov med avtorjem in skupnostjo. Iz podatkov o stopnji negativne avtorefleksije lahko sklepamo, da so se avtorji v precej visokem odstotku zavedali svoje pozicije "outsiderja" glede na diskurz družine, skupnosti oz. družbe. K tem stališčem je zagotovo prispeval tudi proces sankcioniranja odporniškega vedenja. Sankcije, nesorazmerne "krivdi", so spremenile pomen manjših ali večjih odporniških dejanj. Očitno se je večina avtorjev prepoznala kot kršitelji določenih pravil. Poslovilna pisma lahko torej razumemo kot dejanja ponovnega povezovanja s skupnostjo, ki daje gotovost pripadnosti določeni kulturi oz. tradiciji. Tovrstna dejanja verjetno prispevajo k zlivanju individualnega *Selfa* s kolektivnim. Na ta način omogočajo neko vrsto varnosti, ki je potrebna, da bi pogledali smrti v oči, kar se kaže tudi v možnosti verbalizacije teh besed oz. v integraciji ideje minljivosti. K integraciji smrti v diskurz poslovilnih pisem je verjetno prispevalo tudi sprejemanje religioznega verovanja v obstoj "onstranskega" življenja. Na ta način se namreč pokaže perspektiva, ki se v nekaterih pismih zrcali v izjavah, češ da smrt pomeni srečanje s sorodniki, znanci.

## Suicidalni zapisi

Interpretacija poslovilnih pisem rodoljubov je zaradi precejšnje homogenosti vzorca dokaj preprosta. Podobne ugotovitve namreč veljajo skoraj za vse. Suicidalne zapise bi bilo precej težko interpretirati na podoben način, že zaradi tega, ker je vzorec poslovilnih pisem precej nehomogen. To se izraža tako v strukturnih raznolikostih kot tudi v vsebini zapisov. Suicidalne zapise slovenskih samomorilcev je možno razvrstiti na podlagi več vzorcev. Iz podatkov, ki govorijo za "usmerjenost" besedil lahko razberemo, da kar 60% zapisov vsebuje izjave informativne vsebine, ki izražajo sporočila samomorilca glede pogreba, zapuščine oz. nahajališča posmrtnih ostankov. Suicidalni zapisi torej velikokrat funkcionirajo kot oporoke. Nekatere so podpisale tudi priče, iz česar je mogoče sklepati, da posameznik takrat še ni verbaliziral svojih samomorilnih namenov. Oporoke, sporočila itd. sledijo strukturnim značilnostim in vsebinam tovrstnih besedil nesamomorilnih avtorjev. Ti zapisi kar precej odstopajo od zapisov, ki kažejo večjo relevantnost za presuicidalno dogajanje.

Presuicidalni diskuz se očitno ne manifestira v jasnih skriptih suicidalnih zapisov. Vendar iz nekaterih fragmentov lahko razberemo določene mehanizme, vzorce, kot tudi smisel posameznih besedil. Tovrstno delo namreč ustreza logiki hermenevtične raziskave, ki temelji na razumevanju drobcev, ki potem prispevajo k razumevanju celote, kar pa prispeva k razumevanju delov. V tem kroženju tudi sama interpretacija predstavlja le "štacijo" spoznavanja in razumevanja, ki se samoumevno nikoli ne konča. Iz primerjave s poslovilnimi pismi je razvidno, da so suicidalni zapisi manj značilno usmerjeni in vezani za določeno osebo (osebe) v vlogi naslovnika. To dejstvo podpira tudi pomanjkanje poslovilnih fraz in podpisov vsaj v polovici zapisov. Medtem ko je zgradba poslovilnih pisem ro-

doljubov precej "uniformna", pri suicidalnih zapisih ni možno zaslediti določenega vzorca. Manjko naslovnika in podpisa ruši trojno zgradbo besedila, tako značilno za poslovnica pisma. Suicidalni zapisi pogosto dajejo vtis, da so v pisni obliki nadaljevani monologi, vodeni v prisotnosti ali odsotnosti poslušalcev. Pisna oblika suicidalnih zapisov še bolj ustvarja vtis dokončnosti in nespremenljivosti.

Madžarska suicidološka tradicija izpostavlja pomembnost zanikanj kot statistično "trdih" značilnosti suicidalnega diskurza. V slovenskem vzorcu se je potrdila značilnost visoke stopnje zanikanja v suicidalnem "znakovnem sistemu". Pravzaprav se značilni suicidalni zapisi lahko ločijo od manj značilnih (testamenti, sporočila o nahajališču posmrtnih ostankov itd.) po tem, da ti vsebujejo manj zanikanj kot tudi manj osebnih zaimkov, ki se nanašajo na avtorja - samomorilca oz. na "signifikantne" osebe iz okolja, ki niso nujno naslovniki. Kot je razvidno iz podatkov, se zanikanja pojavijo približno v tretjini vseh izjav. Značilno je tudi to, da je razlika med številom izjav, ki se nanašajo na naslovnika oz. avtorja, in številom osebnih zaimkov veliko manjša kot pri poslovnih pismih talcev. Iz tega lahko sklepamo, da je poudarjena uporaba osebnih zaimkov precej relevantna za suicidalni diskurz in je precej pogosto povezana z zanikanji. V poslovnih pismih talcev se namreč zanikanja po navadi nanašajo na zanikanje trpljenja avtorja ali na zanikanje namernosti v domnevno povzročenem trpljenju.

Za suicidalne zapise to ni značilno, znotraj-tekstovno funkcijo zanikanj lahko zasledimo na več vzorcih.

Pomen zanikanja je v tem, da:

- zanika dejstva, na katerih sloni mnenje drugih oseb o samomorilcu;
- ugotov nerazumavanje s strani okolja;
- zanika prej preferirana dejstva;
- zanika možnosti sprememb;
- naznani nezmožnost življenja.

Zanikanje ima pogosto namen dekonstruirati realnost, zgrajeno na določenem "sistemu verovanj", ki je interpersonalno in kulturno utemeljen. Zanikanje je torej zelo pomembno orodje samomorilnega diskurza. Je način, s pomočjo katerega je mogoče ambivalentnost spremeniti v določeno obliko gotovosti. Ambivalenca namreč pomeni pomembno komponento kriznega in presuicidalnega dogajanja. Koincidence okoliščin in preteklih osebnih izkušenj lahko spremenijo gotovost vsakdanjega življenja v negotovost in rahljanje sistema pomenov, ki "vežejo" posameznika v splet odnosov in realnosti. V tem obdobju je v središču pozornosti problem prihodnost v smislu "Kaj bo z mano" ali "Kako bom živel v prihodnje...?" S časovnim potekom suicidalne krize upanje v prihodnost kopni, s čimer se do neznočnosti povečuje stopnja anksioznosti.

Vsem suicidologom je dobro znano dejstvo, da se samomorilci pred samomorilnim dejanjem velikokrat spremenijo. Na dan samomora ali kakšen dan prej postanejo umirjeni, poglobljeni in gotovi vase. Glede na čas nastajanja bi lahko suicidalni zapisi predstavljali pisne odtise tega stanja.

Zanikanje je izredno priročno sredstvo za hitro in učinkovito dekonstrukcijo realnosti. Izjava v smislu "Mene nikoli nihče ni ljubil" je pravzaprav idealen vzorec, kako

se izogniti dvomu v pomene, ki izhajajo iz aktualnih ali osebno-historičnih povezav s svetom. Na novo odkrita "Realnost" samomorilca, ki temelji na tovrstnih negativnih sklepkih, postane zagotovo trdna in nedotakljiva za ves zunanji svet. Vendar na ta način ni mogoče ustvariti realnosti, ki bi prenesla izkušnjo prihodnosti. Tako nastalo stanje se lahko imenuje "stanje odklopljenosti" ali "disconnectedness", referenčne vezi in odnosi s "signifikantnim" okoljem so namreč pretrgani.

Simbolično je mogoče takšen konstrukt primerjati s središčem hurikana, v katerem vladata blažen mir in tišina, vendar brez prihodnosti, "svoboda" in "prihodnost" sta namreč na drugi strani neprehodnega viharnega prstana. Te predstave se precej ujemajo z ugotovitvami Becka (23), ki trdi, da je izguba zaupanja v prihodnost bolj relevantna za samomorilnost kot manifestna depresivnost oz. žalost posameznika.

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# ON THE CONTENTS OF SUICIDE NOTES AND THE FAREWELL LETTERS OF PATRIOTS, EXECUTED DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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225

**Keywords:** *death, suicide notes, content analysis, negation, deconstruction*

The 60's and the 70's were the "golden era" of the modern suicidology. Shneidman, Farberow, Beck, Ringel and many others were the first researchers, who brought some light into the darkness of the presuicidal process. According to their theoretical concepts and empirical findings, today it is evident, that the feelings and expressions of the suicidal individuals are not arbitrary. The presuicidal process reflects some important rules and contents. It seems that the existence of a suicide discourse, (which differs from culture to culture), is obvious. The suicide discourse, in a sense of a "reality, expressing in signs" (Kézdi, 2) represents (in some circumstances) the only way of talking, thinking and writing about suicide. The tradition of the suicidogenity of a certain culture is occurring through the semantic, pragmatic and syntactic dimensions of the discourse. The presuicidal process involves the potential suicidal individual, and all the "significant" environment around him.

The phenomenon of the "Cry for Help" (looking for help and support before committing suicide) is an evidence for the interpersonal (conversational) nature of the presuicidal process. The theoretical concepts of Shneidman and Farberow contributed to the development of some preventive and therapeutic methods, but they were unable to answer some very important questions of suicidology.

The researches found out that the suicide notes are an important part of the suicidological tradition of the 70's. At the late 50's, Shneidman and Farberow constructed a scientific project to compare genuine suicide notes to the simulated ones, written by healthy volunteers. The result of the research was poorly relevant to the understanding of the suicide phenomenon. Other authors examined the difference between the subpopulations of suicide committing individuals, who left suicide notes behind and those, who did not. Those results were irrelevant also. The most interesting studies were those, based on the content analysis of the suicide notes. They reflect the influence of the theoretical concepts and the epistemology of the contemporary humanistic sciences on the research of the suicide notes.

One of the most creative suicidologists, working in the field of the suicide notes is Antoon Leenaars from Canada. He is the author of many important studies, which consider the presence of some textual elements, reflecting the intra- and interpersonal concepts of the suicide. Leenaars is important also, because he was one of the first researchers, working in the field of the transcultural analysis of the documents, relevant to the suicide. He compared suicide notes from Canada and United States and from Canada and Hungary. The suicidology of the 80's and 90's developed a cultural-anthropologically based paradigm also. This kind of studies discovered the appearance of the suicide-related contents in presuicidal manifestations, in media and in literature. The transcultural comparison seem to be very important method in the understanding of the nature of the suicidal behaviour.

226

Kézdi was the first (Hungarian) suicidologist in the early 80's, who studied the linguistic elements of the suicide relating texts. He made a content analysis, based on the theoretical concepts of language behaviour, semiotics and semantics. The sample of his research contained transcribed interviews, made with suicidal individuals, suicide notes and fragments of texts, relevant to suicide. The control sample contained interviews with non suicidal people and texts, irrelevant to suicidal manifestations. He identified the negation, (denial) as the most relevant element of the entire suicide discourse. An important part of his work was the interpretation of the discursive role of the denial from the viewpoint of the culture and tradition.

Fekete, another Hungarian suicidologists used the method of Kézdi for transcultural comparison of the suicide notes. He compared Hungarian, German and English notes. The cultural-anthropologically based suicidological concepts increased in the 80's and 90's like the answer to the deficiency of the »modern«, sociologically and psychologically determined concepts. Namely, the above mentioned sociological and psychological concepts of the 60's and 70's were unable to sufficiently interpret the difference in suicidality of culturally different populations. But they supported the development of a new, interdisciplinary based paradigm which is able to answer very important questions about the presuicidal process. Those concepts are influenced by linguistic theories and hermeneutics. The viewpoint of the researchers changed from the suicidal individuals to the phenomenology of the suicidal process which appears in suicide-related discourse. This kind of view is certainly inter- and multidisciplinary based, oriented into the dimension of the interpersonal space. The »observer« is not an outstanding and »objective« person, but he is at the time of the observation completely involved in the situation and influenced by the language transmitted elements of the »main discourse«. According to the theoretical concepts of the contemporary cultural anthropology, the members of a culture are able to constitute a communicative act on suicide just in harmony with the relevant discourse, which contains the elements of »how«, »whom«, »when« and »why«.

Kézdi and Fekete confirmed the role of the denial like a »hard« marker of the texts, relevant to the suicide. The denial (negation) can be imagined like an element of the content, but at the same time the negation has a syntactic function also. For example, the presence of the multiple negation is specific to some Middle-European cultures

with high suicidal rate, like Hungary and Slovenia, not just to some suicidal individuals, belonging to those cultures. From the viewpoint of the cultural anthropology it seems very important to answer the question: »What is the intention of someone writing a suicide note and what is the meaning of those kind of texts?« The comparison of suicide notes and leave – taking notes of some non- suicidal individuals seems to be a successful way to answer this questions.

The Slovene study on suicide notes compared the sample of 50 suicide notes and 45 leave-taking notes of patriots, executed at the time of the second world war, written in the Slovene language by members of the Slovene culture. The suicide notes were collected by the police in 1994, and the notes, written in the Slovene language were included in the sample. The leave-taking notes were published in a collection and those, included in the research-sample were chosen randomly. After the preliminary reading of the texts, author created a system of criteria for reflection and interpretation of the psychological, semantic, semiotical significance of both samples. The questionnaire, used in research was developed on the ground of some intuitive expectations to the relevance of certain variables, but they reflect the tradition of many suicidological theories also.

### **The leave-taking notes of patriots**

The leave-taking notes of patriots are a very homogenous sample, according to the length, formal structure and the dominantly expressed feelings. The leave-taking notes contain 60 to 80 words in average. Almost all of the notes were addressed to one or more (identified) persons. At the end of the notes there is a kind of a leave-taking phrase and a signature of the author. Almost all of the notes contain an information about the expected execution of the author. (In a sense of »being killed«.) The emotional content of the notes reflects the expression of »love« and »guilt«. The »guilt« appears in the context of pain, caused by the author to they relatives, (by his illegal activity, seen from the viewpoint of the enemy.) The author very often begs for pardon or denies the need for compassion of the relatives. The leave-taking notes contain a great amount of utterances, (60% of all) relating to the author or to the addressee. Twenty percent of the utterances contain information, relating to the relationship between the authors and their relatives. The nature of the reflections and autoreflections is also indicating the perception of the relation between the author and the »significant other«. The negative autoreflection of the authors is present in 40% of the leave-taking notes. The majority of the authors reflect the “significant other” positively. The negation is very often used to deny pain or fear of the author, or to deny the intention of causing suffering and pain to the significant others. More than 60% of the notes contain one or more direct expressions of death and dying. The responsibility for the early and cruel death of the authors is not often mentioned. If it is, than it is in the sense of a destiny.

The leave-taking notes contain utterances with informative values (about the execution, the testament, the significant others etc.) but many phrases with polite content also. This utterances speak about loyalty and “good will”. Listening to the narratives of the leave-taking notes becomes clear, that the conspirative patriotic activity was not a

value for the majority of the (almost rural) population standing behind the authors of the leave-taking notes. The fear from consequences often divided the members of the same family. To join the patriot movement meant being different in the sense of rejecting the traditional values of the family and community.

The main characteristics of the notes, for example the positive reflection (of the others) and the negative autoreflection (of the authors) suggest an intent of reaccepting the belief system, relevant to the main population by the authors of the leave-taking notes. That means also rejecting the appurtenance to the discourse of the patriot movement, to which they belonged before. The cause of the rejection are probably the feelings of guilt and the irrelevance of their belief system in the circumstances of expecting the execution. The main reason for writing leave-taking notes is probably an attempt to reconstruct the original relationship between the authors and their families. The act of confession (in the sense of accepting one's own mistake) may be seen like an act of reconciliation. The result of reconciliation is the harmonisation of the individual with the family and community, what is necessary to accept the cruel fact of death. The death was seen by the authors of the leave-taking notes like a chance to join some family or community members expired before. The acts of harmonisation probably cause confluence of the individual and the collective Self, resulting in the feelings of individual safeness and in the possibility to integrate the idea and the experience of transience. The belief into the life after death is an important fact in the process of integrating the death, but not the only one. The harmony, reestablished between the individual and the community gives a feeling of immortality to the authors of leave-taking notes.

## Suicide notes

The interpretation of the suicide notes seems more difficult, because of their structural and content inhomogeneity. The sample of the Slovene suicide notes contains various types of texts, according to the length, structure, expressed emotion etc. More than 60% of all notes contain utterances, expressing information about the funeral, the last will of the author or about the location of the corpse. Some suicide notes are identified like testaments. Some of those texts are irrelevant to the suicide of the individual, because they were sometimes written before the increasing of the presuicidal process. The testaments and messages are structured like the same texts of nonsuicidal individuals and they differ from the suicide notes, because they are more relevant suicide process. From the other hand, it is clear, that the discourse of suicide is not manifested through some clear scripts. The relevant meanings are hidden in some fragments of the suicide notes. The discovery of those fragments is the hermeneutic way of understanding. The hermeneutic circle is built up from the process of comprehension of the partial, which contribute to the understanding of the whole etc. Certain interpretation is just a station in the never ending process of understanding.

Comparing the leave-taking and the suicide notes, it becomes evident, that the suicide texts are less oriented toward the addressee. The lack of leave-taking phrase and the signature supports this statement. The structure of the leave-taking notes is

more “uniform”, the suicide notes do not contain specific structural elements. The lack of utterances, introducing the addressee and the lack of the signature at the end of the text destroys the trisequent structure, characteristic of the structure of the leave-taking notes. The suicide notes often look like a monologue, written in the absence of the audience. The written form of the suicide notes gives an impression of termination and unchangeability.

The Hungarian suicidological tradition often accentuate the role of the denial as very important and statistically “hard” determinant of the suicide discourse. The research, made on the Slovene sample of the suicide notes confirms the highly significant presence of the utterances, containing denials. The less relevant suicide texts (testaments, last wills, notes of funerals etc) contains less utterances, expressing denial. Among the sample of suicide notes, the denial is present in the one third of all utterances. The narrative function of the negation (denial) is different from those, described in leave-taking notes.

The role of denial is multiple:

- denial of facts, which are important for the opinion of the significant others about the author
- denial of facts, preferred before
- denial of the possibility of changes
- declaring the absurdity of life
- declaring the rejectedness from the significant others.

The main role of denial seems to be the deconstruction of reality, which is culturally and interpersonally determined. The deconstruction of reality is a process, strongly connected with the presuicidal crisis.

The coincidence of the destructive and stressful circumstances and the personal experiences of the individual can initiate the process, which leads to the destruction of everyday feelings of safety, based on harmony of the meanings. The ambivalence is in some way the expression of the distorted harmony of the meanings between the individual and the environment, resulting in the indecisiveness of the suicidal person. The ambivalence is strongly connected to the changed, foreshortened perception of the future in a way of “what will happen with me in the future”? When the crisis is deepening, the negative perception of the possible future is even more dominant and the anxiety of the individual is increasing.

The denial is an important weapon of the suicide discourse. Namely, the denial is a way to change the ambivalence into a special kind of “safetiness”. An utterance, for example: “Nobody, ever loved me,” seem to be the perfect model for the understanding the process of reality deconstruction. Ambivalence suggests the hesitation between the “loves me or loves me not” – for example. This kind of hesitation is sometimes the source of the anxiety of suicidal individuals. Solving the ambivalence in the above-mentioned way, the individual might construct a new reality, which reduces anxiety and makes him virtually safe in front of doubt regarding the interpersonally based feelings. The process of deconstruction causes the tearing of the referential connections between the individual and the social discourse, producing the state of disconnectedness.



Sometimes, several hours or days before the act of suicide, the potentially suicidal persons changed the behaviour. They often became relaxed and more communicative than before. The suicide notes are probably the written impressions of those periods. The problem with the deconstruction of the interpersonally and culturally based reality is the elimination of the future. Namely, the deconstructed reality can not give a positive perception of the future. The disconnected individual is virtually safe and relaxed, but the freedom and the future is unattainable to him. Metaphorically, the position of the individual is just like at the "eye" of the hurricane. Safe, but without future.

## BESEDA O AVTORJU

Robert Oravec, dr. med., rojen v Vojvodini kot pripadnik madžarske manjšine. Medicinsko fakulteto je končal na Madžarskem. Od leta 1988 živi v Sloveniji. Študiral je filozofijo in diskurzivne znanosti, dokončal je specializacijo psihiatrije. Od 1995 živi v Ormožu, sicer pa je na doktorskem študiju na Medicinski fakulteti v Budimpešti. Ukvarja se s problematiko travme, žrtev in beguncev kot tudi z adiktologijo in suicidologijo. Objavil je več člankov iz omenjenih tem in sodeluje na nacionalnih in mednarodnih znanstvenih srečanjih.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Oravec, M.D., was born in Voivodina as a Hungarian minority member. He graduated from Med. School in Hungary. Since 1988 he has been living in Slovenia, where he has been studying philosophy, discourse studies and has got a certificate in psychiatry also. Since 1995 he has been living in Ormož. He is also a Ph.D. student at Medical University of Budapest. Robert Oravec is interested in the field of psychotrauma, victimhood and refugees, also in addictology and suicidology. He has many publications on related topics and he has participated at many national and international scientific congresses.

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# ARHEOLOŠKO NAJDIŠČE IN LEGENDA O UMRLIH: PRIMER GORENJI MOKRONOG

Uroš Bavec

231

**Ključne besede:** mitična krajina, uhan s košarico, rekristjanizirana ali sveta krajina, ajdje

Eno od značilnih in morda najbolj očitnih materialnih manifestacij smrti je vsekakor grobišče oz. pokopališče. Pri raziskovanju takšnih točk je sodelovanje med nekaterimi na videz nezdržljivimi strokovnimi področji nujno. V mislih imamo predvsem področje varovanja kulturne dediščine, ohranjanje ostankov ustnega izročila ob upoštevanju novih arheoloških in fizičnoantropoloških podatkov.

Nekatera stara pokopališča ali bolje grobišča v agrarnih okoljih osrednje Dolenjske imajo praviloma poseben status. Ponavadi gre za že znane lokacije, ki jih ljudje označujejo s tipičnimi imeni. Tem mestom dajo včasih namensko pridih skrivnostnosti, kar privede do postopne "mitizacije" celotne pokrajine (prim. Roymans 1995).

Lokalno prebivalstvo vsak devastacijski poseg na takšnem območju praviloma sprejme z neodobravanjem in odporom. Zanimivo, da je ta svojevrstna pieteta, ki se kaže v odnosu do skeletnih ostankov prednikov, zelo spremenljiv pojav, ki ni skupen vsem prebivalcem. Na nekem ozkem vzorčnem primeru se lahko giblje od precejšnje indiferentnosti do pravega "kulta mrtvih".<sup>1</sup> Čemu ta razlika? Zakaj niso v ljudski zavesti vse lokacije s skeletnimi ostanki umrlih obravnavane enako? Zakaj dvesto let opuščeno vaško pokopališče izginja iz ljudske zavesti, medtem ko se zgodbe o tisoč let starejšem poznoantičnem grobišču ali stari romanski kostnici ohranjajo? Paradoksalno je dejstvo, da domačinov na teh mitiziranih krajih celo prisotnost ne vedno najbolj priljubljenih raziskovalcev - arheologov, ne moti.<sup>2</sup> Naša teza je, da dobijo vrednost samo tisti elemen-

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<sup>1</sup> Spremenljiv odnos do skeletnih ostankov pokojnikov, ki se kaže npr. v prekopavanju grobov, se pojavi že v visokem srednjem veku in je znan iz pisnih virov (Makarovič G. 1995, 146). Potrjujejo ga tudi rezultati izkopavanj na srednjeveškem grobišču ob cerkvi Sv. Petra (slika 2-3). Za našo nadaljnjo obravnavo ostaja zanimiva lokacija poznoantičnega grobišča, kjer je odnos do grobov povsem drugačen, in ni naključje, da se večina legend veže ravno na to lokacijo (slika 1).

<sup>2</sup> Zdi se, da "sveti značaj" tovrstnih najdišč pomeni spregledan most med nepopularno državno službo (kot so npr. lokalni zavodi za varstvo kulturne dediščine) in lokalnim javnim mnenjem, ki bi ga bilo vredno v prihodnosti bolj spopularizirati

ti (sem sodijo npr. tudi skeletni ostanki), ki sodijo v kontekst povrnitve nikdar povsem izgubljene "stare slave" neke mitizirane pokrajine.

Arheologija s sodobnimi metodološkimi pristopi takšno "mitizacijo pokrajine" praviloma preprosto spregleda ali le površno citira. Interpretacij skorajda ni. Morda zato, ker imamo lahko precejšen del tega bogatega ustnega izročila v smislu postavke - "resnične preteklosti" v strogem empiričnem smislu za diskutabilen.

To potrjuje tudi analiza na prvi pogled bogatega ustnega izročila, ki se veže na arheološko najdišče Gorenji Mokronog na območju centralne Dolenjske. Vedenje o svetem značaju določenih delov obravnavane pokrajine se v našem primeru neposredno ohranja le v ledinskem imenu lokacije. Lokacija ob na novo odkritem poznoantičnem grobišču (*slika 1*), se imenuje "Orajk" ali "Vrajski breg", kar je narečna izpeljava lokativna imena "v raju" oz. v nebesih (krščansko) oz. v poganskem onstranstvu (Sl. SKJ 1985, 311). Ta toponim je torej tista točka, ki bi jo smeli označiti za "resnično preteklost" - potrjeno z empirijo arheoloških izkopavanj. Kljub prekinitvi izrabe tega prostora v tradiciji (izkopavanja so pokazala, da je grobišče časovno ozko omejeno na konec 6. in začetek 7. stoletja) so poganski oz. slovanski prišleki "svetost" te krajine ponovno prevzeli od staroselcev; zatem je mitična krajina poznoantičnega grobišča ob vnočnem pokristjanjenju zopet postala del krščanske kozmologije.

Zanimivo je, da si vse arheološke točke v prostoru ne "zaslužijo" mitizacije. V neposredni bližini - ob nekdanji župnijski cerkvi sv. Petra - je bilo odkrito visoko in poznosrednjeveško grobišče (*slika 2*). Rezultati izkopavanj kažejo, da je bilo grobišče konec 18. stoletja dokončno opuščeno, kar sovпада z zgodovinskimi podatki, ki kažejo, da se je dogajanje ob cerkvi po l. 1870 preneslo v novo župnijsko (nekdanj podružnično) cerkev sv. Križa na Trebelnem (Golob 1994, 9). Tu je, kot kažejo rezultati izkopavanj, odnos do mrtvih že precej podoben današnjemu. Grobove so zaradi pomanjkanja prostora v zadnji fazi pogosto prekopavali. Rotunda sv. Mihaela pa je služila kot kostnica, kjer so dolge kosti in lobanje iz teh prekopanih grobov odlagali. Grobišče je namreč umeščeno pod romansko rotundo sv. Mihaela in je, kot kažejo rezultati izkopavanj v kombinaciji z nekaterimi topografskimi podatki, zapolnjevalo ves prostor okoli barokizirane cerkve sv. Petra (*slika 2-3*). Morda se je zaradi pomanjkanja prostora v nekem trenutku spremenila celo lega mrliča v grobu, ki iz starejše tradicionalne usmeritve vzhod-zahod preide v smer sever-jug (*slika 3*). Značilno in za nas zanimivo pa je dejstvo, da je vse ustno izročilo, ki se je spletlo okrog obravnavane lokacije, v bistvu vezano na mitizirano lokacijo bližnjega poznoantičnega grobišča. Imeli smo srečo, da smo naleteli na gospoda Franca Hočevarja - mežnarja in vaškega kronista iz Mokronoga, ki je prava zakladnica tovrstnih podatkov. Za centralno slovenski in jugovzhodnoalpski prostor je to danes že prava redkost. Vsi njegovi podatki kažejo, kako so lokalni prebivalci neki mitični krajini postopoma vračali njen prvotni - očitno nikoli povsem izgubljen sveti pomen, ki se kaže v zelo konkretnem odnosu do skeletnih ostankov umrlih iz točno določene lokacije poznoantičnega grobišča. Romanska rotunda sv. Mihaela (iz prve polovice 13. stoletja) (*slika 4*), v kateri naj bi po legendi maševala Ciril in Metod in naj bi vanjo "še ajdje hodili", je hkrati kostnica in je še danes polna človeških kostnih ostankov (Hitzinger P, 1863,

19). Kosti so kot element *tremendum et fascinans* zopet vzbudile željo po mitizaciji, sam izvor legende o maševanju Cirila in Metoda pa je bolj banalen.

Ugotovili smo, da je mitizacija v tem primeru povezana z nekakšno "mitično slovanizacijo", ki ima izvor v stari, tendenciozni časopisni objavi Aleksandra Kobeta alias Jurija Sodevskega iz prve polovice 19. stoletja (Kobe-Sodevski 1844, 115-116). Še danes izredno živa legenda, ki so jo domačini hvaležno sprejeli, se v tem primeru izkaže za reakcijo na realne politične razmere v prvi polovici 19. stoletja. Tako je pod vplivom takrat nastajajočega panslavizma v visoko srednjeveško romansko rotundo - kostnico sv. Mihaela samovoljno vpeto maševanje Konstantina (Cirila) in Metoda - slovanskih apostolov iz 9. stoletja. Ljudsko znanje smemo tu razumeti kot razumsko spoznanje sveta, kot ga doživljamo, ne glede na realnost preteklih stanj, kar zopet ni v nasprotju z visoko empiričnim pristopom radikalno konstruktivistične perspektive (prim. Holtorf C. J. 1997, 80).

233

Globoka potreba po mitizaciji ali "rekristjanizaciji" takšne svete krajine je stalna in se kaže v tem, da domačini vsako novost, ki sodi v ta kontekst, z veseljem sprejmejo. Že prihod tujca, npr. arheologa, in odkritje grobov sta lahko vzrok za nastanek novega "mitičnega konstrukta". Starinokop J. Pečnik, ki je v teh krajih deloval v zadnji tretjini 19. stoletja, je odkril "čudne grobove, zložene iz kamnitih plošč in jako podobnih rimskim", ki jih ni natančno lociral (Pečnik J. 1887, 28 in Pečnik F. 1989) (slika 5). Njegovo odkritje se je vtisnilo v spomin nekaterih zdaj že pokojnih domačinov. Do točne lokacije smo srečno prišli le na podlagi informacije, da je stari lastnik tega območja naključnim popotnikom in romarjem (po cesti teče znana božja pot) prepovedal opravljanje potrebe po bližnjem gozdiču Vrajku z besedami: "Ali doma tudi po britofu serjete?" Ta razlaga, pogojena s sedanjim oz. polpreteklim spoštovanjem do umrlih, torej zopet ne izključuje resnice o obstoju nekega preteklega stanja.

Navadno izvor legende ni povsem jasen in ga celo empirični pristop, kot je npr. interpretacija rezultatov arheoloških izkopavanj, ne more potrditi ali ovreči. Legenda o prvem misijonu in leseni cerkvi ob njej, za lokacijo katere v ustnem izročilu ni točnih podatkov, verjetno ni nepomembna.<sup>3</sup> Navezava na prej omenjeni panslovanski konstrukt seveda ni nemogoča. Vendar smo z izkopavanji odkrili ostanke jam za kole, ki skupaj sestavljajo neko preprosto ovalno strukturo umetno izravnane površine ob najvišjem delu izkopnega polja poznoantičnega grobišča (slika 1). Misel, da so slovanski, morda še poganski prišleki prepoznali poznoantično grobišče kot del mitične krajine, ki jo je potrebno označiti z nekakšno arhitekturo, po nekaterih analogijah ni neverjetna, a je z ohranjenimi materialnimi ostanki žal ne moremo dokazati.<sup>4</sup>

Je pa stroka (npr. arheologija) v sodelovanju z drugimi vedami sposobna v mnogočem dopolniti legendo o "pervih kristjanih", ki naj bi bili ob leseni cerkvi pokopani, in s tem priskočiti na pomoč pri novodobni mitizaciji krajine. Dvajset pokojnikov je bilo položenih v plitve jame brez grobne arhitekture in le z osebnimi pridatki (slika 1). Da je šlo za zaprto samoskrbno skupnost, kaže obrabljenost in deloma celo unikatnost najdenih pridatkov, značilnih za konec 6. in začetek 7. stoletja. Dva uhana s košarico,

<sup>3</sup> Podatek mi je posredoval g. Franc Hočevar, za kar se mi na tem mestu najlepše zahvaljujem.

<sup>4</sup> Funkcija podobnih vkopnih jam, ki so verjetno stojke skromne lesene arhitekture, ostaja zvečina neinterpretirana; najdemo jih npr. na zgodnjerednjeveškem najdišču v avstrijskem Gusnu (Tovornik V. 1985, 187 in priloga).

izdelana v bronu, postaneta takoj bolj zanimiva, če povemo, da je prvega nosila neka več kot štirideset let stara ženska pred tisoč tristo leti na desni strani glave kot del lokalne noše, medtem ko je nekoliko mlajša ženska, morda sorodnica zgoraj omenjene (kar kažejo antropološke analize), v približno istem času nosila slab lokalni posnetek neke luksuzne starejše izvorno bizantinske narebrenne oblike uhana, ki v tem nevarnem času očitno ni bila več dostopna.

Zanimiva je tudi zgodba o preluknjanih odlomkih dveh poznoantičnih čaš, ki sami na sebi ne pomenita ničesar. Če pa vemo, da sta bili položeni v naročje štiri do pet let starega otroka, sta predstavljivi sliki neke daljne bolečine. Eden od njegovih najbližjih mu je na zadnjo pot položil v naročje njegovo ljubo igračo - ropotuljico.

234

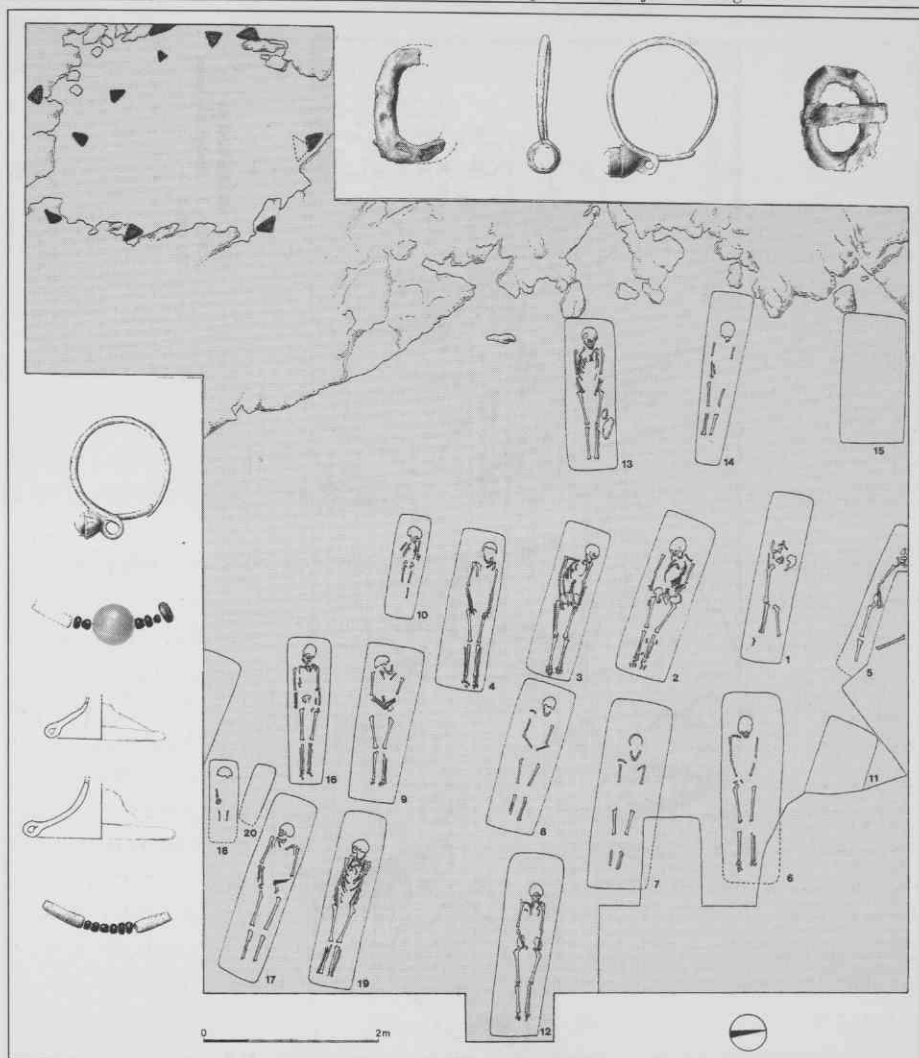
Antropološko poročilo je pokazalo približno enakovreden odstotek žensk (7), moških (6) in otrok (2). Če hočemo, lahko iz suhoparnih podatkov s področja fizične antropologije vedno izluščimo detajle, zanimive tudi za širšo javnost. Takšno je npr. dejstvo, da so si bili ti ljudje verjetno v sorodu, na kar kažejo nekatere fiziološke sorodnosti - npr. orlovski nos, ki se pojavlja tako pri moških kot pri ženskah. Zanimivo, da jih je največ umrlo v dobi *adultus* II (30-40 let), medtem ko starosti *maturus* II (50-60 let) na vzorcju te sonde ni nihče presegel.<sup>5</sup>

Mitično krajino uspešno dopolnjuje še arheološki podatek o obstoju poznoantične naselbine, ki se je v ustnem izročilu že izgubil in se ni ohranil niti v toponimu. Naselbina je bila odkrita ob gradu Obernassenfuss, ali natančneje: na terasah pod njim (slika 6). Možnost, da stika med staroselci in slovanskimi prišleki ni bilo, izključuje že sam obstoj mitične krajine. Morda na mestu same naselbine ni sakralnega objekta s svetimi močmi, ki bi bil vreden mitizacije. Sakralne objekte najdemo namreč na lokacijah večine poznoantičnih višinskih utrjenih naselij, ki imajo svoj poznoantični izvor večkrat skrit v imenu (npr. Ajdna nad Potoki, Ajdovski gradec). Tudi tu so izjeme, vendar arheologi le redko prebiramo pravljice izpred stotih let. V primeru hriba Vipota pri Celju se je npr. nekoč zapisana zgodba "o votlini, kjer so se skrivali kristjani pred srdom poganov", ki se je z najdbami zgodnjekršćanske cerkvene opreme potrdila kot zelo verjetna (Seidl 1881, 76).<sup>6</sup>

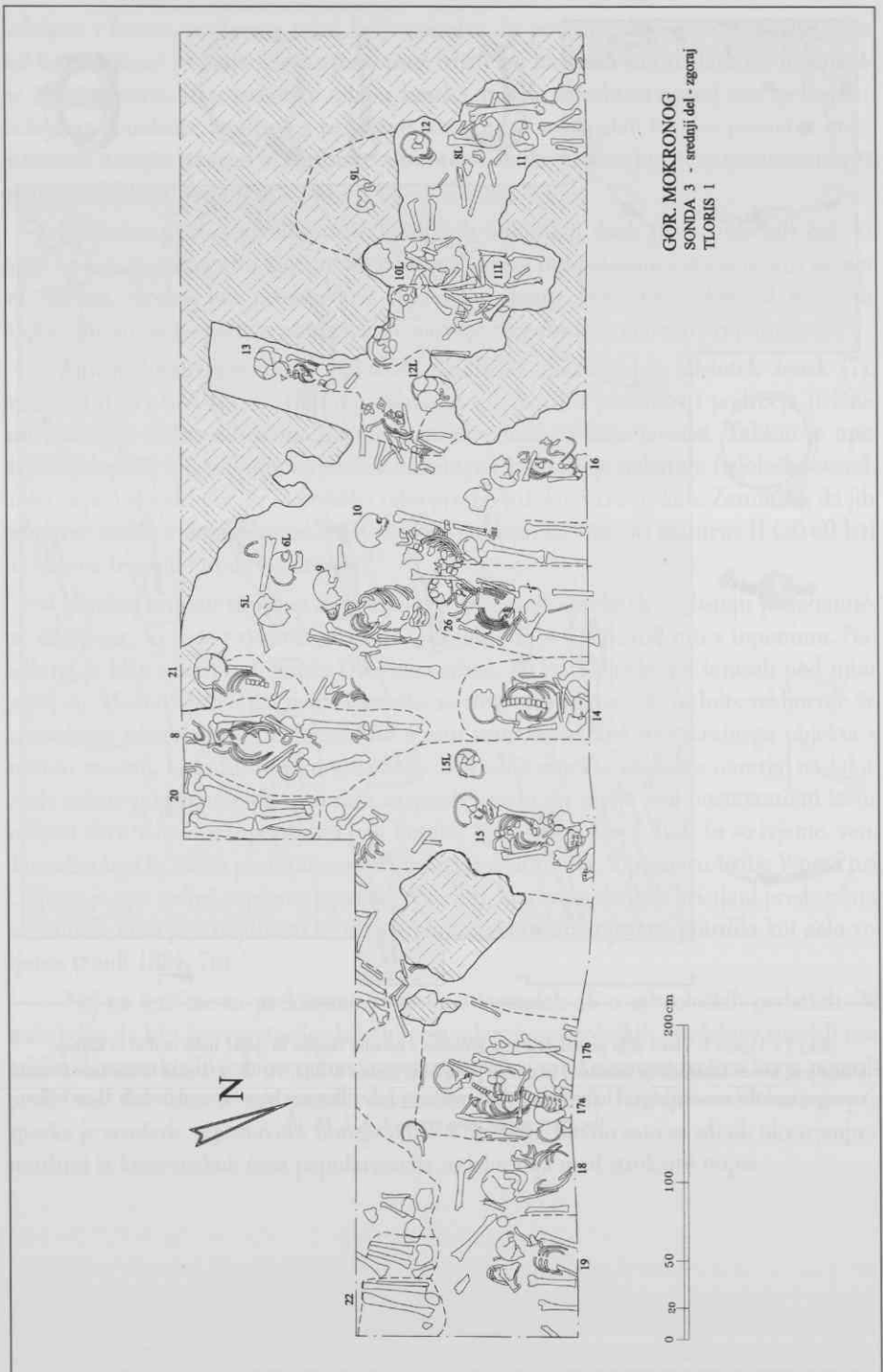
Naj na tem mestu prekinemo pogovor o legendah ali o arheoloških podatkih. Ni naša želja, da bi z interpretacijo skeletnih ostankov in arheoloških artefaktov sprožili nov mitični konstrukt. Ta je bil verjetno vzpostavljen že takrat, ko smo se na tem kraju pojavili prvič (naše delovanje je npr. postalo del gostilniških govoric). Temeljno vodilo našega prispevka je vendarle vzpostavitev novega odnosa do živih. Ravno zato se zdi ob ukvarjanju z umrlimi iz kateregakoli časa popularizacija sodelovanja med strokami nujna.

<sup>5</sup> Izčrpno antropološko poročilo dr. Petre Leben-Selakove hrani ZVNKD Novo mesto.

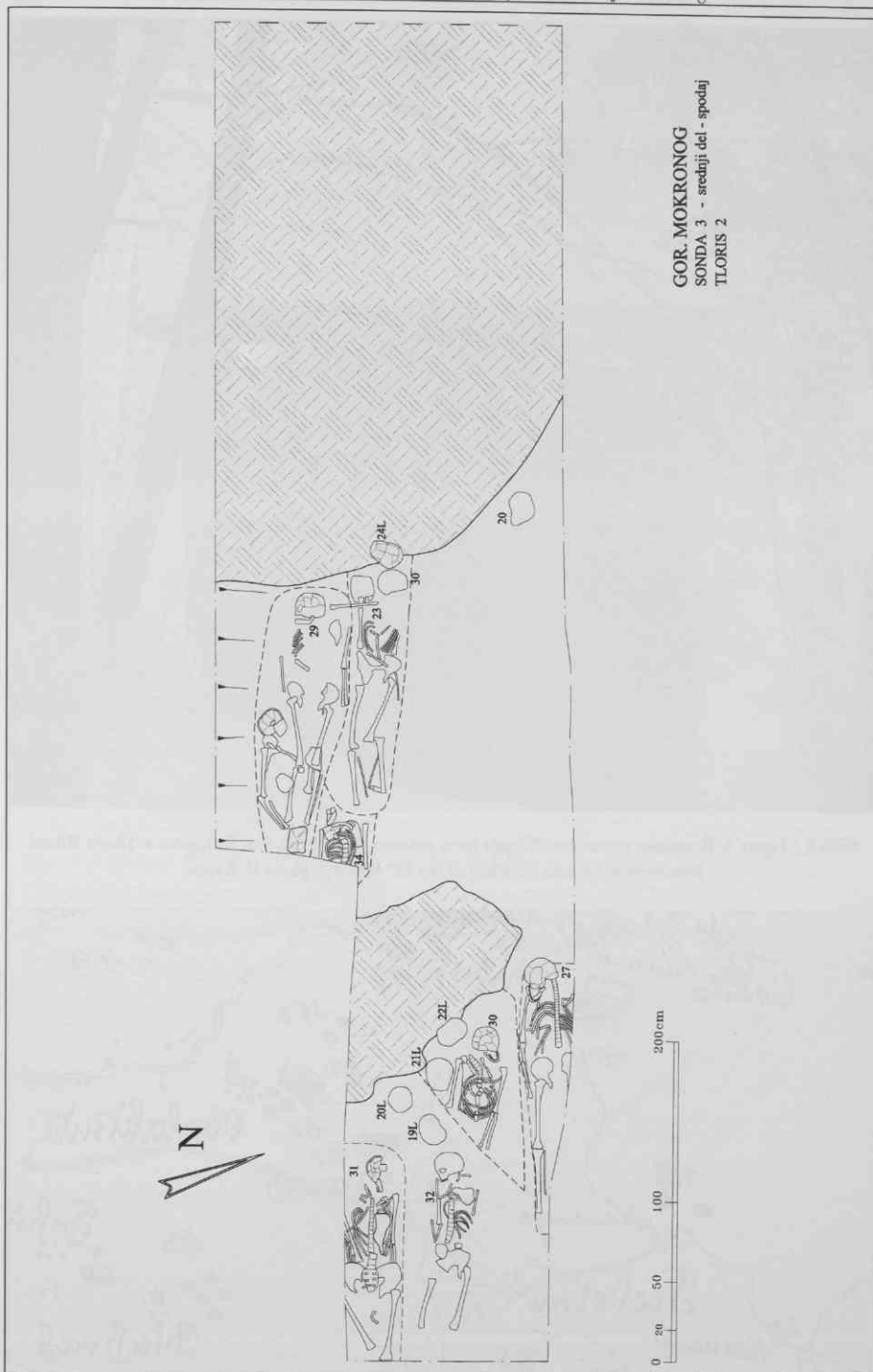
<sup>6</sup> Za prijazen napotek se na tem mestu najlepše zahvaljujem dr. Andreju Pleterskemu.



Slika 1 / Figure 1: Tloris dela poznoantičnega grobišča z ostanki vkopov za stojke neke ovalne in kasneje odstranjene lesene konstrukcije (sonda 1) in grobni pridatki iz grobov 2, 5, 7, 14, 18. ♦ A plan of the Late Roman cemetery and the remains of post holes for an oval wooden structure that was later removed (trench 1), as well as the grave goods from graves 2, 5, 7, 14, 18.



Slika 2 / Figure 2: Tloris dela poznosrednjeveškega grobišča (sonda 3) - faza 1. ♦ A plan of part of the Late Medieval cemetery (trench 3) - phase 1.

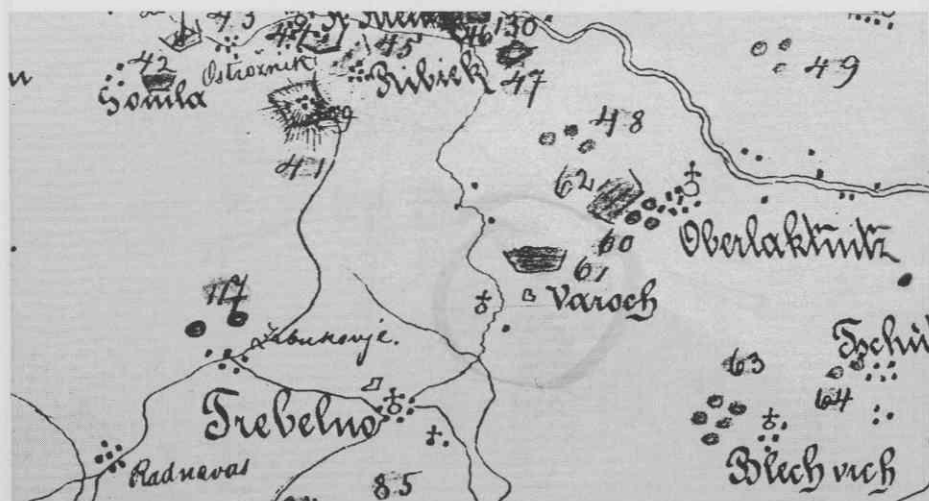


Slika 3 / Figure 3: Tloris dela poznosrednjeveškega grobišča (sonda 3) - faza 2. ♦ A plan of part of the Late Medieval cemetery (trench 3) - phase 2.

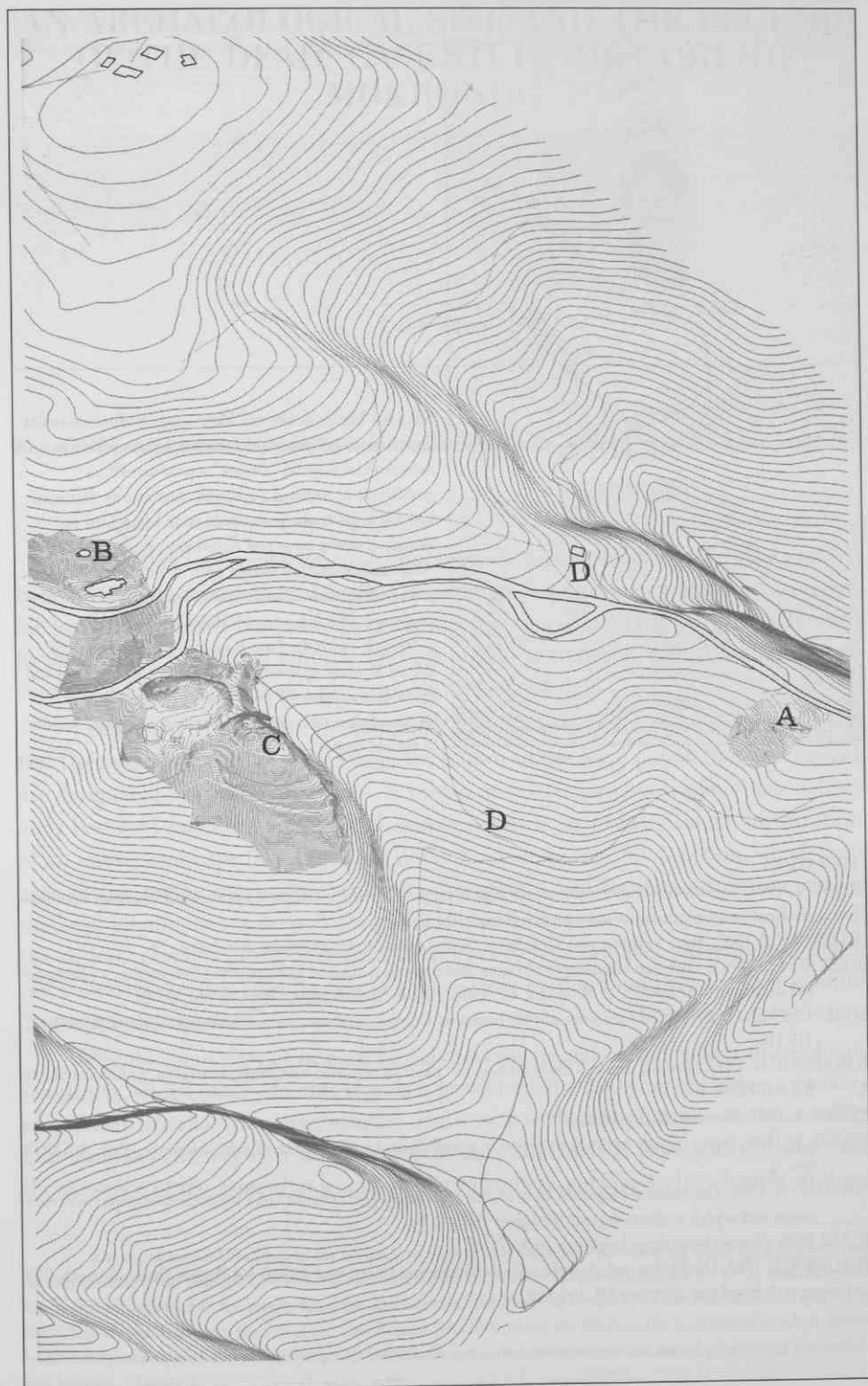


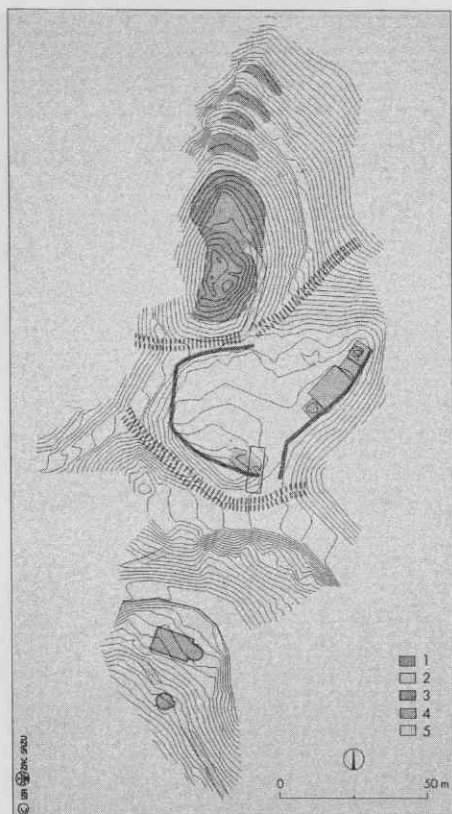


Slika 4 / Figure 4: Romanska rotunda sv. Mihaela (prva polovica 13. stoletja), foto M. Kapus. ♦ The St Mihael Romanesque rotunda (first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), photo M. Kapus.



Slika 5 / Figure 5: Izsek karte iz dnevnih zapisov starinokopa Jerneja Pečnika. ♦ A section of a map from the daily records of the treasure hunter, Jernej Pečnik.





Slika 6 / Figure 6: Gorenji Mokronog - tridimenzionalni (axonometrični) geodetski posnetek terena. Vidne so naslednje lokacije: a) "Orajek" s poznoantičnim grobiščem; b) romanska rotunda - kostnica sv. Mihaela, kjer naj bi po tradiciji maševala sveta brata Ciril in Metod; c) sistem teras pod ruševinami gradu "Obnassenfuss"; d) fosilne poti. ♦ Gorenji Mokronog. A three-dimensional (axonometric) geodesic plan of the landscape. The following locations are visible: a) "Orajek" with the Late Roman cemetery; b) the Sv. Mihael Romanesque rotunda - ossuary, where Cyril and Methodius supposedly held a mass; c) the system of terraces below the ruins of the "Obnassenfuss" castle; d) the old routes.

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# AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND THE LEGEND OF THE DEAD: CASE-STUDY OF GORENJI MOKRONOG

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Uroš Bavec

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241

**Key words:** *mythical landscape, basket earrings, Christian landscape, indigenous romanised population*

A cemetery is certainly the most characteristic and perhaps also the most conspicuous material manifestation of death. Cooperation among select, seemingly incompatible professional fields is a necessity in the investigation of such sites. This largely refers to the field of preserving cultural heritage and oral tradition, whilst taking into account new archaeological and physicalanthropological data.

Certain ancient cemeteries maintain a special status in the rural areas of the central Dolenjsko region. These locations are known to the local population and as such are designated by specific toponyms. A breath of mysteriousness is sometimes deliberately bestowed upon these sites which consequently leads to the gradual 'mythization' of an entire landscape (e.g. Roymans 1995). Each and every intervention, which damages such a region, normally encounters disapproval and resistance from the side of the local inhabitants. It is fascinating that this peculiar piety should be expressed towards the skeletal remains of the ancestors. It appears to be a mutable phenomenon that is not collective. In this specific case it ranges from extreme indifference to a genuine "veneration of the dead".<sup>1</sup>

Why do some sites of human burials receive special consideration in local consciousness, whilst others do not? How is it possible that a 200 year old village cemetery can vanish from local's consciousness, whilst oral traditions of a thousand year older Late Roman cemetery or a Romanesque ossuary survived? It is paradoxical that even the presence of the somewhat less popular researchers, such as archaeologists, in these

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<sup>1</sup> The capricious relationship to the skeletal remains, which is often exhibited in the digging up of graves, was already present in the Middle Ages and is also referred to in the written sources (Makarovič G. 1995, 146). The practice is also reconfirmed in the results from the excavations of the Medieval cemetery by the church of St. Peter - Figure 2-3. In the continuation, the site of the Late Roman cemetery, where the relationship to graves takes on an entirely different manner, is of some consequence. It is certainly not a mere coincidence that most legends refer precisely to this location - Figure 1.

'mythicized' localities does not seem to be considered an intrusion by the locals.<sup>2</sup> It is suggested here that the only elements that gain in value are those (including skeletal remains), which conform to the context of reinstating the 'old glory' of a 'mythicized' locality, which was never entirely lost.

If archaeology only applies contemporary methodological approaches, it will simply overlook or inadvertently cite such 'mythization' of the landscape. Interpretations are all but omitted. This may be because a large part of this rich oral tradition, denoting "real past", is considered debatable in a strictly empirical sense. This is also confirmed by analyzing the seemingly rich oral tradition concerning the Gorenji Mokronog archaeological site in the central Dolenjsko. Only the toponym of the locality directly retains the 'sacred status' of certain parts of the discussed landscape. The area around the newly discovered Late Roman cemetery – *Figure 1*, is referred to as "Orajk" or "Vrajski breg", which is a dialect form of the locative name "v raju", in heaven (Christian), in the pagan otherworld (Sl. SKJ 1985, 311). This toponym is a point which can be defined as "real past", and which is confirmed by the empiricism of archaeological excavations. In spite of settlement discontinuity in this area (the cemetery dates to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century), the incoming pagan population appropriated the "sacred status" of the area from the existing population; the mythic space of the Late Roman cemetery once again became a part of Christian cosmology when the region was Rechristianized. It is interesting that not all archaeological sites within the area have "earned" mythization. A cemetery dating to the High and Late Middle Ages was discovered in the direct vicinity to the former parish church Sv. Peter – *Figure 2*. Results from the excavation indicate the cemetery was finally abandoned toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This coincides with the historical data, which indicates that activity by the church was transferred to the new parish, and formerly subsidiary, church of Sv. Križ at Trebelno after the year 1870 (Golob 1994, 9). Results from the excavations suggest a rather similar relationship to the deceased as at the present time. Due to a scarcity of space, graves were often dug up during the final phase. The Sv. Mihael rotunda, where long bones and skulls from these graves were then deposited, served as an ossuary. The cemetery is situated on the slope below Sv. Mihael, a Romanesque rotunda. Excavations, in combination with certain topographic data revealed that, it occupied the entire area surrounding the baroque style church of Sv. Peter – *Figure 2-3*. The scarcity of space may also have been the reason why the orientation of the inhumation was adjusted from an older and traditional East-West orientation to a North-South orientation – *Figure 3*. A characteristic and significant fact is that any and all oral tradition that concerns the above location is essentially bound to the 'mythicized' site of the nearby Late Roman cemetery.

It was by a stroke of luck that Franc Hočvar, the parish clerk and a village chronicler, was encountered; he contributed a treasure trove of such information. Today, this represents quite a rarity in central Slovenia and the south-eastern Alpine region as a

<sup>2</sup> It seems that the "sacred nature" of such sites represents a bridge between unpopular state offices (e.g. local institutions for the preservation of cultural heritage) and local public opinion, which would be worth promoting in the future.

whole. His entire collection of information illustrates how the local inhabitants gradually restored the initial – and evidently never entirely lost – ‘sacred status’ to a mythic landscape. This was based upon a very specific relationship to the skeletal remains of the deceased from a precise location at the Late Roman cemetery. According to the legend, Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius held a mass in the Romanesque rotunda Sv. Mihael (from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), and to which ‘ajdje’ (indigenous romanised population) would also pay visits; at the same time, it served as an ossuary and even today is filled with human skeletal remains (Hitzinger P, 1863, 19) – *Figure 4*. These bones, as an element *tremendum et fascinans*, instigated the desire for ‘mythization’ once again, while the origins of the legend concerning Cyril and Methodius are more commonplace.

In this case, mythization is connected with same kind of the “mythic Slavicization”, which originated in the tendentious newspaper articles of Aleksander Kobet alias Jurij Sodevski of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kobe-Sodevski 1844, 115-116). The still living legend from Gorenji Mokronog exhibits a reaction to real political conditions in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were reflected by the local people. Thus, under the influence of the nascent Pan-Slavism, the mass held by Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius, 9<sup>th</sup> century Slavonic apostles, was arbitrarily attributed to the Sv. Mihael Romanesque Rotunda. This is not in opposition to the highly empirical approach of radical constructivist perspectives, because this defines folk traditions as “knowledge and meaningful understanding according to cognitive and practical (that includes social) viability in the world as we experience it, not according to correspondence to a (past) reality” (see Holtorf C. J. 1997, 80). However, the deep need to mythicize or ‘Christianize’ such a sacred landscape is permanent and is reflected by the fact that the local people accept each new element that fits into this context. Already the arrival of strangers (archaeologists) and the discovery of graves can cause the construction of a new “mythic construction”. The treasure hunter J. Pečnik, who operated in the area during the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, discovered “strange graves, lined with stone slabs and very similar to Roman graves” (Pečnik J. 1887, 28; Pečnik F.1989) – *Figure 5*. His discovery was imprinted in the memories of certain now deceased locals. The precise location was rediscovered on the basis of information that the old landowner refused to allow stray travelers and pilgrims (a well-known pilgrimage route follows the road) to obey the call of nature in the Vrajk woods with the words: “Do you also urinate on cemeteries at home?” This interpretation of the respective present reverence for the deceased does not exclude the truth of the existence of a former state.

The common origins of the legend are so equivocal that even an empirical approach, such as an interpretation of results from archaeological excavations, cannot confirm or refute their genesis. The legend that refers to the first mission and a wooden church nearby, yet eludes a specification of a precise location, is most likely of little importance.<sup>3</sup> A correlation with the above mentioned Pan-Slavic structure is of course impossible. Nonetheless, excavations revealed the remains of post holes at the upper part of the excavated area of the Late Roman cemetery, that in conjunction form a sim-

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Mr. Franc Hočevar for providing this information.

ple oval structure with an artificially leveled surface – *Figure 1*. It is feasible according to certain analogies that the Slavic or even the pagan newcomers acknowledged the Late Roman cemetery as part of a mythic landscape and felt the need for some sort of an architectural structure to distinguish. However, the preserved material remains are insufficient proof.<sup>4</sup>

The combination of one discipline (e.g. archaeology) with other disciplines is fully capable of fulfilling the legend of the “first Christians”, who were supposedly buried by the wooden church, and thus contributes to the modern mythization of the landscape. Twenty individuals were placed in shallow graves, without any elaborate mortuary construction, and furnished with grave goods – *Figure 1*. The worn condition, and partially also the uniqueness, of the discovered artifacts, characteristic of the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries indicate, that the society was a closed and self-sufficient one. The significance of two bronze basket earrings immediately increases with the additional piece of information that they were worn by a 40 year old woman on her right side as an integral part of a local attire 1300 years ago; at the same time, a somewhat younger woman, perhaps even a relative of the above mentioned woman (as indicated by the anthropological analyses), wore an inferior local imitation of an older, an elaborate ribbed-shaped earring whose origins derived from the Early Byzantine period, which was evidently not available anymore during this perilous age. Likewise also the story of the perforated fragments of two Roman glass beakers, which in themselves are inconsequential. When one is equipped with the additional information that they were laid in the arms of a 4 or 5 year old child they become a reflection of some remote anguish. One of his nearest and dearest placed his favorite toy – a rattle – in his arms for his final journey.

The anthropological report determined approximately equal percentages of women (7), men (6) and children (2). Of course we deal with a small sample size with an incomplete mortuary population. However, more engaging details for the wider public can always be extracted from among the tedious information presented by the field of physical anthropology. For instance, the fact that they were related to each other; whereupon physiological affinities were also detected, e.g. aquiline noses, among the men as well as the women. It is also interesting that the majority died during the adults II age (30-40 years), while no cases were detected from this sample exceeding the matures II age (50-60 years).<sup>5</sup>

The mythic landscape is also successfully supplemented by the archaeological information concerning the existence of a Late Roman settlement, already absent in oral tradition and not denoted in the toponym. The settlement was discovered near the castle Obernassenfuss, or more precisely, on the terraces below – *Figure 6*. The chance that there was no contact between the indigenous population and the Slavic newcomers is resolved by the mere existence of the mythic landscape. And yet there is no sacral structure with sa-

<sup>4</sup> The function of similar pits, which probably represent post holes for a modest wooden structure, for the most part have yet to be interpreted; they are present, for instance, at the Early Medieval site of Gusen in Austria (Tovornik V. 1985, 187 and addition).

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Petra Leben-Selak's comprehensive anthropological report is kept at the ZVNKD, Novo mesto.

cred powers at the very location of the settlement worth mythization. Ecclesiastical structures are found at the majority of Late Roman upland settlement sites, which often furnish their Late Roman origins in their names (e.g. Ajdna above Potoki, Ajdovski gradec). There are always exceptions, although archaeologists rarely read stories from centuries ago. In the case of the "Vipota near Celje" hill, the story written long ago "concerning a cave where Christians hid from the wrath of pagans" was credibly corroborated by the find of an Early Christian church accoutrements (Seidl 1881, 76).<sup>6</sup>

Let us conclude this discussion concerning legends or archaeological data. It is not our intention to create a new mythic structure with the interpretation of skeletal remains and archaeological artefacts. This was probably already established with our first visit to the site itself (perhaps our ventures became the subject of a tavern gossip). The main objective of this article is to contribute a new perspective to the living, precisely for this reason it seems that the promotion of the collaboration between disciplines is essential in taking an interest in the dead, from any point in time.

REFERENCES see page 240

#### BESEDA O AVTORJU

Uroš Bavec, arheolog, po diplomi na Univerzi v Ljubljani je od leta 1992 deloval kot samostojni kulturni delavec, kasneje je bil kustos za arheologijo v Posavskem muzeju Brežice, zadnjih nekaj let pa opravlja delo konservatorja za nepremično dediščino na Zavodu za varstvo kulturne dediščine v Novem mestu. Specializacija - mikroregionalne poselitvene študije: Sv. Jakob nad Dovškim (B.A.R 1988), Velike Malence (VS 1997), aplicira na podiplomski študij, ki posredno zadeva varovanje arheološke dediščine. Sodeluje tudi na mednarodnih tečajih in simpozijih, ki zadevajo dokumentacijo in rekonstrukcijo kulturne dediščine (npr. CEU Summer University Hungary - Poland 1998).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uroš Bavec, an archaeologist, after attaining his degree at the University of Ljubljana in 1992, he worked as an independent cultural worker, he then became the archaeological curator of the Posavski Museum in Brežice and more recently he works as a conservator of cultural heritage at the Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Novo mesto. Specialization - microregional settlement studies: Sv. Jakob above Dovško (B.A.R 1988), Velike Malence (VS 1997), applies to his post-graduate studies which indirectly concerns the preservation of the archaeological heritage. He takes part at international courses that concern the documentation and reconstruction of cultural heritage (e.g. CEU Summer University Hungary - Poland 1998).

<sup>6</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Andrej Pleterski for his kind information.





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# FRESCOS AND GRAFFITOS AS WITNESSES OF MASS DEATH

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Željko Dugac

247

## IZVLEČEK

### **Freske in grafiti kot priče množične smrti**

*Avtor v članku proučuje odnos prebivalcev Istre do smrti v času velikih epidemij 15. in 16. stoletja. Ta odnos je mogoče razbrati iz del lokalnih mojstrov, slikarjev fresk v istrskih cerkvah, zlasti v delih mojstrov Vincen-  
ta in Janeza iz Kastva in njuni slavni različici Plesa smrti – Mrtvaškega plesa. Drug tip dokumentarnih virov so grafiti, ki so jih z glagolico napisali preprosti ljudje na omet cerkvenih sten. Ti grafiti na slikovit način odsevajo okoliščine tistega časa, vsakodnevne dejavnosti preprostih ljudi, kljub temu pa niso nikoli omenjeni v kronikah uradne zgodovine. Raziskave zgodovinarjev in zdravnikov odkrivajo načine in razširitve določenih epidemij v Istri, načine zavarovanja pred njimi, posledice teh epidemij in status uradne zdravstvene zaščite, ki se nanaša na bolnike. Če primerjamo vse tri različne vire, si lahko na slikovit način predstavljamo sliko družbe v tem zgodovinskem obdobju, ki ga je zaznamovala hitra in številna smrt. To je bilo obdobje, ko so se življenjske vrednote zelo hitro spreminjale, zmagoslavje smrti pa je bilo neogibno.*

**Ključne besede:** smrt, kuga, epidemija, 15. stoletje, 16. stoletje, grafiti, freske, zgodovina medicine, Istra.

**Key words:** death, plague, epidemics, 15<sup>th</sup> century, 16<sup>th</sup> century, graffitos, frescos, history of medicine, Istria

## Introduction

Regarding to this article, we will pay attention to the frescos from the churches in villages of Beram and Hrastovlje, and to the graffitos carved in the churches in Lovran and Pazin. We will also pay attention to the spreading of epidemics in Istria in fifteenth and sixteenth century, and the presence of doctors at that time and their attitude towards mass death and their own death.



Zdravnik in smrt – detajl s freske Ples smrti iz cerkve v Hrastovljah (iz knjige M. Zadnikarja Hrastovlje, foto M. Smrke). ♦ The physician and death – a detail from the fresco Death dance from the Hrastovlje church (from the book of M. Zadnikar Hrastovlje, photo M. Smrke).

## Discussion

There was a period of strong extensive epidemics in Istria in fifteenth and sixteenth century (Bertoša 1977: 89-99). Very often old sources tell us about plague, but today we know that the described epidemics were not just the product of plague but also of variola, typhoid, malaria, syphilis and many other diseases (Attali 1984: 61). But plague left the strongest trace because it caused death of an enormous number of people in a very short period. Its causative organism, which today we call *Yersinia Pestis* (Mihaljević 1994: 148-51), was at that time very virulent and as such it caused mass death (Grmek 1962: 705). Due to bad hygiene, inadequate living conditions and deficit knowledge about plague, pestilence spread very quickly. Istria as a transitive territory, was extremely exposed to it. After the tragic experience of Black Death in the fourteenth century, Venetian Republic in 1485 established a supreme institution (*Proveditori alla Sanita*) (Glesinger 1989: 109) for the control of ships that came to Istria from suspicious territories. A special sanitary cordon was organized and it was placed on the border between Venetian and Austrian part of Istria (Muzur, Škrobonja 1996: 211). The cities tried to protect themselves by controlling the ships and by the isolation of passengers. But epidemics continued to spread quickly and strongly.

It is no wonder that in 15th century iconographic motives of Dance of Death appeared on church walls. All through the Europe this motif was known in the shape of wall paintings, graphic prints, literary forms and even live performances (Fučić 1997: 305-8; Delimo 1986: 103-122). The Dance of Death, in a wall painting form, appeared in Istria in the village of Beram in 1474 (Fučić 1992: 95-102) and in the village of Hrastovlje in 1490 (Zadnikar 1988: 37-41). Before the making of this frescos some strong epidemics appeared. Today we know about the ones that appeared in 1427, 1449, 1456, 1467, 1476, 1478, 1483, 1487 and 1497. All together in 15th century the plague was presented nine times. Around 7000 people died during the epidemics in Trieste from 1477 to 1478. The death took the rich as well as the poor. So in 1497 in Trieste 120 respectable people died as well as over 400 poor people (Glesinger 1989: 107-109).

Dance of Death iconographically represents all social classes, from a begger to rich salesmen, even cardinals, the Pope and the King. It is interesting that on the frescos in Hrastovlje we can see a doctor. We can recognise him with a bottle of urine, hanging around his waist (Schadewadt 1997: 188-189). This figure warns that the medicine is helpless and that the death is inevitable. The medicine in 15th century was helpless because of the unknown origin of the epidemics. Until the sixteenth century there was no scientific knowledge about the development of the epidemics.

Girolamo Fracastore in 1546 was the first one to notice that pestilence diseases were caused by germs. He thought that the pestilence was caused by living germs which were able to enter into the organism by contact with a sick person or through infected objects or by flying contagious aerosol (Grmek 1962: 188-189). But Istrian doctors had another opinion in 16th century. They had an old conception that the plague was caused by miasma - the sick evaporation which came from swamps around the town (Glesinger 1989: 109).

The theory about the origin of the plague was also connected with the way of protection. Even the Antique doctors Hypocrate and Galen didn't know a single rational method for the protection from plague. What people thought best was to escape momentarily, quickly and to a far off place (Bazala 1963: 72). The doctor in Koper, Leandro Zarotti, also used the method of escaping in 1554, when the plague appeared in Koper. He went to Venice and said that his contract was made only for normal situation in the city, but not during the plague epidemics (Glesinger 1989: 87).

That was not the only case. For example, doctors were going away from the city during the big plague epidemics in Dubrovnik in 1526 because they didn't want to take care of plague patients, and they were afraid to go to any patients (Jeremić, Tadić 1939: 94). In those cases the barbers took the place of the doctors (Orlić 1962: 28-32). They performed chirurgical actions on the plague buboes and we can only imagine how dangerous that was. For example the barber from Koper caused the plague epidemic with his doing in 1632 (Glesinger 1989: 111). The towns also lost doctors because of the lack of money for doctors to pay.

After the epidemics in Pula in 1557 the town was so poor that it couldn't afford a doctor. The similar situation happened at the end of the century in Koper (Glesinger 1989: 86). During the absence of preventive and therapeutical medical practice people used their own methods of protection. People also expected help from God and that is why a lot of prayers, processions, and gifts were common. A great number of vow churches, altars and pictures came into existence. Some of them finished, but some works were interrupted because of the new epidemics, and than the survivors finished the rest.

In the churches we also find graffitos about death. These are graffitos written in ancient Croatian letter - *glagoljica* and were carved into the walls at the holy place. They were done by people who knew how to write, usually priests or their pupils, but sometimes also by illiterate people who would carve pictures and symbols of their prayers. That is how the graffitos became living witnesses of one whole "little history", the history that was not taken down by historians and which didn't say anything about the Kings, nor about the state but about a little man and his preoccupations (Fučić 1997: 116-168; Rudelić 1984: 262). Especially interesting for this work are wall graffitos which inform us about death. So in the parish church of St. Nicholas in Pazin we find the following graffito: "*Ja pop Grgur Jerković peh moju mladu mašu na let Gospodnji 1557. dan 2. maja miseca i tada biše v Pazini velika morija*". (I, the pope Grgur Jerković, made the service on the 2nd day of May 1557, and that day, in Pazin was a big death.) (Fučić 1982: 278).

This tells us that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1557 there was a big death in Pazin, meaning that there was an epidemic which killed a great number of people. A medical historical research witnesses that in 1557 a great epidemic of plague caught Istria and that it was especially strong in Trieste and Izola (Glesinger 1989: 110). Obviously it also spread to the Austrian part of Istria, to Pazin. From the other graffito we found out about a possible course of the epidemic which is in parish church of St. George in Lovran; with the following content: "*Va ime Božje i Devi Marije, amen. 1558, miseca sektembra na dan*

14. *Ta dan se v Lovrane javi nagla smerti umre do 50 ljudi.*” (In the name of God and St. Virgin Mary, Amen. The 14th of September 1558. The sudden death struck in Lovran on that day, and almost 50 persons died) (Fučić 1982: 235).

This graffiti shows us that the epidemic also spread even further to the east on the other side of mountain Učka, to Lovran, on the 14<sup>th</sup> September of 1558, 50 people died in that city. Nearly a year and a half passed between graffiti in Pazin and the one in Lovran. We don't know whether the pestilence was constantly present at that time or was the Lovran death same kind of new pestilence or recidive, but those information tell us a lot about frequent presence of mass death on that territory.

In the Lovran church we also find a graffiti which was written a bit earlier in 1549 which was signed by his author priest pupil Marko: “*To govore mrtvi živomu: Ča me gledaš ale ča se čudiš? Ale ne znaš da sam bil i jas včera kako si ti danas, a ti oćes biti zutra kako sam jas danas' 1549, to pisa žakan Marko.*” (The dead speak to the living: Why are you looking at me or why are you surprised. Don't you know that yesterday I was what you are today, and that tomorrow you will be what I am today. 1549, this wrote priest pupil Marko.) (Fučić 1982: 236).

In this graffiti which obviously followed some tragic event in the city and which is a prophetic announcement of future tragic events, shows us attitude of a young man about death. Although the expressive form was taken from the famous theme of three dead man and three living which was known all through Europe in 15<sup>th</sup> century (Delimo 1986: 94-103). Pupil Marko told us in a vernacular way about an almost friendly talk of a dead man, as the one with more experiences, to a living one who was obviously surprised. There is no sadness in that writing because the one who is being addressed by a dead man knows how his life might end, but he also knows the words of Luke the evangelist: “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised.” Lk24, 5-6 (New Testament 1968: 223). In those tough times these words of confidence were a salvation.

## Conclusions

From these examples which mention graffiti of common people on the walls of holy places, from expressive strength of the iconographic motif of Dance of Death and from the researches about the numerous and powerful epidemics in Istria during the time of the making of mentioned graffiti and frescos, and finally from the research of the present doctors, their doctrines and relations toward the sick we can assume that the sudden and mass death during the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century has changed drastically the social situation and the scale of life values.

Ethical relationship doctor - patient, has also changed drastically. The doctors responsibility had been replaced by the escape from duty and the escape from the sick. So, on one hand we have the care for oneself under the cost of their reputation, while on the other hand, their is an oncoming death that turns the survivors toward the protection of God and religious hope.

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122

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# KOKOŠ, CACHIRU IN DRUGA LETEČA BITJA

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Maja Šubic, Tomaž Krpič

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255

**Ključne besede:** smrt, mitična leteča bitja, človekovo telo, kulturni predmet, kognitivni horizont

## Uvod

Ena bolj zanimivih lastnosti človeškega mišljenja je, da ne more obstajati brez nekega zunanjega predmeta, na katerega se v svojem delovanju nanaša. To pa ne pomeni, da mora biti predmet nanašanja vedno le materialne narave. Prav tako je lahko tudi mentalna slika v človekovi zavesti, čeprav moramo v tem primeru ločevati med mentalno predstavo in misljo, ki mentalno sliko tisti trenutek omogoča. Nastanek mentalne slike sega v preteklost in ima vpliv na posameznikovo nadaljnje mišljenje. Ne glede na to pa so naša življenja na splošno natrpana z vsakovrstno predmetno 'šaro', kajti posamezniku je običajno veliko lažje vzpostaviti odnos z materialnim svetom kot pa izgraditi kompleksno strukturo reflesije znotraj razuma. Morda lahko pravkar povedano pospremimo z obžalovanjem, toda biti moramo realni, kajti za povprečnega posameznika je vsakdanje življenje pač predvsem in najprej materialno. Izmed vseh razlogov, zaradi katerih je posameznik pretežno orientiran k fizičnemu svetu, je prav gotovo najpomembnejši naslednji: v primeru, ko bi se stik med posamezniki, izvršen prek nosilcev materialnega sveta, prekinil, bi nastopilo popolno uničenje družbenega sveta. In ker je vse, kar biva, v svojem bistvu družbene narave (glej na primer Mead 1962 in Schutz 1967), lahko rečemo, da je tudi znanost družbeni konstrukt. Na podlagi tega spet lahko trdimo, da družboslovna znanost ne sme zanemariti materialnih dimenzij družbenih procesov. Kajti v tem primeru znanost ne more odgovoriti na vprašanje, kako so interpersonalni odnosi med posamezniki v svetu vsakdanjega življenja sploh mogoči.

Temeljna zahteva sociološkega in antropološkega preučevanja človeškega fenomena leži v kvalitetno pridobljenem znanju o materialnem svetu. Povedano drugače: razlaga specifičnega družbenega ali kulturnega fenomena je odvisna od tega, koliko spretosti premoremo pri določanju družbenega in kulturnega predmeta. Za sociologa, katerega glavni cilj je določiti kognitivne pogoje človekovega razuma, je ta zahteva nema-

ra neobičajna. Toda ne glede na to verjamemo, da je več kot le potrebna. Naša najpomembnejša naloga v pričujočem eseju je, da poiščemo, kar se le da veliko primerov različnih živali, ki simbolizirajo smrt, in nato dobljene primere ustrezno klasificiramo v različne kategorije. V nadaljevanju bomo pokazali, kako posamezniki skozi sebi lastno kulturno izkušnjo uporabljajo svoja telesa in kako pri tem pazljivo izbirajo med različnimi tipi objektov, ki lahko nastopajo kot kulturni objekti v primeru simboliziranja smrti.

## Klasifikacija živali

256

Ta prispevek je plod nekega navdušenja, ki ga je porodila Fantastična zoologija J. B. Borgesa, knjiga, v kateri so brez ambicij po sistematizaciji in klasifikaciji zbrana bitja, ki spremenijo zoološki v mitični vrt. Kot pravi njen avtor, bo ta knjiga vedno ostala pomanjkljiva, enako pa velja tudi za pričujoč pregled krilatih bitij, ki jih je človek tako ali drugače povezoval s smrtjo. Živalska simbolika je med seboj izredno prepletena, zato so na tem mestu zbrana bitja oziroma božanstva ne glede na zgodovinske in geografske okvire. Izvzeti so angeli in zmaji, ki seveda zahtevajo poglavje zase. Predstavili bomo le nekaj živali oziroma bitij, ki podpirajo antropološko razlago fenomena smrti.

Večina od njih ima, kakor je za simbole nasploh značilno, svoj pozitiven in negativen pomen. Na tem mestu bomo izpostavili le slednjega.

### Zakaj krila in smrt?

Ko leteče bitje izgine iz polja našega zaznavanja, ne pusti za seboj nobene oprijemljive sledi, kot so na primer stopinje v pesku, rov v zemlji ali vzburkana voda. Let pusti za seboj komaj zaznaven piš vetra, podoben hladni zoni, ki nas spreleti v trenutku, ko se zavemo smrti.

Mnogo krilatih bitij nima sposobnosti letenja ali pa jo je že davno izgubilo. S tem ko pripnemo nekemu bitju krila, ga povzdignemo med duhovna bitja. V svetu duhovnih bitij pa je let mogoč tudi s kamnitimi krili. Pomen letenja je v osvobajanju od zemeljske težnosti, ki je vzrok za večino težav, s katerimi se otepamo v to - in onstranstvu.

Pri verovanju v posmrtno življenje je smrt sama le ovira, ki jo mora človek premagati, da doseže nesmrtnost oziroma ponovno rojstvo. Oviro pa premagamo najlažje tako, da jo preskočimo ali še bolje - da jo preletimo.

Kadar govorimo o paleolitskih grobovih z magijsko - religijskim pomenom, ne moremo mimo dejstva, da vsebujejo ostanke živalskih kosti in rogovja. Iz tega lahko le ugibamo o duhovni dejavnosti teh davnih pogrebcev in pri tem izhajamo iz opazovanj nekaterih današnjih arhaičnih ljudstev (otrok, obkrožen s kozorogovim rogovjem iz kraja Tešik Taš v Uzbekistanu, ali ženska lobanja, postavljena na čeljust in rog severnega jelena v Mas d'Azilu).

Ni še dognano, ali gre po večini za ostanke pogrebnih pojedin ali pa za dejansko 'opremo' pokojnika, ki bi potrdila verovanje v posmrtno življenje. Vsekakor pa je bila relacija človek - smrt - žival vzpostavljena na samem začetku človekovega zavedanja o bivanju in njegovem prenehanju.

Vodilno načelo paleolitske umetnosti je: na svetu so samo ljudje in živali, lovci in njihov plen; kar je vmes, ni bistveno in torej ne sodi v umišljen prostor, ki ga vidi umetnikovo oko. Točka na kateri se srečata lovec in žival, pa je smrt.

Ideologija lovskih kultur je pravzaprav šamanistična, saj je le šaman s svojim nadnaravnim darom sposoben prodreti do izvira živalskega življenja. Šamanistično ekstazo omenjajo nekateri avtorji že v zvezi s paleolitikom. Kaže na vero v dušo, ki je sposobna zapustiti telo in svobodno potovati. Na takšnem potovanju lahko sreča nadnaravna bitja in jih zaprosi za pomoč. (V jami v Lascauxu naletimo na podobo na videz mrtvega človeka, ki bi ga lahko interpretirali kot vrača v transu. Na obrazu ima kljun, poleg pa je palica s ptičcem, ki najverjetneje predstavlja duha zaščitnika.)

Dušo v podobi ptice, prav tako pa tudi ptico kot vodnico duš, srečujemo zelo pogosto: Egipčanska knjiga mrtvih opisuje 'mrtveca' kot sokola, ki vzleti; na prazgodovinskih spomenikih Evrope in Azije vidimo na vejah Kozmičnega drevesa ptice, ki najverjetneje simbolizirajo duše prednikov; v Mezopotamiji so se pokojniki prikazovali kot ptice...

Smrt je edina, ki lahko človeka preobrazi v ptico, in tako lahko šamani s svojimi nadnaravnimi sposobnostmi doživljajo usodo duše, ki je navadnim smrtnikom dostopna le v trenutku smrti.

Šamanistični ekstatični vnebohodi porajajo občutek transcendece, vzvišenosti in s svojo simboliko leta dajejo imaginarno izkustvo višine kot osvoboditve od težnosti (Eliade 1985, 1996).

## Resnično obstoječe živali

ARA - Kolumbijski Indijanci Bribi uporabljajo rdečo papigo kot pokojnikovega vodnika. Indijanci Bororo verujejo v zapleten cikel preseljevanja duš, med katerim se duše za nekaj časa utelesijo v ari.



ČUK - "“Ne bo več dolgo, čuk ga je klical nocoj” ali pa ‘Čuk ga je izpel’, tako in podobno modrujejo stare ženice, kadar glave vkup staknejo, in žal se še celo od mož sem ter tja slišijo enake neslane besede. In tako je ubogi čuk zaradi svojega žalostnega glasu prav po nedolžnem razpjit kakor mrtvaški ptič. Marsikoga mrzel pot oblije, ko ga sliši v tihi noči čukati. Bedak ugiba sem in tja, komu bi utegnila veljati čukova pesem. Če nato noče nihče umreti, nobeden ne misli več na smrtnega sla. Če pa se res prigodi, da v soseščini kmalu kdo umrje, potem vražjim babjevercem ne izbiješ iz glave, da čukovo petje ni ‘pomenilo’ smrti” (Erjavec 1995, 476).

Čuku pravijo tudi smrtni ptič. Če prileti v bližino hiše, pomeni to skorajšnja smrt za njene prebivalce. Podobno grozi, če ponoči slišimo čuka peti ali celo cviliti. Skoraj povsod po Sloveniji se boje njegovega oglašanja. Žal pa ta živahna sova rada prebiva blizu človeka - pod strehami, v sadovnjakih in cerkvah - zato vražavrnim vsekakor večkrat povzroča sive lase.

Čuki pa niso glasniki smrti le v Evropi, temveč jih srečamo tudi kot sle poglavarjev Xibalbe, dežele mrtvih pri Majih. V drugem delu svete knjige Indijancev Quiche POPOL VUH naletimo na štiri čuke:

Chabi-Tucur - hiter kot puščica

Huracan Tucur - enonogi čuk

Caquix Tucur - čuk makao z rdečimi krili

Holom Tucur - čuk, ki je imel le glavo in krila, nog pa ne.

Tudi dva varuha vrto v Xibalbi sta bila čuka. Ker nista dobro pazila na tisto, kar jima je bilo zaupano, so jima gospodarji razklali kljun in odtlej ima čuk razklan kljun.

Ponoči ga privabljajo razsvetljena okna, ki so bila večkrat znak, da ljudje bedijo pri mrliču. Pravijo, da od tod njegova nesrečna povezava s smrtjo. Vendar pa tudi fizionomija njegove glave z močno povečanimi očmi, ki nekoliko spominja na lobanjo, in pa njegov nemiren zaletav let aplicirajo na človekove predstave o bližini smrti.

KOKOŠ - Kot večina domačih živali je verjetno tudi kokoš romala prek daritvene skledе v kuhinjski lonec. Pri Grkih je bila kokoš priljubljena žrtvena žival revnih ljudi. Tudi Rimljani so se baje skrbno in praznovorno držali napovedi kokošjega prerочиšča.

Po vsej črni Afriki je razširjeno žrtvovanje kokoši, potrebno zaradi komunikacije s pokojnimi. V iniciacijskem obredu šamank pri Luluih kandidatki, po preizkušnji smrti in preporoda v jami, obesijo okoli vratu kokoš. Z njo bo poslej lahko mamila duše pokojnih medijev v gošči.

Zelo razširjen je strah pred kokošjim kikirikanjem. Žensko bitje z moškimi lastnostmi je vedno povzročalo nelagodje in strah. Gre namreč za združitev lastnosti oziroma moči dveh principov. Popolnoma smo sposobni razumeti, torej sprejeti, le enega. Taka združitev nima prihodnosti, je oboje in hkrati ni nič. Ne more se nadaljevati, torej ji grozi smrt.

Če začne kokoš peti kot petelin, grozi smrt gospodarju. Takšno kokoš - petelinko - je bilo potrebno brž zaklati, saj lahko "izpoje gospodarja". Če poje črna kokoš, izpoje gospodarja, če pa poje bela kokoš, "izpoje gospodinjo". Petje črne kokoši pomeni nesrečo pri hiši, petje bele kokoši smrt, petje rjave kokoši pa požar.

KOLIBRI - Azteki verujejo, da se duše mrtvih bojevnikov vračajo na zemljo v podobi kolibrijev ali metuljev.



KROKAR - "Črna perje, votlo krokanje, nenasitna požrešnost in roparska predrznost ga delajo skrivnostnega, groznega in pošastnega. Zato pa skoraj vsem narodom pomeni nesrečo, oznanja smrt" (Erjavec 1995, 398). Simbolika krokarja je dobila povsem negativen vidik šele nedavno in skoraj izključno v Evropi. Na splošno velja, da krokar ne obeta nič dobrega, da je glasnik nesreče in lahko napoveduje celo smrt.

Tudi v keltskem izročilu je krokar slabo znamenje. Njegovo podobo je privzela Morrigan, kraljica strahov, boginja vojne in podzemlja. Morrigan se pojavlja še v dveh podobah - kot "Norija" in "Poparjena vrana". Že pred bitko je oprala opremo tistih, ki bodo padli, in s tem že določila poraženca. "Krokar je črna ptica romantikov, ki se spretava nad bojiščem in klujuva trupla" (Chevalier - Gheerbrant 1993, 285).

Res je, da krokar zavoha mrhovino na zelo veliko razdaljo in se z njo tudi pogosto hrani, torej dejansko "sluti" smrt že na daljavo. Ta smrt pa je njegova hrana, njegov dejanski obstoj.

V Grčiji je imel krokar skupaj z orlom in labodom preroško funkcijo.

Pri nas pravijo, da lahko, kadar hišo preleti en krokar, računamo na smrt ženskega člana družine, če pa jo preleti več krokarjev, grozi smrt moškim. Mornarji so verjeli, da smrt prinašajo trije krokarji, ki letijo skupaj.

V Mahabharati krokarje primerjajo z glasniki smrti.

V večini verovanj je sončni vidik, pogosto demiurg, vodnik duš na njihovem poslednjem potovanju, kajti kot psihopomp razkriva skrivnost teme, ne da bi ga to zmedlo. Pozitivno vlogo ima pri nomadskih, ribiških in lovskih ljudstvih, medtem ko velja pri stalno naseljenih in poljedelskih ljudstvih za negativnega. Alkimisti fazo gnitja in črne snovi imenujejo krokarjeva glava.

**KUKAVICA** - Kukavica je ptica, ki je povezana s pomladjo in prebujenjem narave, zato pri sibirskih ljudstvih pomaga šamanu in oživlja mrtve. V vedskem izročilu je kukavica simbol človeške duše pred inkarnacijo in po njej. Telo je kot tuje gnezdo, v katero pride duša. Če kukavica sede na suho vejo in tam zakuka, bo pri hiši kmalu nekdo umrl.

Kukavica v gnezdo, kamor odloži svoje jajce, prinese smrt, saj iz njega pomeče že zasnovane oblike življenja. Za svoj obstoj potrebuje torej smrt.

**LASTOVKA** - Če si lastovka spomladi pri hiši naredi gnezdo in ga kasneje zapusti, bo tamkaj gotovo nekdo umrl. Lastovka zato, ker je ptica selivka, simbolizira samoto, selitev in ločitev.

**NETOPIR** - Pri Majih je netopir eno izmed božanstev, ki inkarnirajo podzemске sile. V Popol Vuhu je netopirjeva hiša eno izmed podzemeljskih območij, skozi katera pridemo do dežele mrtvih. Netopir je gospodar ognja, uničevalec življenja, požiralec svetlobe. Je emblem smrti. Pravijo mu "tisti, ki trga glave". Prikazan je z mrtvimi očmi. Božanstvo smrti je tudi pri Mehičanih, ki ga povezujejo s severom. Pogosto je prikazan z odprtimgobcem ali žrtvenim nožem namesto gobca. Dvoličnost hibridne narave, miši in ptiča, v alkimističnem izročilu razlaga ambivalenco netopirjeve simbolike: netopir predstavlja androgina, krilatega zmaja, demona. Njegova krila so krila peklenskega prebivalca (hudič ima modra krila, podobna netopirjevim). Netopir mora mahati s krili, zato ne pozna počitka v mrtvem letu. Narava išče krilo, najde pa grdo kosmato opno, ki vendarle deluje kot perut...



**PETELIN** - Tako kot kokoš tudi petelin po verovanju preprostih ljudi ne pomeni nič dobrega. Če je petelin sedem let star, znese jajce, iz katerega se izvali hudič - bazilisk. Kot zaščitnika pred slednjim so ga upodabljali na ščitih, amuletih in nagrobnikih.

Tudi petelin, čeprav v redkih primerih, napoveduje smrt - npr. če zakikirika malo pred polnočjo.

V Grčiji ima vlogo psihopompa. Pokojnikovo dušo naj bi napovedal na drugem svetu, nato pa jo tja odpeljal; odprla naj bi oči v novi svetlobi, novemu rojstvu. Dodelili

so ga Hermesu, glasniku, ki potuje po treh ravneh kozmosa, od pekla do nebes. Pri starogermanskih pogrebnih obredih so petelina darovali mrtvim.

Med očiščevalnimi in izganjalnimi obredi po smrti pri nekaterih altajskih ljudstvih privežejo petelina k pokojnikovi postelji: petelin predstavlja smrt, ki jo šaman nato izganja.

SLAVEC – Ljudje verjamejo, da slavčev spev umirajočim omogoča blago smrt. Slavec s svojim prelepim petjem opozarja na minljivost in z njo v zvezi na tenko steno med ljubeznijo in smrtjo.

SOKOL - Podoba sokola, povezano s smrtjo, najdemo po večini v starem Egiptu. Najpogosteje nastopa kot BA, ki predstavlja duhovno moč, dušo. Ba ima sokolje telo, človeško glavo in božjo brado. Ko je telo ob posmrtnem obredu poveličano, ga ba zapusti in se nato svobodno giblje. Podnevi sledi soncu na obzorju, ponoči pa se vrne v podzemlje, v svoje telo, ki je njegovo pravo bivališče, in se nahrani s pogrebnimi darovi.

SOKAR (tudi Seker), memfiški bog mrtvih, teme in razpadanja v zemlji, ima sokoljo glavo, podobo sokola pa privzema tudi eden od štirih Horusovih otrok - Kebehsenef. Gre za štiri zaščitnike trupla, ki so umrlega varovali pred lakoto in žejo. Vsak od njih je bil zadolžen za eno od strani neba. V posebnih posodah, kanopah, so shranjevali notranje organe. Kanopa s Kebehsenefovo podobo je vsebovala trebušne organe in je predstavljala sever.

SOVA - "Sove so jeznorite, plahe, neumne in požrešne ptice. Zaprte sove se med seboj koljejo in žro; razen nekaterih malih se s človekom nikoli ne sprijaznijo, zmeraj ostanejo divje in togotne. Če poleg tega pomislimo še na njihovo neprijetno zunanost, na tiho letanje in nočno dejanje ter na njihov neprijetni glas, bomo lahko razumeli, da so vse sove človeku odurne, za neukega in praznovernega imajo pa še celo nekaj groznega, skrivnostnega in pošastnega. Vraža je sovo naredila za mrtvaško ptico in zato jo bajeveren in nespameten svet preganja" (Erjavec 1995, 470).

Sova je nočna ptica, povezana z luno, ne prenaša sončne svetlobe. Leta nizko, tiho in počasi. Njena sposobnost videti v temi jo je naredila za simbol jasnovidnosti in je zato atribut prerokovalcev.

Pri Indijancih Srednje in Južne Amerike je sova simbolična žival peklenskih božanstev. V več azteških kodeksih je prikazana kot čuvarka zemeljske temne hiše. "Povezana je s htoničnimi silami in je tudi avatar noči, dežja, viharjev. Ta simbolika jo povezuje s smrtjo. Na predmetih predinkovske civilizacije Chimu je pogosto prikazan žrtveni nož v obliki polmeseca, nad njim pa je podoba polčloveškega in polživalskega božanstva v obliki nočne ptice - sove. Ta simbol, ki je očitno povezan z idejo o smrti ali žrtvovanju, je okrašen z ogrlicami iz školjk in biserov. Prsi ima rdeče pobarvane, zraven nje pa sta večkrat prikazana psa, katerih pomen psihopompa je dobro znan. Sova pogosto drži v eni "roki" žrtveni nož, v drugi pa vrč, v katerega naj bi stekla kri žrtve. Sova je še danes božanstvo smrti in čuvarka pokopališč pri številnih indijanskih ljudstvih" (Chevalier - Gheerbrant 1993, 564).

Sova je poleg pajka in netopirja atribut azteškega boga smrti in podzemlja Mictlantecutlija. V vlogi glasnice nastopa pri majevskem bogu smrti, posebitvi nesreč,

mraka in mraza ter gospodarju Mitnala, kraljestva mrtvih, Hunahau. V knjigi POPOL VUH je vrač - sova eden izmed vračev, ki Stvarniku in Tvorcu pomagajo uničiti nevhvaležne ljudi, ki sta jih ustvarila. Vrač - sova jim polomi kosti, zdrobi živce, jih zmelje in raztrese ostanke njihovih kosti.

Sova igra skupaj z golobom glasniško vlogo tudi pri vedski boginji Niriti.

Simbolna žival judovske nočne demonke, ki ogroža nosečnice in mori dojenčke ter se podi po ruševinah, je prav sova, ki jo tudi dejansko lahko srečamo na zapuščenih krajih.

Na Kitajskem je sova negativna protiutež feniksu in prav tako napoveduje nesrečo.

Simboliziranje sove kot glasnice smrti zaradi njenega samotnega življenja in zamolklega zagrobnega oglašanja je že prastaro in dobro zasidrano v zavesti ljudi. Gorje, če ima ta boljšeča ptica poseben glas in pri tem zaide v bližino hiše! Več sov skupaj nesrečo še poveča, torej ni čudno, če sovo imenujejo tudi mrličeva kura.

VRANA - Če se je vrana spustila na streho, je to pomenilo, da bo v tej hiši moral nekdo umreti.

ŽOLNA - Če v bližini hiše večkrat zapoje črna žolna (imenujejo jo tudi smrtni ptič), bo v bližini zagotovo kdo umrl.

## Izmišljena bitja



BAZILISK - je nadnaravno mešano bitje judovsko - krščanskega izvora. Najpogosteje je upodobljen kot petelin z zmajevim repom ali kot kača s petelinjimi perutmi in svetlo liso v obliki krone na glavi. Število nog se na upodobitvah spreminja in doseže celo število osem. Na začetku srednjega veka so ga upodabljali kot štirinožnega petelina s kronico, rumenim perjem, velikimi bodičastimi krili in kačjim repom, ki se včasih konča tudi z drugo petelinjo glavo. Spočet je bil v petelinjem jajcu, položenem v gnoj, brez matere. Zvalila ga je krastača ali žaba. Prebiva v vodnjakih in kletih, po nekaterih virih pa v puščavi, ki jo sam ustvarja, saj k njegovim nogam mrtve padajo ptice, okrog njega pa zgrijejo vsi sadeži. Reke, v katerih se napaja, ostanejo še cela stoletja zastrupljene.

Je utelešenje zla in smrti. Njegov zli pogled ubija. Ubije ga le vonj po podlasci, kikirikanje petelina ali ogledalo, iz katerega ga je zadel lasten pogled. Predstavlja smrtno nevarnost, ki je ni mogoče pravočasno zaznati. Popotniki so se za prečkanje neznanih pokrajin oskrbeli z živimi petelini. Borges v zvezi z baziliskom navaja Quevedovo romanco, ki pravi:

Če je živ tisti, ki te je videl,  
je vsa tvoja zgodba laž,  
kajti če ni umrl, te ni videl,  
če pa je mrtev, nam tega ne more potrditi.



**CACHIRU** (tudi Cachuru) - zlobno božanstvo, ki ga poznajo na območju Santiaga del Estera, Argentina. Prikazujejo ga kot nenavadnega skovirja z ogromnimi kremplji in ostrim kljunom. Njegovo perje je temnosivo in raskavo, proti nogam pa prehaja v ščetine. Njegove ogromne svetlikajoče oči žarijo v senci kakor ognji. Ta luč in njegovi nesrečo naznanjajoči kriki so edino, kar izdaja njegov neslišen let. Pravijo, da lahko dvigne človeka v nebo ali pa ga v hipu raztrga. Najpogosteje pa ugrabi dušo ob smrtni uri in jo spremeni v grozljivo prikazen. Živi v najbolj nedostopnih predelih gozda, kamor človeška noga ne more stopiti. Ker pa se gozdovi krčijo, se njegovo kraljestvo oži, če ni že domala izginilo.

**CHONCHON** (tudi Chonchonyu) - božanstvo Indijancev Mapuche. Zli duh, pravzaprav človeška glava z ogromnimi uhlji, ki jih uporablja kot peruti. Kroži v bližini bolnikov in čaka na priložnost, ko ni ob njih nikogar. Takrat jih ubije in jim popije kri...



Ta bizarna pošast se nam bo mogoče zdela manj tuja, če se spomnimo na demone z dolgimi ušesi, v srednjeveškem kiparstvu in grafiki. Taki "uhatici" se pogosto vrtijo okoli umirajočega. Prav tako pa poznajo uhate demone v funkciji čuvarjev grobov na Daljnem vzhodu. Neizmer-na ušesa so kakor krila ali školjke, v katerih odzvanjajo šumi sveta.

**GORGONE** - gr. skupina treh sester, pošasti z grozljivim obličjem. Ob pogledu nanje je vsakdo okamenel. Živele so na skrajnem zahodu zemlje. K njim spadajo: Steno, Evriala in Meduza. Upodobljene so z zlatimi krili, bronastimi rokami, s sikajočimi kačami namesto las in merjaščevimi čekani v ustih. Gorgonina glava ob svetiščih in grobovih odvrta zle moči.

**HARPIJE** - demonske viharne boginje stare Grčije. So krilate pošasti, mešana bitja s ptičjim telesom, žensko glavo, dolgimi razpuščenimi lasmi, ostrimi kremplji in kužnim zadahom. To so mrhovinarji v ženski podobi. Vse, kar vidijo, požro in onečastijo s svojimi izločki. Napogostejše so: Viharna, Hitroleta in Mračna.

Harpije poosebljajo pohlepno lakoto. Mučijo duše, saj jim z nenehnim nadlegovanjem ne dajo miru. So vražji del kozmične energije, pekel polnijo z nenadno umrlimi. Veter, ki jih edini lahko prežene, je sapa duha.

**KERONKEUKEN** (tudi Keronkenken, Kerol Kenk) - mitična žival Indijancev Tehuelche. Nima natančno določene oblike, najpogosteje pa ga opisujejo kot velikega ptiča s črnim repom, kot sovo ali celo kot žrebička. Je zelo hudobno bitje, pojmujejo ga tudi kot čarovniškega odposlanca. Če kroži ponoči okoli hiše, bo vzel življenje njenemu stanovalcu tako, da bo le-ta ob zori zbolel in popoldne umrl.

Lahko ga primerjamo s krokarjem, ki prav tako večkrat z nič kaj prijaznim poslanstvom nastopa kot čarovniški sel oz. kot njegovo zločesto orodje.

**LASE** - etrušč. skupina mladostnih boginj služabnic, ki stražijo predvsem grobove. Upodobljene so večinoma s krili in bolj ali manj gole. Njihova atributa sta venec in ogledalo.

**MANTUS** - etrušč. vodnik mrtvih in čuvaj v podzemlju. Na sarkofagih so ga upodabljali kot čokatega moškega, s krili, divjimi obraznimi potezami, satirskimi ušesi in velikim kladivom.

**NASU** - iran. demonka mrtve snovi, trupla in oskrumbe. Takoj po človekovi smrti prileti k truplu v podobi muhe in sosede okuži z boleznijo. V nosača trupla prodre skozi eno od devetih telesnih odprtih.

**NAVJE** - psl. ime za umrle; po sprejemu krščanstva je bil pomen zožen na duše prezgodaj umrlih, nekrščenih otrok. Včasih se navje pojavljajo kot velike ptice in napadajo nosečnice. Ponekod navje pomeni deželo mrtvih. Beseda je nastala iz korena \*naHu" - ladja. Navezuje se na predstavo o deželi mrtvih nekje za morjem, do katere je treba odpluti...

**PAZUZU** - akad. zli demon, ki prinaša vročino in mrzlico in poseblja jugovzhodni veter. Upodobljen je s štirimi krili, spačenim obrazom, dolgimi lasmi, levjimi šapami, ptičjimi kremplji na nogah in škorpionovim želom.

**PIHUCHEN** (tudi Piguchen, Pihuechengu) - Mitično bitje Araukancev, s kači podobnim podaljšanim trupom, ki je pokrit s perjem. Ima peruti in včasih dve kačji glavi. Leta samo ponoči in med letom žvižga ali pa oddaja shrhljive piske.



V veliki vročini se drži drevesne skorje in pušča na deblu rdečo sled. To je kri, ki jo sesa ljudem in živalim, dokler jih popolnoma ne izsuši. Njegov žvižg je zanesljiva najava smrti, razen če nam pošast uspe videti prej, kot ona opazi nas. Pravijo, da si ljudje pokrivajo ušesa, da je ne bi slišali, da pa je ne bi videli, je potrebno namočiti tla.

**SFINGA** - 1. egipč. pošast in mešano bitje večinoma moškega spola, s človeško glavo in levjim telesom; 2. gr. pošast in demonsko mešano bitje z žensko glavo in prsmi ter krilatim levjim telesom. Sedeč na pečini pri Tebah je mimoidočim zastavljala uganko in požrla vsakogar, ki je ni znal rešiti.

**SIRENE** - gr. dve do štiri demonke škode, mešana bitja z žensko glavo in ptičjim telesom. Živijo v Hadu, na rajskih poljanah ali na otoku ter s svojim zapeljivim petjem privabljajo mornarje in jih nato požrejo.

**ŠKOPNIK** - leteči demon, znan v Alpah. Leti kot goreči snop slame (škop) ali metla in skozi dimnik vdira v hišo. Po funkciji je podoben škratu.

**ŠTRPED** - polh, ki je imel namesto prednjih nog sokolja krila. Iz ušes so mu rastle jesenovi listi. Njegove oči so bile sokolje, dlaka pa bela (dobri Štrped) ali redkeje črna (Štrped, ki je prinašal nesrečo in smrt). Izlegel se je vsakih sedem let ob pomoči polne lune in zlatokljunega sokola Lunja. Bil je izredno plašljiva žival. Vse, česar se je črni Štrped dotaknil, je izginilo v nič.

**TANATOS** - gr. bog ter posebitev naravne in nasilne smrti. Umrle nosi v Had. Upodobljen je kot krilati demon s povešeno baklo.

**TIFON** - gr. 1. orjaška pošast v podzemlju s stotimi zmajskimi glavami in s kačami namesto nog ter utelešenje uničujočih sil narave; 2. grozljiva pošast s kačami namesto nog in s krili, ki so zakrila sonce.

**TOT** - pomaga Ozirisu na onstranskem sodišču, zato je bog mrtvih. Nadzira tehtanje src in zapisuje razsodbe. Ker pot do Ozirisa vodi mimo njega, dušam umrlih utira pot in jih vodi v onstranstvo. Upodobljen je z ibisovo glavo ali kot ibis.

TURMS - etrušč. božji sel in vodnik mrtvih v podzemlje. Upodobljen je s krilatimi čevlji in glasniško palico (ustreza Hermesu in Merkurju).

VANTH - etrušč. demonka podzemlja in mrtvih ter glasnica smrti in pomočnica pri miranju. Upodobljena je s krili. Njeni atributi so kača, bakla in ključ.

VELES - slovan. bog čred, imetja in podzemnega sveta. V Velesovem cesarstvu so duše umrlih in pozimi ptice.

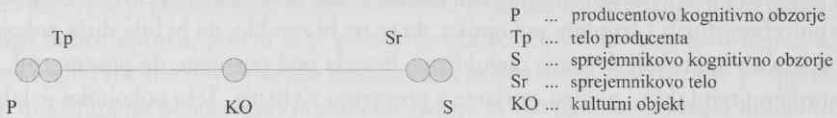
## Nekaj teoretičnih sklepov

264

Kaj lahko sklepamo na podlagi povedanega v prvem delu našega eseja? Predvsem bi morala biti naša naloga poiskati kulturni pomen, ki ga imajo živali, ki simbolizirajo smrt. Ali lahko gradimo na predpostavki, da so 'živali' pravzaprav kulturni objekti posebne vrste? Za tistega, ki je posvetil svoje življenje iskanju poti, ki bi ga popeljala k ustreznim razlagi človekove kulture, se bo nemara zdel predlog zgolj slaba šala. Vse takšne antropologe in sociologe bomo spomnili na članek Roberta Wuthnowa, v katerem posveča kar nekaj prostora opisu zgodovinskega razvoja dveh pojmov: 'kulture' in 'smisla' (Wuthnow 1987). Po njegovem mnenju moramo ločevati med tremi različnimi obdobji v razvoju teh dveh konceptov. V prvem obdobju je bila pozornost kulturnih teoretikov (Durkheima, Marxa in Webra), usmerjena k vzniku kulturnega pomena na podlagi delitve subjekta in objekta. Čeprav je kulturni objekt samostojen, pa ni nujno naraven iz materialne substance. Za Durkheima je kolektivna zavest v pravem pomenu besede samostojna družbena entiteta in je kot taka od posameznika ločena. Posamezniki so prisiljeni nositi breme lastne kulture in ne morejo ubežati družbeni prisili. Druga generacija kulturologov (neoklasicisti, kot so Berger, Luckmann, Bellah in Geertz) si je prizadevala povrniti ustrežno zvezo med subjektom in objektom. V skladu z njihovo namero so lansirali idejo družbene konstrukcije realnosti, deloma navdihnjeno z idejami fenomenologa A. Schutza (Luckmann in Berger 1991) in deloma z interpretativno sociologijo Maxa Webra (Geertz 1993). Kulturni pomen je dobil mesto temeljnega koncepta v teoriji neoklasicistične paradigme, in ker je bila njihova teoretična pozornost usmerjena k družbeni konstrukciji realnosti, so veliko pozornost posvečali položaju jezika v vsakdanji komunikaciji. Kulturni objekt ni nekaj, kar bi bilo zunaj posameznikovega horizonta. Nič čudnega torej, da so si svojo najbolj priljubljeno metodo izposodili od fenomenologov in hermenevtikov. Naslednja stopnja v razvoju kulturologije je poststrukturalizem (Habermas, Foucault, Lévi-Strauss). Če neoklasicisti še vedno verjamejo v aktivno vlogo posameznikov v procesu nastanka kulturnega smisla, pa so se poststrukturalisti odpovedali aktivni vlogi akterja. Vse svoje moči so vložili v razlago temeljnih principov družbe in kulture s pomočjo vloge jezika in komunikacij med posamezniki. Tako se je kulturni objekt ponovno znašel onkraj dosega posameznikov.

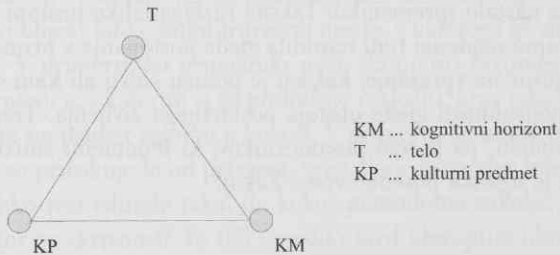
Na koncu svojega članka Wuthnow ugotavlja, da je vpliv posameznikov na kulturni smisel še vedno potrebno upoštevati, če želimo ustrežno razumeti delovanje človeške družbe. Na žalost pa njegova teorija ne more zadovoljiti naše intelektualne radovednosti. Ne glede na to, da so kulturni pomeni družbeno konstruirani, vendarle menimo, da mora obstajati svet onkraj družbenega in kulturnega pomena, ki nam pomaga le-taga

konstruirati, pa čeprav se tega morda sploh ne zavedamo. Predlagamo torej, da resno upoštevamo možnost, da kulturni predmeti obstajajo neodvisno od človekovega uma<sup>1</sup>. Kulturni objekt razumemo kot materialni predmet, ki pa ima v procesu doživljanja kulturnega izkustva to lastnost, da deluje kot nosilec družbeno konstruiranega kulturnega pomena. Zaradi določenih razlogov, ki pa zaradi vsebinskih omejitev tega eseja ne morejo biti natančno pojasnjeni, bomo razdelili kulturne objekte v dva tipa kulturnih objektov: telesa in kulturne predmete<sup>2</sup>. Metodološki okvir, ki bo omogočal naše razmišljanje, pa si lahko ogledate na spodnji sliki:



Slika št. 1: Razmerje med akterji v kulturni produkciji in percepciji (mikro nivo)

Zgoraj opisani metodološki okvir za preučevanje kulturnih pojavov (glej sliko št. 2) bomo uporabili na predhodno dobljenih podatkih. Pri tem moramo odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: Kateri je kulturni objekt v našem primeru? Kako pri tem pravilno razumeti vlogo telesa? In nenazadnje, kakšno vlogo ima socialno kognitivni horizont pri nastanku specifičnega kulturnega pojava, v našem primeru razumevanju smrti?



Slika št. 2: Metodološki okvir za preučevanje kulturnih fenomenov

Prepričani smo, da je potrebno pristopiti k analizi kulturnih fenomenov s stališča njihovega izkustva. V primeru smrti pa trčimo ob skorajda neprehodno oviro, kajti smrti ne moremo izkusiti več kot enkrat, če sploh lahko označimo te vrste dogodek z besedo 'izkustvo'. Če si ogledamo pojav smrti z znanstvenega vidika, ne moremo vedeti, ali nemara obstaja življenje po smrti. Morda obstaja, morda ne. Hipoteze, ki bi vsebovala bodisi prvo bodisi drugo trditev, ni mogoče znanstveno preveriti. Zato je edino smiselno, da se v polju znanosti odpovemo takšnim hipotezam<sup>3</sup>. Toda v realnem življenju je

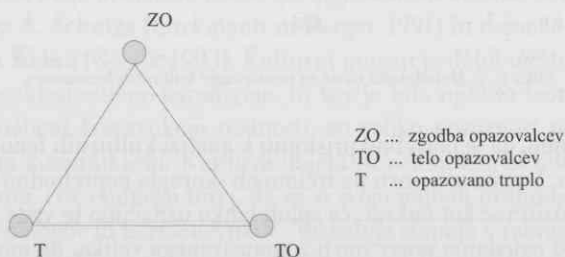
<sup>1</sup> Spomnimo se, kako je naša ideja o samostojnosti kulturnih predmetov v nekaterih niansah zelo podobna Popperjevi ideji Sveta 3 (Popper 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Novi pristop v razumevanju nastanka kulturnega smisla se močno naslanja na delo Strauss in Quinn (1997) ter na metodološki model, ki ga je razvila Wendy Griswold (1987).

<sup>3</sup> Zahteva je v skladu s Popperovimi metodološkimi tezami, razvitimi v njegovo knjigi *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Popper 1992).

situacija mnogo bolj zapletena, saj oseba, vpletena v fenomen smrti (najsí bo umirajoča ali pa zgolj prisotna pri umirajočem), običajno nima ustreznega znanja in metod, da bi takšno znanstveno odločitev sploh lahko sprejela. Še bolj pomembno pa je, da posameznikom v vsakdanjem življenju takšne odločitve sploh ni potrebno sprejemati, kajti način delovanja vsakdanjega življenja je značilno drugačen. Njegova prisotnost in oblika sta posamezniku kot taka dana (glej Schutz in Luckmann 1974). To, kar posamezniki v takem trenutku potrebujejo, je uporabno znanje, na podlagi katerega lahko delujejo. Če se posameznik znajde v situaciji, ko mora poskrbeti za truplo pokojnika, mora biti seznanjen s posmrtnimi obredi. Vedeti mora, kako obrede pravilno izvajati in kaj je potrebno storiti s truplom pokojnika, da se ne bi zgodilo, da bi bila duša pokojnega prekleta ali kakorkoli drugače pogubljena. Seveda pod pogojem, da posameznik, ki je postavljen pred takšno nalogo, verjame v posmrtno življenje. Telo pokojnika je lahko pokopano, upepeljeno ali izpostavljeno na odprtem prostoru, kjer ga lahko pojedó divje živali, itd.

V skladu z našim metodološkim okvirom, razvitim za potrebe raziskovanja kulturnih fenomenov, moramo poiskati tri elemente, iz katerih je kulturni fenomen sestavljen (glej sliko št. 3). Ob smrti nekega posameznika je mrtvo telo edino, kar ostane za njim. Nemara se sliši nenavadno, toda v primeru kulturnega fenomena smrti je edini resnično obstoječi kulturni predmet truplo umrlega. Razlika med mrtvim in živim telesom je vse preveč očitna, da bi jo lahko zanemarili, zato so si ljudje prisiljeni izmisliti primerno razlago za nastalo spremembo. Takšna razlaga lahko nastopi kot zgodba ali mit, v katerem običajno najdemo tudi navodila glede postopanja v primeru smrti. Vsebuje lahko tudi odgovor na vprašanje, kakšen je pomen smrti ali kam se preseli duša umrlega in druge podrobnosti glede obstoja posmrtnega življenja. Tretji element, ki nastopa v našem modelu, pa je telo posameznikov, ki fenomenu smrti prisostvujejo. Delovanje slednjega je uganka posebne vrste. Zakaj?



Slika št. 3: Mikro situacija v primeru fenomena smrti

Med iskanjem odgovora na zgoraj postavljeno vprašanje moramo izpostaviti eno izmed najpomembnejših družbenih značilnosti. Kultura in družba ne moreta uspešno trajati, vsaj ne prav dolgo, če znanje in vedenje nista relativno uspešno prenesena iz ene v drugo generacijo. V primeru prenašanja obredov, povezanih s smrtjo, z ene v drugo generacijo, je vsakdanja izkušnja smrti običajno omejena na opazovanje naključnih smrti v neki skupnosti. Ni običajno, da bi neko osebo ubili, pa čeprav naključno, z namenom, da bi s tem nazorno prikazali smrt in poučili potomce, kaj smrt je in kako iz-

gleda. Vsekakor bi bila to draga odločitev, saj ima posameznikovo življenje vrednost za skupnost, v kateri biva. V preteklosti je bil posameznik še posebno dragocen, saj je ekonomija temeljila predvsem na fizični moči človeških bitij. V moderni dobi pa je posameznik dragocen predvsem zaradi občutja svoje enkratne individualnosti. Drugi razlog, zaradi katerega je bilo ubijanje ljudi v večini kultur omejeno le na religiozni obred, pa tiči v slabi razvitosti izobraževalnega sistema. Le od časa do časa so se v človeški zgodovini pojavili svetli otoki sistematičnega učenja. Prevladujoča strategija v prenosu znanja med generacijami je bila utemeljena v osebni izkušnji učečega. Če je situacija, v kateri se je posameznik znašel, zahtevala neko določeno znanje, da bi lahko svojo nalogo dobro opravil, potem si je potrebno znanje največkrat zagotovil neposredno<sup>4</sup>. Seveda je od tistih časov preteklo mnogo vode in družbena struktura se je spremenila tako temeljito, da neposredno prenešeno znanje ni več najpomembnejša oblika učenja (glej Schutz 1975).

Praktične težave, ki spremljajo socializacijo posameznikov v primeru fenomena smrti, zahtevajo rešitve, ki jih lahko razdelimo v dve kategoriji. Temelj, na katerem stoji naša odločitev, je prvi del našega eseja, v katerem smo se ukvarjali s konkretnimi primeri živali, ki simbolizirajo smrt. Najbolj primerno se zdi, da zamenjamo kulturni objekt, ki neposredno simbolizira smrt, s takšnim kulturnim objektom, ki predstavlja smrt le simbolično. Če si izberemo primeren kulturni objekt, ki za povrh še dejansko obstaja (glej sliko št. 4), bomo morda lahko zgradili zanimivo zgodbo, kjer bo na novo izbrani kulturni objekt lahko dobil ustrezno mesto, s katerega bo uspešno simboliziral fenomen smrti. V primeru, ko pripadniki neke skupnosti razumejo smrt kot skrivnostni pojav, je fenomen, s katerim si ga poskušajo razložiti, prav tako zavit v tančico skrivnosti. Vzemimo na primer zgodbo o kokoši. V primeru, ko kokoš brez pravega vzroka zakikirika, kar se pričakuje le od petelina, velja, da je gospodar hiše v smrtni nevarnosti. Glavo si lahko reši edinole tako, da kokoš nemudoma zakolje. Kje v tej zgodbi je primeren prostor za skrivnost? Ta tiči v razliki med običajnim obnašanjem izbranega kulturnega objekta (kokoš vali jajca in kokodaka kot kokoš) in njegovim spremenjenim načinom obnašanja (kokoš kikirika, kot da bi bila petelin).



Slika št. 4: Kulturni fenomen v katerem je kulturni objekt zamenjan z resnično obstoječim bitjem

<sup>4</sup> Lep primer takšnega obnašanja lahko vidimo v razmerju med srednjeveškim mojstrom in vajencem (Hawalt 1993).

Rekli smo že, da je tretji element v našem metodološkem modelu telo, v tem primeru telo uporabnikov kulturnih pomenov in smislov. Kakšne vrste telesa lahko pričakujemo v tej kulturni situaciji? V tem primeru pričakujemo normalno delujoče telo. Ko pravimo normalno delujoče, imamo pri tem v mislih telo, ki omogoča njegovemu uporabniku jasno percepcijo. S čistostjo percepcije pa se bomo v nadaljevanju še srečali.

Toda, kaj bi se zgodilo, če bi zamenjali dejansko obstoječi kulturi predmet (mrtvo telo) s popolnoma izmišljenim kulturnim predmetom, kot je na primer Cachirú (glej sliko št. 5)? V tem primeru bi se situacija spremenila, kajti posameznikova pozornost bi se obrnila od dejanskega k izmišljenemu liku, v tem primeru k zgodbi. V uvodu v naš esej smo poudarili, da človeška zavest vedno potrebuje za svoj obstoj neki predmet zunaj sebe, da bi si s tem zagotovila normalno delovanje. Izguba konkretnega predmeta ima zanimive posledice za delovanje posameznikove zavesti. V primeru, ko možgani posameznika ne dobijo zadostnega vzburjenja iz okolice, si izmislijo svoj lasten svet na podlagi predhodno uskladiščenega znanja, spominov in hotenj (Dennett 1991). Iluzije in halucinacije predstavljajo splošen simptom v laboratorijskih raziskavah, povezanih z izpostavljanjem posameznikov nizki stopnji senzorne percepcije (Zubek 1969). Delitev kulturnega objekta v dva različna tipa (primarni in sekundarni tip) se pokaže kot zelo koristna. Jasno je, da um za svoje delovanje potrebuje neki svet onkraj sebe. Če mu je odvzet primarni kulturni predmet, potem se razum zateče k edini možni rešitvi. Svoje telo uporabi kot kulturni predmet, saj drugače ne more delovati dobro. Telo nam je vendar vedno na razpolago, saj je z umom neločljivo povezano. Toda na žalost lahko umu zagotovi le tiste informacije iz okolja, ki so že vskladiščene v spominu in genih. Telo je brez svojega okolja pravzaprav nemočno, in prav zaradi te svoje občutljivosti nam pogosto zagotovi 'napačne' informacije.



Slika št. 5: Kulturna situacija, v kateri je običajni kulturni predmet zamenjan z izmišljenim primerom živali

Pomanjkanje senzornih dražljajev (kulturni predmet) je le eden od načinov, da pride pri posamezniku do pojava iluzij in halucinacij. Druga pot za doseg tega cilja leži v namerni izpostavitvi posameznikovega telesa napačni percepciji zaradi specifičnega delovanja posameznikovega telesa. V zgodovini človeštva je bilo nemalo takšnih primerov, ki našo trditev dobro ilustrirajo. Včasih je nadnaravnim videnjem botrovala splošna podhranjenost neke populacije. Posamezniki s posebnim položajem v družbi so se nameno izpostavljali uporabi halucinogenih substanc (glej Huxley 1979; Eliade 1985). Znanje, pridobljeno s pomočjo telesa, je za nekatere kulture in družbe bistveno. Za srednjeveško

družbo je to vsekakor ključna oblika védenja, toda kasneje je z upadom njegove pomembnosti na plano prišla nova oblika védenja: kognitivno razumetje (Mellor in Schilling 1997). Kulturni predmet v primeru smrti (truplo in proces samega umiranja) je bil potisnjen v posebna družbena polja (bolnišnice in sanatorije). Za moderno telo se poskrbi s posebnimi oblikami tretmaja (sistematična zdravniška nega in športno udejstvovanje posameznika), vsako njegovo zanemarjanje pa sprejmemo z neodobravanjem. Kognitivna struktura modernega posameznika je 'polna' mladih teles, medtem ko je smrt in z njo povezano staranje potlačeno v globine človekovega modernega mišljenja.

Ali je za mite in zgodbe, ki so nastali na podlagi narave, ob koncu iztekajočega se tisočletja še kaj upanja? Prav gotovo perspektive niso dobre. Prepričani smo, da jih posameznikova moderna kognitivna struktura ne odobrava. Pa ne zaradi tega, ker bi bila slednja v primerjavi s tradicionalnimi pogledi mnogo bolj racionalna (glej Luckmann 1997). Poglavitni razlog za to leži drugje. Človeško okolje se je v zadnjem stoletju dramatično spremenilo. Danes je narava prav tako daleč stran od človekovega pogleda kakor tudi sam mistični svet. Iz pepela starih mitov pa se je dvignil nov, moderen mit. Slednji je mit o čudežnih ozdravitvah, ne pa o smrti (bioenergija). Modernega mita posmrtno življenje pravzaprav sploh ne zanima več.

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# THE HEN, CACHIRU AND OTHER WINGED CREATURES

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Maja Šubic, Tomaž Krpič

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271

**Key words:** death, mythological flying creatures, human body, cultural object, cognitive mindscape

## Foreword

One of the most surprising characteristics of the human mind is how human thought cannot exist without some fixation on external objects. That does not mean that the object of fixation always has to be a material one. It can also be a mental picture in the human mind, although in this case it needs to be understood as something separated from what is experienced in that moment. This mental picture originates in the past and it looks like it has its own will to influence on our way of thinking. Nevertheless, our lives are generally filled with all kind of material stuff, because for a person it is normally much more simple to attain relationship to material world than to reach a complex state of reflection inside the human mind. Some might express regret. But being realistic, for an average person the everyday reality is mostly material. Beside all other reasons why human mind is mostly oriented toward material world, especially one is important. If the connection between individuals through the material world is interrupted, social world simply falls apart. And since everything is basically social (see Mead 1962, Schutz 1967) the science is also the part of society. For that reason social science should not neglect the material dimension of social life. For then we are no longer capable of proper scientific explanation of how interpersonal contacts in everyday life are possible at all.

Preliminary condition for sociological or anthropological investigation is quality knowledge about material world. In other words: the explication of specific social or cultural phenomenon depends on how skilful we are when we trace down cultural object. For someone whose primary intention is to elaborate cognitive conditions of human mind, this demand may sound odd. Nevertheless, we believe it is more than just necessary. Our first goal is to find as many examples of different animals that symbolize death as possible and classify them into different categories. Our second goal is to show how individuals through culture use their bodies and carefully choose among different types of objects that could be properly used as cultural object in the matter of death.

## A classification of the animals

This essay is a product of an enthusiasm caused by *The Book of Imaginary Beings* by J. B. Borges, a book with no ambition to classify or systematize in which the author collects those beings that turn the zoological garden into a mythological one. Like the author says, the book will never be complete, the same goes for this survey of the winged creatures that man has in this way or another connected to the death. The symbolism of the animal world is closely interweaved, therefore this essay collects beings and deities with no regards to historical or geographical frame. It does not include angels and dragons, which should be dealt with in a special chapter. Symbols usually have double meaning and obviously, in this essay only the darker ones are discussed.

### Why wings and death?

A flying creature does not leave behind a solid trace like footprints in the sand, a tunnel in the ground or stirred water surface. The flight makes a tiny little breeze like a cool shiver that dash through us in the moment when we become aware of death.

Many winged creatures do not have flying ability or they lost it long ago. By pinning wings to a creature we elevate it amongst spiritual beings. In the spiritual world, it is possible to fly with stone wings. The meaning of flying lies in freeing from gravity why gravity is the cause of most troubles in this life and beyond it.

If we believe in life after death, the death is only an obstacle which an individual must overcome to achieve immortality or resurrection. The easiest way to overcome an obstacle is to jump over it, or even better, fly over it.

Palaeolithic graves contain remainders of animal bones and antlers. That can only give us an idea about spiritual rituals of the ancient undertakers (a child surrounded by steinbock horns from a site in Uzbekistan or a woman's skull placed onto a jaw and antlers of a reindeer in Mas d'Azil).

It is not yet known whether these are remainders of funeral feasts or an actual equipment of the deceased which would confirm the belief of the life after death. In any case, the relation man - death - animal was established in the very beginning of the human awareness of existence and its end.

The major principle of the Palaeolithic art is: in the world there are only people and animals - hunters and their prey - nothing in between matters and does not belong into the imaginary space as seen by the eye of an artist. And the point in which the hunter and the animal meet, is death.

The ideology of the hunting cultures is actually shamanic. Only a shaman with his supernatural power is capable of penetrating into the very source of animal life. It is confirmed that the shamanic ecstasy existed as early as in Palaeolithic. This ecstasy suggests the believing in the soul that is capable of leaving the body and wandering freely. On these wanderings it can meet supernatural beings and ask them for help. (In a cave in Lacaux there is an image of a man that seems to be dead - a shaman in a trance, with a beak on the face, with a bird on the top of a stick, probably representing his protector).

Very often, we can meet a soul in the form of a bird, as well as a bird as the leader of souls. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* describes the dead man as a hawk that flies

away, in prehistoric monuments in Europe and Asia we can see birds on the branches of the Cosmic tree, which probably symbolize the souls of the ancestors and also in Mesopotamia the dead appeared as birds...

Only death can transform a man into a bird and thus can shamans with supernatural powers experience the destiny of the soul, to other human beings accessible only in the moment of death.

Shamanic ecstatic ascensions bring about a feeling of transcendence, elevation and, with its symbolism of the flight give an imaginary experience of the height as the liberation from gravity (Eliade 1987, 1996).

## The animals that really exist

ARA – Colombian Indians use a red Ara as guide for the death person. The Boro Indians believe in complicate migration cycle of souls, where souls are temporarily embodied in the Ara birds.

SCREECH OWL - “He will not last long - the screech owl called him tonight.” or: “The screech owl cried him out”. This is the wisdom of old ladies when they stick their heads together and say these unbecoming words, and unfortunately men as well. And thus the poor screech owl, due to its sad voice, became notorious as the death bird. Many people get the creeps when they hear it screech. A fool is guessing for whom it hoots. If then nobody wants to die, nobody thinks of the death messenger any more. If somebody really dies in the neighbourhood, the superstitious women will forever be convinced that the screech owl's screech brings death.

A screech owl is also called the death bird. If it stops close to a house, it is said that somebody who lives there will soon die. The same thing threatens to us if we hear it sing or even cry at night. Almost everywhere in Slovenia, people are afraid of its sound. This lively type of owl tends to dwell close to people's homes - under roofs, in orchards and churches, therefore superstitious people often get some grey hairs.

The screech owls do not announce death only in Europe, they are also mentioned as the messengers of the chieftains of Xibalba, Maya's land of the dead.

In the second part of the holy book of the Indians Quiche POPOL VUH we meet 4 screech owls:

Chabi-Tucur - quick as an arrow

Huracan Tucur - the one-legged screech owl

Caquix Tucur - screech owl makao with red wings

Holom Tucur - screech owl with a head and wings and no legs

Two guardians of gardens in Xibalba were screech owls. They did not do their guardian job properly, so their masters cleft their beak and since then the screech owl has a cleft beak.

At night the screech owl is attracted by illuminated windows that were often a sign that people watch over a sick person or the deceased. It is said that its unfortunate

connection with the death comes from this. The physiognomy of its head with enormous eyes reminds us of a skull. Its restless flight is applied in human conception of the nearness of death.

**HEN** - Like most domestic animals, the hen also made a pilgrimage from the sacrificing bowl into the kitchen pot. In the Ancient Greece the hen was frequently sacrificed by poor people. Even Romans strictly and superstitiously followed the prophecies of the hen oracle.

In Black Africa the hen sacrificing is common, necessary for the communication with the deceased. When a Lulu shaman woman undergoes the experience of death and rebirth, she is hanged a hen around the neck to attract the souls of the deceased mediums in the bush.

274

Fear from the hen crowing is very spread. The feminine with male characteristics has always caused uncomfot and fear. Here the two principles and powers are united in one. This kind of union does not have a future, it is both and nothing at the same time. It cannot go on and therefore death or even extinction is inevitable.

If a hen starts to crow like a rooster, the master of the house is bound to die. A "rooster hen" had to be slain at once. If a black hen crows, it cries out the master of the house. A white hen, on the other hand, cries out the housewife. The crowing of the black hen means bad luck for the house, the crowing of the white one death and the crowing of a brown one fire.

**HUMMINGBIRD** - Aztecs believed that the souls of dead solders return beck to the earth as hummingbirds or butterflies.

**RAVEN** - Black feathers, hollow croaking, insatiable ravenousness and predatory boldness make him mysterious, awful and monster like. That is why to all nations it means unfortunate and foretells death. (Erjavec, 1995, p. 398). The Raven became a negative symbol not long ago and almost exclusively in Europe. (...) It is general knowledge that the raven does not promise anything good, that it is a herald of misfortune and that it foretells death.

In the Celtic tradition the raven is a bad sign as well. Its image was adopted by Morrigan, the queen of fear, the queen of war and underworld.

Morrigan appears in two other forms - as Nori and Dispirited crow. Before the battle, she washed the equipment of those who were to die and thus determined the loser. "The raven is the black bird of the romantics which flies over the battlefield and pecks the corpses." (Chevalier - Gheerbrant, 1993, p. 285). It is true that the raven smells carcass from a great distance and feeds on it. Thus it really feels death at a distance. This death is his everyday bread, its actual existence.

In Greece, the raven had the function of a prophet, along with the eagle and the swan.

In Slovenia it is said that if a raven flies over a house, we can expect one of the feminine members of the family to die, whereas if a couple of ravens flies over the house, we can expect the death of a male. Sailors believed that three ravens bring death.

In Mahabharata ravens are compared to the heralds of death.

In most religions, the raven is a sun sign, a demiurge, a leader of souls on their last journey. It reveals the secret of the darkness. Nomadic, fishermen and hunting communities attach positive meaning to it, whereas agricultural and permanently inhabited peoples attach a negative meaning to it.

Alchemists name the phases of rotting a "raven's head."

**COOKOO** - Cookoo is a bird, connected with spring and the awakening of the nature, therefore it helps Siberian shamans to revive the dead. In the Veda tradition, a cookoo is a symbol of the human soul before the incarnation and after it. The body is like a strange nest in which comes the soul. If a cookoo sits on a dry branch and cries there, soon somebody in the house will die.

275

The cookoo brings death into the nest where it leaves its egg, for it throws out the already existing life. Therefore it needs death to exist.

**SWALLOW** - If swallow in the spring built the nest near the house and later abandoned it, someone living there will pass away soon for sure. Swallow symbolises loneliness, migration and separation, for it is a migratory bird.

**BAT** - With the people of Maya, the bat was one of the deities which incarnated the underworld forces. In Popol Vuh a bat's house is one of the underworld places through which leads the way to the land of the dead. The bat is the master of fire, destroyer of life, swallower of the light. It is an emblem of death. They call him "the one that tears heads." The bat is depicted with dead eyes. It is a god of death with the Mexicans. They connect it with the North. The bat is often depicted with an open jaws or with a sacrificing knife instead of the jaws. A duplicity of the hybrid nature, the mouse and the bird, in the alchemist tradition explains the ambivalence of the bat symbolism: the bat represents the androgyne, a winged dragon, a demon. Its wings are those of a creature from the hell (the devil has blue wings, similar to the bat's). The bat must wave with wings therefore it cannot rest during the flight. A nature seeks for a wing, but finds only an ugly hairy membrane which, nevertheless, functions as a wing.

**ROOSTER** - Like the hen, the rooster is also believed to bring bad luck. If it is 7 years old, it lays an egg out of which the devil - Basilisk hatches. The rooster was used as a protector against Basilisk on shields, amulets and tombstones.

On rare occasions, the rooster too foretells death - for instance, if he crows just before midnight.

In Greece it announces the arrival of the soul on the other world and then take it there. The soul would open its eyes to a new light, a new birth.

The rooster was assigned to Hermes, a herald that travels in three levels of the cosmos, from hell to heaven. Germanic nations believed that a bright rooster greets heroes on the bridge to Walhala, whereas on the door to the underworld there waits a black rooster.

During purification and exorcism ceremonies after death some Altay nations tie a rooster to the bed of the deceased. The rooster represents death which a shaman expels.

**NIGHTINGALE** – it is common believe that the singing nightingale helps dying person to passing away easier. The nightingale reminds us on the transitoriness of life and in connection with this on the thin line between love and death.

**HAWK** - The image of the hawk connected with death is found mostly in the old Egypt. It mostly appears as BA, representing a spiritual power, a soul. Ba has hawk-like body, human head and godlike beard. When the body is redeemed in the posthumous ceremony, ba leaves it and then moves freely. During the day, it follows the sun on the horizon, at night it returns into the underworld, into its body which is its real residence, and there it feeds with funeral gifts.

276

**OWL** - "Owls are quick-tempered, timid, stupid and greedy birds. The captured owls bite and eat one another. Except from some smaller species, they never tolerate people. They are always wild and choleric. And if we only thought about their unpleasant look, on their silent flight in the night, not to mention their awful sound they produce, we could understand easily why owls are detestable to ordinary people. For unschooled and superstition person the owl is something mysterious and monstrous (Erjavec 1995, 470).

The owl is a night bird, and as such it is usually connected with the appearance of moon, for owl do not suffer the day light well. It flights low and silently and also very slow. Its capability of seeing in the dark made of owl the symbol of the clear-sightedness and it is an attribute of fortune-tellers.

The owl is also a symbolic animal of hellish divinities, worship by the Indians of Middle and South America. It is showed in Aztecs books as guardian of earthy dark house. It is connected with dark forces and it is also avatar of the night, rain and stormy whether. This is its connection to the death. On the artefacts of pre-Inca of Chimu civilisation, it can be seen well the knife using for sacrifice with an owl depicted over it in the shape of half human, half animal creature. The symbol, obviously bind with the notion of death and sacrifice, is ornamented with the necklaces made out of pearls and shells. Their breasts are purple, and there are some dogs lying by it. The owl sometimes holds a knife in one hand and a jar for victim's blood in the other hand. Owls are still divine creatures now days. They are guards of the graveyards by many Indian people (Chevalier – Gheerbrant 1993, 564).

Using an 'owl' as a symbol for announcer in the matter of death is well known fact, for owl usually live solitary life and at the same time owl produce dull sound. As such the owl can call a misery upon the house if owl sing near it. The situation is even worst if there is more then just one owl in the nearness. Small wonder than that people sometimes call it the dead person's hen.

**WOODPECKER** – someone will pass away in the nearness of the place where a singing woodpecker is seen if this is happening several times. That is why the woodpecker is often called a mortal bird.

## Fictitious Creatures

**BASILISK** - is a supernatural mixed creature of Jewish Christian origin. Most frequently depicted as a rooster with the tale of a dragon or as a serpent with rooster's wings and a bright crown-like spot on the head. The number of legs varies from two to eight. At the beginning of the Middle Ages it was depicted as a four-legged rooster with a little crown, yellow feathers, large spike-like wings and serpent tail that sometimes has another rooster head at the end of it. It was conceived in a rooster's egg put into dung, without a mother and brooded by a toad or a frog. It dwells in fountains and cellars, and according to certain sources in the desert which is created by Basilisk itself. Namely birds fall dead in front of it. All fruit around it rots and the rivers from which it drinks remain poisoned for whole centuries.

It embodies death and the evil. Its evil look kills. The only things that can kill it are the smell of a weasel, a rooster's crow or the look in its own face in the mirror. It represents life danger of which one cannot be aware in time. Travellers took alive roosters with them when passing through unknown territories. Borges quotes Quevedo's ballad:

If the one that has seen you still lives  
Your whole story is a lie  
For if he had not died, he did not see you  
and if he is dead he cannot confirm that.

**CACHIRÚ** (also Cachurú) - An evil deity known in the region of Santiago del Estero, Argentina. It is depicted as an unusual owl with huge claws and a sharp beak. Its feathers are dark grey and coarse and become bristles towards the legs.

Its immense phosphorescence eyes radiate like fires in the dark. This light and his mischievous shrieks are the only thing that reveal its inaudible flight. It is said that it can heave a man into the sky or tear him apart in an instant.

Preferably, it captures the soul at the hour of death and turns it into a horrible apparition. It dwells in the most inaccessible parts of the forest where a man cannot penetrate. Because the forests reduce, its kingdom is getting smaller or has almost disappeared.

**CHONCHÓN** (also Chonchonyú) - A deity of the Mapuche Indians. An evil spirit, actually a human head with enormous ears used as wings. It circles around sick people and waits for a chance when nobody is around. Then he kills them and sucks their blood.

This bizarre monster may seem less strange to us if we mention that long-eared demons can easily be found in medieval sculpture and graphics. Such "earheads" often flutter around the dying person. Eary demons are also known in the Far East as grave guardians. Their vast ears are like wings or shells, echoing the noises of the world.

**GORGONS** - monsters from the Greek mythology. 3 sisters with dreadful faces. Looking at them, everyone petrified. They lived in the extreme West of the Earth. They call themselves Stena, Euriala and Medusa. They are depicted with golden wings, bronze hands and hissing snakes for their hair and fangs of a boar. Around the temples and tombs, a Gorgon's head chases away the evil powers.



**HARPIES** - demonic storm goddesses of the Ancient Greece. Winged creatures, mixed creatures with the body of a bird, head of a woman, long and loose hair, sharp claws and plague breath. They are scavengers in the feminine form. They devour everything they see and disgrace it with their excrements. The most frequent are The Stormy One, The Fast-flying one and the Dark one.

The Harpies personify greedy hunger. They torture souls and constantly annoy them. They are a satanic part of cosmic energy and fill the hell with the unexpectedly dead. The wind that can chase them away is the breath of the spirit.

**KERONKEUKEN** (also Keronkenken, Kerol Kenk) - mythic animal of the Te-huelche Indians. It does not have a certain form but is usually described as a big black-tailed bird, similar as the owl or even stallion. Keronkeuken is very evil, also considered as the magician's messenger. If it circles around a house at night, it would like to take life from somebody in it so that he or she would fall ill at dawn and die in the afternoon. It can be compared to a raven.

**LASE** - Etruscan group of young goddesses servants guarding mostly graves. They are depicted mostly with wings and naked. Their attributes are wreath and mirror.

**MANTUS** - Etruscan leader of the dead and guard in the underworld. On sarcophagi it was depicted as a stout man with wings, wild facial features, satyre-like ears and a big hammer.

**NASU** - Persian demoness of inanimate substance, corpse and profanation. Immediately after a man's death she flies in the shape of a fly and infects the neighbours with a disease. She penetrates the pallbearer through one of nine bodyholes.

**NAVJE** - Pre-slavic name for the dead after the acceptance of Christianity, the meaning was narrowed to the souls of yet unbaptized children. Sometimes navje appears like big birds attacking pregnant women. In certain places navje means the land of the dead. The word originates in the stem "naHu" - ship - a notion of the land of dead somewhere beyond the sea, where one has to sail to.

**PAZUZU** - acad. evil spirit which brings fever and shivers and personifies the Southeast wind. It is depicted with 4 wings, deformed face, long hair, lion paws, bird claws on the legs and scorpion sting.

**PIHUCHEN** (also Piguchen, Pihuechengu) - Mythical creature of Arawakans with a snake-like trunk, covered with feathers. It has wings and sometimes two snake heads. It flies only at night and during the flight whistles or produces thrilling whistles. In the heat, it is attached to the bark of the tree and leaves a red trace of blood he sucks from people and animals as long as it sucks them dry. Pihuchen's whistle is a reliable announce of death, except if we see the monster before it sees us. It is said that people cover their ears not to hear it and in order not to see it, it is recommended to moist the ground.

**SPHINX** - 1. Egyptian monster and mixed creature of mostly masculine gender with a human head and the body of a lion. 2. Greek, monster and demonic mixed creature with a woman's head and breasts and winged lion body. Sitting on a cliff near Tebe it posed a riddle to passer-bys and ate everyone that could not solve it.

SIRENS - Gr. 2 to 4 demonesses of harm, mixed creatures with woman's head and birdlike body. They live in the Hades, on Paradise fields or on an island,

and with their seducing singing attract sailors and eat them in the end.

ŠKOPNIK - flying demon from the Alps. It flies like a burning bale of straw or a broom and forces its way into a house through a chimney. Similar to the goblin.

ŠTRPED - a dormouse with wings instead of the front legs. Ash leaves grew out of its ears. Its eyes were those of a hawk its hair white (the good štrped) or black (štrped who brought misfortune and death). It hatched every 7 years with the help of the moon and the goldbeaked hawk named Lunj. A very timid animal. Everything it touched vanished.

TANATOS - Greek god and impersonation of natural and violent death. It carries the deceased into the Hades. It is depicted as a winged demon with a lowered torch.

279

TIFON - gr. 1. a gigantic monster living in the underworld. It has hundred dragon-like heads and snakes instead of its legs. It is the incarnation of devastating forces of nature. 2. horrible monster with legs replaced by snakes and with wings, which can cover up the sun.

TOT - he helps Osiris with judgement in the underworld court, so he is the God of dead persons. He supervises the balancing of the hearts and he write down the judgements.

While the path to Osiris leading by him, he helps the dead one and leads them. He is depicted with the head of Ibis or as Ibis him self.

TURMS - he is the messenger of God and leader of the dead person to the underworld, depicted with winged shoes and the stick of announcer.

VANTH - Etr. the demon of the underworld and death. She is depicted as winged creature, with snake, key and torch.

VELES - Slavic God of herds, property and underworld. In the empire of Veles the souls are settled and also the birds in the winter.

## A few theoretical conclusions

What can be said on the basis of our previous assignment? Above all, we should find the cultural meaning of animals signifying death. Can we assume that the animals are in fact cultural objects? For anyone who devoted their life to illuminating a way for proper understanding of the human culture, this statement might sound as some sort of a bad joke. We shall remind all those anthropologists and sociologists of an essay written by Robert Wuthnow where he elaborated the historical development of the notions 'culture' and 'meaning' (Wuthnow 1987). In his opinion the difference between three stages of that development must be drawn. At the first step the attention of *classical* social theorists (Durkheim, Marx and also Weber) were pointed toward the division between subject and object from where the meaning originated. Although culture object is independent, it is not made only of material substance. For Emile Durkheim collective consciousness was literally a social entity and it was in some way separated from individuals. Persons are forced

to carry the burden of their culture, but they cannot do much to reduce its power. The second generation (*neoclassicists* like Berger, Luckmann, Bellah and Geertz) endeavoured to bring back the notion of united object and subject. In accordance with their intention, they launched the idea of social construction of society, partly inspired by the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (see Luckmann and Berger 1991) and partly by interpretative sociology of Max Weber (see Geertz 1993). Meaning became an important element of neoclassicists' interests, but while their theoretical attention was pointed toward social construction of reality, they paid a lot of attention to symbolic language and its use in everyday life. The cultural object is no longer something outside the human mind. No wonder the preferred methodological approaches that emerged within the neoclassical tradition were phenomenology and hermeneutics. The next stage in the history of cultural theory is called poststructuralism (Habermas, Foucault, Levi-Strauss). If neoclassicists still believed in important role of the individual in the construction of society, the poststructuralists rejected the idea of the author. They put all their efforts in demonstration how the basic principles of society and culture can be uncovered in language, communication, speech and discourse. Once again the cultural object was put beyond the reach of human individuals.

At the end of his article, Wuthnow concludes that the influence of individuals on the origin of meaning is still necessary for understanding the human society. Unfortunately his theory would not satisfy well our intellectual imagination. In any case, meaning is socially constructed, but we still think that the world outside the meaning which helps us construct it is necessary, irrespective of the fact that we might not be well aware of it. So I suggest we seriously take into consideration the possibility that cultural object exist independently from the human mind<sup>1</sup>. In this example we understand the culture object as something material which in the process of experiencing culture is able to carry socially constructed meaning. For the reasons that cannot be explained here more precisely, the cultural object will be divided into two kinds of cultural objects (the body and other objects)<sup>2</sup>. The picture of our methodological framework should be like it is depicted in the picture below (see Figure 1).

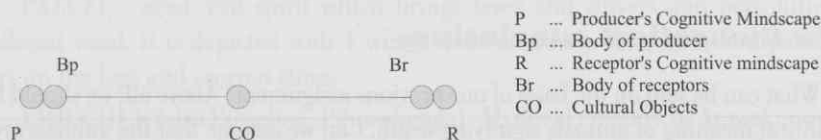


Figure 1: The relationship among actors in cultural production and reception (micro level)

It is time we used this methodological framework (see Figure 2) on our previously got data, so the next few puzzles should be solved: What is cultural object in our situa-

<sup>1</sup> Later on we remembered, how close our idea of cultural object is to the notion of the world 3 in the philosophy of Karl Popper (see for instance Popper 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Our new approach towards understanding the constructig of meaning in culture and society is rudimentary the same as it has been shown by Strauss & Quinn (1997).

tion? How should the role of the body be understood? And last but not least, what is the function of social cognitive mindscape in the origin of the cultural phenomenon of the death?

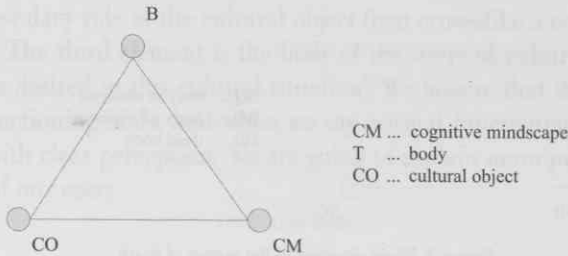


Figure 2: A methodological framework for cultural sociology

We believe the cultural phenomenon should be studied first from the point of its experience. In the matter of death, we collide into an insurmountable barrier, because death can be experienced only once, if we dare to label such phenomenon with the word 'experience' at all. Looking from the scientific point of view, we do not know if there is life after death. Maybe there is, maybe there is not. Hypotheses that contain whether the first or the second idea, cannot be tested scientifically. The only proper conclusion would be to eliminate such hypotheses from the area of science<sup>3</sup>. But in real life the situation is much more complicated, while the person involved in the process of death (whether dying or just looking at someone dying) usually does not have an adequate knowledge and methods to make such a scientific decision. And even more important is that people in everyday life do not have to make such a decision, while the logic of the everyday situation is characteristically different. Its presence and form are 'taken for granted' (see Schutz and Luckmann 1974). What individuals need is a useful knowledge on the basis of which an applicable action can be carried out. If someone finds himself in a situation to find a dead body, that person should know which rituals must be properly executed and what should be done with the dead body, unless the soul of the dead is cursed or in some other way condemned. Of course, if that particular individual believes in the supernatural world. The body can be buried, burnt or exposed in the open to be eaten by animals, etc.

In accordance with our methodological framework developed for cultural investigation, we must take into account three elements of culture (see figure 3). When someone dies, the other members of a group or a society are brought face to face with the corpse. No matter how odd this might sound, in the matter of death, the dead body is the only real cultural object. People notice very well the difference between alive and dead person. They are forced by cognitive process in their mind to generate necessary explanation. This explanation might have the form of a story or a myth in which some basic knowledge about what should be done in the matter of death, or what is the essential meaning of the death, or where the soul of a dead person goes after the death, or if there is any 'life' after death, should be proposed. The third element in our cultural

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with methodology presented in Popper's book *The Logic of Science Discovery* (1992).

model is the body of the participant in the cultural phenomenon of death. It remains the key puzzle. Why?

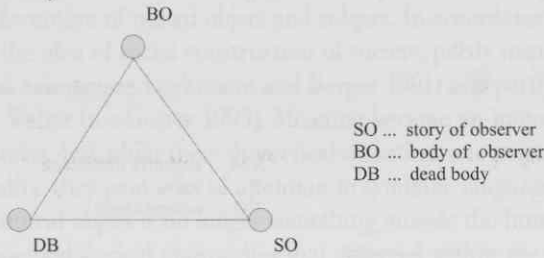


Figure 3: Micro situation in the matter of death

When we try to find the solution to this particular question, one specific element of the nature of society must be taken under scrutiny. Culture and society can not successfully endure, at least for a long time, unless the knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another. In the case of transferring rituals of death from one generation to another, the everyday experience of passing away is limited to accidental death among the population. It is not usual to subordinate a person chosen at random to execution with intention to teach youngsters what death is or what it looks like. This would be a costly decision, because the individual's life has a specific value for society. In the past, the life of the individual was precious, because the economy was mostly based on physical power of human beings. Modern society is now concerned for the individual on account of a higher self esteem. The second reason why the sacrifice of people in most cultures and societies was restrained to religious rituals, is revealed if we take into consideration the level of development of the educational system. Although only from time to time, in the history there appeared a few bright islands of systematic teaching and learning. The prevailing strategy in transferring knowledge from one generation to another was basically forced by the structure of experience. If a situation required a specific knowledge for accomplishing a task, the individual was given this knowledge directly<sup>4</sup>. Well, from those times social structure has changed a lot. And the directly transmitted knowledge is no longer the most important form of learning (see Schutz 1975).

The practical problems that accompany the socialization of individual person in the matter of death demand solutions, which can be classified into two different categories. These two categories can be drawn on the basis of our inquiry presented in the previous chapter of this essay. An elegant solution would be to change the cultural object that directly presents death, with such cultural object that represents death only symbolically. If we choose an object that really exists (see figure 4), maybe we will be able to build a nice story where the selected cultural object can find a nice place for signifying the death. If the members of a society comprehend the phenomenon of death as something mysterious, the proper cultural object signifying death should also be a mysterious object or process. For example, the story of the hen. If a hen suddenly, without any reasonable cause, crows like a cock, it means that death will come and take

<sup>4</sup> Like in such social institution as it was relation between master and apprentice.

the life of the master of the house, unless the hen is killed immediately. Where in this story is the place for mystery? The mystery rises out from the difference between what is the primary role of the cultural object (hen hatches eggs, and cackles like a hen) and what is the secondary role of the cultural object (hen crows like a cock, and thus symbolizes death). The third element is the body of the users of cultural meaning. What kind of body is desired in this cultural situation? We believe that the body should be the normal functioning body, and when we say normal functioning body we have in mind a body with clear perception. We are going to explain more precisely why in the continuation of our essay.

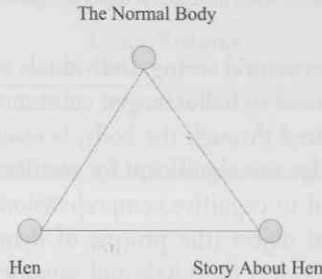


Figure 4: Cultural situation, when the cultural object is replaced by a real existing animal

But what would be the result if we changed our cultural object (the dead body) with fictitious cultural object, like for example Cachirú (see figure 5)? Then the situation changes, while the centre of gravity is moved from a really existing cultural object to fictitious cultural object, in this case to the story. In the foreword of our essay, we assert how the human mind always needs a concrete object for its concentration in order to assure its normal activity. The lack of a concrete object causes interesting consequences in the case of the human consciousness. When the brain cannot get enough stimuli from the outside, it produces its own world on the basis of previously stored knowledge and aspirations (Dennett 1991). Illusions and hallucinations are general symptoms in the experiments where the individual is subject to sensor reduction in laboratory tests (Zubek 1969). The division of the cultural object into two separated kinds of cultural objects (primary and secondary) is now showed as a very fruitful idea. Obviously, our mind for its acting necessarily needs an object outside the mind. If the primary cultural object is taken, the mind helps itself with leaning on the only possible solution: the mind desperately looks for the body, otherwise it cannot function right. The body is always here associated with its mind, but unfortunately it can provide only the information about its environment which is already stored in the memory or in the genes. The body is helpless without an environment, and sometimes because of its vulnerable position the body provides the 'wrong' data.

The lack of the sensory stimuli (cultural object) is only one mode to get the experience of illusions and hallucinations. Another way to get a mystical situation is to deliberately manipulate the function of the body with the intention of wrong perception. Through the history of the human mind, there have been a lot of examples that are good illustrations of what has been just said. Sometimes a general deficiency of nour-

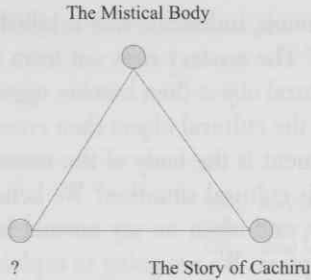


Figure 5: A cultural situation when the cultural object is replaced by a fictitious animal

ishment helps to cause a supernatural seeing. Individuals with a special position in the society were deliberately exposed to hallucinogen substances (see Huxley 1979; Eliade 1985). The knowledge, acquired through the body, is essential for some cultures and societies. The carnal knowledge was significant for medieval culture, but later with its decline, the shift from carnal to cognitive comprehension can be traced (Mellor and Schilling 1997). The cultural object (the process of dying and the dead body) was pushed to a specific area of society (hospitals and sanatoriums). The modern body is taken care of with special treatment (systematic medical care and participation in sport). Its negligence should be disregarded. The cognitive structure of modern individuals is occupied with pictures of young bodies, while the thought of death is being oppressed deep in the human mind.

Are there any good prospects for myths and stories founded on nature at the end of the millennium? It does not look good, that is for sure. We believe that the cognitive mindscape of modern individuals does not permit it. Not that modern strategy of thinking is so much more rational in comparison to traditional (see Luckmann 1997). The main reason lies somewhere else: the environment of human race has been drastically changed in the last century. Today, the nature is as far away from human eyes as the mythological world itself. A new kind of myth has been born from the ashes of the traditional believing. The story of the modern myth is the story of miraculous recovery from illness (bioenergy). Modern myth is no longer interested in posthumous life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY see page 269

#### BESEDA O AVTORJIH

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# ODNOS DO SMRTI Z ZGLEDOM HOMEOPATSKEGA TABUJA MED NOSEČNOSTJO

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Irena Rožman

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285

**Ključne besede:** tabu, homeopatski tabu, kontagiozni tabu, numinozno, sveto, nosečnost, nasilna smrt, kolina, nosečnica, kri, obred, rojstne šege

## Uvod

Namen članka je nakazati nekatere dileme pri poskusih definiranja tabuja. Razrešitev ni preprosta, kljub bogati etnološki, sociološki in antropološki tradiciji, na katero se ta prizadevanja navezujejo. Da bi stopili na pot analize dilem, ki so povezane s poskusi opredelitve tabuja, se je treba odločiti za smer obravnave. Najbolj problematična se mi je zdela tista smer, ki tabu razume kot kategorijo svetega. Tako imamo že na samem začetku opraviti z dvema neznankama, s tabujem na eni strani in svetim na drugi. Zato se za začetek zgoščeno seznanimo z obema pojmovoma.

## Tabu in sveto

Tabu je polinezijska beseda, ki označuje z ene strani sveto, posvečeno, z druge strani pa strašno, nevarno in nečisto (Freud 1969: 141). Izvirno označuje tisti moment svetega, ki še ne ločuje med svetim in nečistim. Pri tem gre za svojevrstno občutenje svetega, ki ga je Rudolf Otto imenoval *numinozno*. Prednost pojma je v tem, da označuje tako podvrste in razvojne stopnje svetega kot posebno občutenje nadnaravnega. Sveto kot tako, numinozno, je brez moralne in racionalne prvine; moralnost in racionalnost postaneta njegovi sestavini šele v razvitih, teističnih religijah.<sup>1</sup> Numinozno je

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<sup>1</sup> V prispevku ne bom razpravljala o Ottovi trditvi, da je numinozno brez moralne in racionalne prvine. Antropologi se npr. strinjajo v tem, da je pokojnik oziroma truplo pokojnika numinozno, *tremendum et fascinans*. Isto velja za kršitelja religioznega tabuja "Ne ubijaj!". Njegovo numinozno naravo določata dva momenta. Če upoštevamo mehanizem okužbe, lahko trdimo, da je kršitelja okužila numinozna narava ubitega, kar nazorno pove rek, da ima nekdo omadeževane roke s prelito krvjo. Tudi Levy-Bruhl, raziskovalec tako imenovanih primitivnih družb, kjer še ni sledu o teistični religiji, pravi, da numinozna narava bojevnikova izvira iz madeža prelite krvi. Iz tega sledi, da tabuji ne



ambivalentno, je *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Otto je mnenja, da obstaja posebno čustvo, ki se izraža v človekovem občutenju lastne ničnosti, v tako imenovanem občutju *kreaturnosti* (Otto: 13-45).

Ottova definicija svetega omogoča, da tabu pojmujeemo kot religiozni fenomen. Mnogi antropologi so imeli tabu za magijski fenomen. Da bi se odločili, ali je tabu magijski ali religiozni fenomen, bi bilo treba najprej postaviti strukturno razliko med magijo in religijo, kar pa presega namen referata. Vendar naj za nadaljnje razumevanje tabuja povemo le to, da se obe praksi, magijska in religiozna, nahajata vedno le znotraj nam znane kozmosa in da tekmujeta, vendar pa tudi prehajata druga v drugo. V nadaljevanju ne bomo govorili o razmerju med religijo in magijo oziroma religijo in tabujem, ampak se bomo posvetili družbeni moči tabujev. Oprli se bomo na spoznanja Jeana Cazeneuve, ki je v svojih delih sledil Durkheimovemu izročilu. Oba pripadata sociološki šoli, za katero je značilno, da ne izhaja iz svetega kot svetega, kot na primer Rudolf Otto, ampak iz svetega kot sakralnega; iz takšne svetosti, ki je sankcionirana z zakonom.

Preden se seznanimo z Cazeneuvevo opredelitvijo tabuja, je treba pojasniti še pojma *homeopatski* in *kontagiozni tabu*. Delitev na homeopatske in kontagiozne tabuje je vpeljal sir James Frazer, čeprav je zamisel Tylorjeva, kasneje pa so jo uporabljali in jo z manjšimi pomenskimi odtenki še vedno uporabljajo tudi drugi. Za homeopatsko magijo velja tradicionalni zakon podobnosti, za kontagiozno magijo tradicionalni zakon dotika (Frazer 1977: knjiga 1, 29). Frazer je na podlagi primerjalne metode z etnografskim gradivom iz različnih kulturnih okolij prišel do ugotovitve, da so tabuji posebna oblika magijske prakse, da je tabu negativna magija (Frazer 1977: knjiga 1, 29). Takšno delitev je sprejel tudi Cazeneuve, vendar z razliko: nasproti homeopatskim in kontagioznim tabujem je postavil *tabu nečistosti* (Cazeneuve 1986: 41-54).

Tabu nečistosti opredeli takole: »Predvsem tabu ne more biti prepoved, ki bi bila lahko razumsko utemeljena. V tem je navsezadnje njegova specifika. Od drugih oblik prepovedi se razlikuje po tem, da ni motiviran; represija, zaradi katere je obvezen, ni posledica intervencije nekoga tretjega, in nevarnost, na katero opozarja, ni očitna. Razloček med magijskim tabujem in tabujem nečistosti najbolje začrtamo, če kot razločevalno načelo upoštevamo mehanizem sankcije« (Cazeneuve 1986: 41, 42). To je pred Cazeneuvm storil že Durkheim (Durkheim 1937: 430). Kriterij med tabujem nečistosti in homeopatskim tabujem je sankcija oziroma, bolje rečeno, oblika sankcije. Medtem ko homeopatski tabu prepoznamo prav po podobnostnem razmerju med prepovedjo in posledico, pa v tabuju nečistosti ni skupnega merila za prepovedano dejanje in posledico kršitve tabuja (Cazeneuve 1986: 43). Nadalje Cazeneuve pravi, da je pri homeopatskem tabuju posledica kršitve individualna in materialna, pri tabuju nečistosti pa splošna in kolektivna (Cazeneuve 1986: 46). Tabuje, kakor nasploh vse vrste obredov, lahko proučujemo iz vidika njihove funkcije, pomena in učinka (Radcliffe-Brown 1994: 159-161). Cazeneuve se je osredotočil na raziskovanje učinkov tabujev, ti pa so lahko psihološki in sociološki. Po tej delitvi bi veljalo, da so psihološki učinki pridržani

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obstajajo najprej v obliki mitične zgodbe, iz katere se naknadno izlušči moralna prvina. Menim, da je ta neposredno vsebovana v vsakem tabuju. Videnje iracionalne komponente zgolj v okužbi je navidezno. Že na tej stopnji je razumska, moralna komponenta prisotna, vendar se kaže na drugačen način (prim. Cassirer 1985: 87-89).

homeopatskim tabujem, sociološki učinki pa tabujem nečistosti oziroma pravim tabujem. Taka delitev pa seveda ni dopustna.

Prav tako se ne moremo strinjati s trditvijo, da je tabu prepoved, ki je ni mogoče razumsko utemeljiti, pa vendarle v določeni družbi deluje (Cazeneuve 1986: 41). Če se strinjamo, da imajo tabuji družbeno funkcijo, pomeni, da so smiselni. In če so smiselni, pomeni, da jih je razumsko mogoče utemeljiti. Seveda ni nujno, da jih raziskovalec racionalizira, bistveno je, da je takšen za njihove nosilce.

Homeopatski in kontagiozni tabuji za nosečnice tako izvirajo iz prepričanja, da materino počutje, čustva, dejanja vplivajo na telesno in duševno zdravje ter značaj otroka. Najdlje so se ohranili v vaških okoljih. Številni etnologi jim niso prišli do dna in jih imajo preprosto za nerazumljive prepovedi, ki so se kot prežitki arhaične ontologije ohranile skozi ustno izročilo ali skozi kontinuiteto tradicionalnega življenja. Če se poglobimo v preučevanje njihove družbene vloge, spoznamo, da razkrivajo nekaj več. Ta "nekaj več" bi lahko imenovali življenjski koncept. Tabuji so odsev človekove težnje po varnem življenju brez pretresov in anomalij.

Da bi se približali razumevanju tabujev, je skoraj neogibno, da skupaj z Marcelom Maussom domnevamo, da so tabuji totalen družbeni fenomen, v katerem se vse vrste ustanov izrazijo hkratno - religiozno, pravno, moralno in ekonomsko (Mauss 1970: 1).

Tabuji se največkrat izražajo v simbolih. V tem primeru moramo raziskovanje usmeriti v razvozlanje njihovih pomenov. Zgodovinsko gledano se simboli arhaičnih ali tradicionalnih družb razlikujejo od simbolov tehnološko razvitejših družb. Da bi razumeli povezave med pomenom in funkcijo tabuja, moramo poznati sistem verovanj in mitičnih predstav, iz katerih izvirajo tabuirana dejanja, čustva, želje, živalske in rastlinske vrste, predmeti, določene kategorije ljudi itn.

Kršitve različic homeopatskih tabujev med nosečnostjo imajo usodne posledice: otrok bo krvolok, sadist ali celo morilec. Da se to ne bi zgodilo, nosečnica ne sme klati perutnine, prestrezati krvi, ko koljejo prašiča, ne sme jesti krvavic ali mesa, iz katerega se kri še ni povsem izcedila. Preden nadaljujem z razlago, bom navedla neko pripoved.

*Prašiča so privlekli do praga svinjaka. Žival se je upirala, pa so jo strici trdno zgrabili za ušesa in eden za rep, vlekli so ga, da je glasno zakrulil, če ne že grozno, potem pa, kot bi že vse vedel, začel predirljivo cviliti, podobno kot ljudje, ko jih zares stisne. Medtem je teta šla v hišo in iz zidne omare pograbila posodo z blagoslovljeno soljo. Iz posode je vzela ščepec soli, jo vrgla v moder emajliran lonec in še predno je stekla ven, da bo stregla kri, mi je v roke potisnila flašo šnopsa in štamperle z besedami: "Pa jim natoč pol." Na dvorišču pred svinjakom je mesar zamahnil in prašiča mojstrsko zabodel v srce. Drgeti, zadnji, so prehajali z umirajočega telesa v roke tistih, ki so ga držali. Videla sem, kako mu je en uhelj visel na odprto modro oko, ki je bilo presenetljivo podobno očem pripadnikov mojega plemena.*

*Pohištvo so v hiši že zjutraj znosili nekam drugam. Sredi mrzle in izpraznjene sobe so stale na ključ zložene tri mize, prekrite z brezhibno belimi rjuhami, na njih pa so bili zloženi kupi še krvavečega mesa in kri se je cedila po belih rjuhah. Tesnoben občutek me je prevzel. Dosti let kasneje me je podoben občutek groze in tesnobe obšel, ko je na istem mestu na belem odru ležala mrtva stara mama.*

Pripoved je dovolj nazorna: pokaže, kaj omenjeni homeopatski tabu prepoveduje. Kratko rečeno - prepoveduje ubijanje. Antropolog Robert Minnich, ki je raziskoval furež v Halozah, pravi: »Uboj teh najbližnjih, v kmečki družbi udomačenih družabnikov, njenih svinj, je moralni prekršek, ki doseže vrhunec v dramatizaciji osnovnih vidikov lokalnega družbenega in moralnega reda« (Minnich 1987: 136-143). To je seveda le eden od vidikov obravnave kolin, ki se razločno kaže v homeopatskem tabuju, obstajajo pa še drugi, kot npr. ekonomski in eksistencialni. Slednji s stališča zakona preživetja zakol prašiča, uboj, upravičujejo. Zakon preživetja vključuje diametralno nasprotje prepovedi, ker predvideva specifično situacijo, ki kršitev prepovedi upravičuje.

Če navedeno apliciramo na značilnosti homeopatskih tabujev med nosečnostjo, jih smemo po Cazeneuvovi opredelitvi tabuja (po podobnostnem razmerju med kršitvijo in sankcijo) imeti za homeopatske.

Na prvi pogled se tudi zdi, da prepoved ni razumska, da je kazen individualna, konkretna in materialna, in ne splošna in kolektivna. Za marsikoga prepoved ni racionalno utemeljena. To pa ne velja za nosečnico in vse tiste pripadnike skupnosti, ki verjamejo v njegove učinke. Seveda je mogoče, da nosečnica tabuja ne bo kršila še iz drugih razlogov, npr. iz strahu pred sankcijo, občutka krivde kot posledice kršitve iz malomarnosti, ali drugih razlogov. V tem primeru je tabu kategorični imperativ. Pri življenju ga ohranja bojazen pred sankcijo, ki je v tem primeru na eni strani materialna, konkretna in individualna (otrok bo krvoločan, morilec itn.) in splošna na drugi (skupnost bo morala zaradi kršitve tabuja v svoji sredi trpeti krvoločneža in bo tako omadeževana). Ugotovitev problematizira Cazeneuovo delitev tabujev na prave in neprave oziroma homeopatske. Cazeneuve namreč meni, da predmet homeopatskega tabuja ni numinozne narave (v našem primeru so v določeni situaciji numinozne narave ubijanje, kri kot simbol življenja, klavec), da je za razloček od pravega tabuja motiviran. Za zgled Cazeneuve navede pravi tabu iz Nove Gvineje, ko kršitelja lastninskega tabuja doleti zelo splošna kazen (zaradi kršitve postane nabuhel ali celo umre in tudi skupnost je prizadeta) (Cazeneuve 1986: 43, 44). V tem primeru je kazen resda kolektivna, vendar je hkrati tudi individualna in materialna, zato je vsakdo motiviran, da tabuja ne krši.

V našem primeru je bila vsaka nosečnica, ki je verjela v posledice kršenja tabuja, motivirana, da ga ni kršila. Če bi izčrpeje obravnavali vse tabuje, ki so veljali za nosečnice, bi videli, da se dotikajo vseh področij človekovega življenja in da je njihova vloga ustvariti v vseh pogledih brezhibnega otroka. Naj si dovolim podmeno, da takšni tabuji posnemajo vzorec božje stvaritve človeka, ki je popolna. Otrok se tako nahaja v materinem telesu še v nediferencirani, brezoblični modalnosti predstvarjenja, naloga matere pa je, da ga ob spoštovanju tabujev ustvari. Na ta način se skozi tabuje kaže tako skrb skupnosti za posameznika kot skrb posameznika, da stori za skupnost vse, kar je v njegovi moči. Skupnost si želi zdravih otrok, ker je to neobhodno povezano z njenim obstojem in normalnim delovanjem. Drugačni so anomalija vsake družbe. Zato omenjenega tabuja ne moremo reducirati na higiensko ali medicinsko prepoved, kakor bi bilo mogoče, če bi pri njegovi opredelitvi upoštevali le podobnostno razmerje med kršitvijo in sankcijo. Vedeti je treba, da imajo včasih pomembne stvari preprosto obliko. To velja tudi v primeru, ko spoznamo, da tudi za kmete koline niso (bile) le veseli domači praznik, nujen za njihovo existenco, ampak tudi moralno in religiozno neopravičljivo dejanje.

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# ATTITUDES TO DEATH WITH REGARD TO A HOMEOPATHIC TABOO DURING PREGNANCY

Irena ROŽMAN

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290

**Key words:** *taboo, homeopathic taboo, contagious taboo, numinous, sacred, pregnancy, violent death, pig slaughtering, pregnant woman, blood, ritual, birth customs*

## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to highlight certain dilemmas in attempts to define taboo. The solution is not simple, in spite of the rich ethnological, sociological and anthropological traditions, on which these efforts rely. It is necessary to decide on the direction of analysis, before commencing the analysis of the dilemmas that are connected with attempts to classify taboo. The most problematic direction would appear to be that which understands taboo as a category of the sacred. Thus, it is necessary to deal with two unknown factors at the very beginning, with taboo on the one hand and with the sacred on the other. It is therefore appropriate to begin with a summary of both concepts.

## Taboo and sacred

Taboo is a Polynesian word, which can mean either sacred and dedicated, or terrifying, dangerous and unclean (Freud 1969, 141). It originally denotes the particular moment of sacredness, which does not separate out the ideas of sacred and impure. This is a special way of relating to the sacred, which Rudolf Otto termed numinous. The advantage of this concept lies in the fact that it denotes both subtypes and degrees of sacredness as a special feeling of the supernatural. Sacredness as something numinous, is without moral and rational principles; morality and rationality only become an integral part of this in developed theistic religions<sup>1</sup>. The numinous is ambivalent, it is *mys-*

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<sup>1</sup> This paper will not discuss Otto's assertion that the numinous is without moral and rational principle. Anthropologists, for instance, agree that the deceased or the deceased's body is numinous, *tremendum et fascinans*. The same is true of the person who breaks the religious taboo "thou shalt not kill!". His numinous nature is defined by

*terium tremendum et fascinans*. According to Otto, there is a special emotion, which is expressed in a person's feeling of his own worthlessness, in the so-called feeling of contemptibility (Otto, 13-45).

Otto's definition of the world permits us to characterise taboo as a religious phenomenon. Many anthropologists define taboo as a magical phenomenon. In order to decide whether taboo is a magical or a religious phenomenon, it would first be necessary to define the structural difference between magic and religion, which exceeds the parameters of this paper. However, for the further understanding of taboo, it should be stated that both magical and religious practices only take place within a cosmos, which is known to us, and that they compete, but always merge into each other.

The rest of the paper will not consider the relationship between religion and magic or magic and taboo, but will confine itself to the consideration of the social power of taboos. The author finds support for this in the work of Jean Cazeneuve, whose work followed the tradition of Durkheim. Both of them belong to the particular sociological school, whose approach does not take the sacred as sacred, as Rudolf Otto does for example, but from the sacred nature of something, which is sanctioned by the law.

Before further considering Cazeneuve's classification of taboo, it is first necessary to clarify the concepts of *homeopathic taboo* and *contagious taboo*. The division into homeopathic taboo and contagious taboo was undertaken by Sir James Frazer, although it was originally conceived by Tylor. Both concepts were later used with slight conceptual changes by other writers. Homeopathic magic is characterised by the traditional law of similarity, whilst contagious magic utilises the traditional law of contact (Frazer 1977, book 1, 29).

On the basis of comparison of ethnographic data from different cultural backgrounds, Frazer concluded that taboos a specific form of magical practice, that taboo is negative magic (Frazer 1977, book 1, 29). This definition was also accepted by Cazeneuve, but with an essential difference: he placed the *taboo of impurity* in opposition to the opposition of homeopathic and contagious taboo (Cazeneuve 1986, 41-54).

The taboo of impurity is defined as follows: a taboo, above all, cannot be a prohibition, which is rationally based. This is its essential specification. It differs from other forms of prohibition in its lack of motivation; the repression, which makes it obligatory, is not the result of the intervention of a third party or entity, and the danger, of which it warns, is not obvious. The distinction between magical taboos and impurity taboos can be best defined, if the mechanism of sanction is respected as the defining principle (Cazeneuve 1986, 41, 42). Durkheim defined this before Cazeneuve (Durkhe-

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two elements. If one takes into account the mechanism of infection, then it may be asserted that the offender was infected by the numinous nature of the murdered person, which is well illustrated by the phrase that someone has their hands stained with blood. Levy-Bruhl, the researcher of so-called primitive societies, where there is no trace of theistic religions, also states that the numinous nature of the warrior derives from bloodstains. It thus follows that taboo does not have a prior existence in the form of a mythic story, from which moral principles are later derived. It is the author's opinion that this is directly encapsulated in every taboo. The visibility of irrational components merely as infection is more apparent than real. The rational, moral component is already present at this level, but it is shown in a different way (e.g. Cassirer 1985, 87-9).

im 1937, 430). The criteria between impurity taboos and homeopathic taboos is the sanction, or rather the form of sanction. Whilst homeopathic taboos are precisely recognisable by the similarity in the relationship between the prohibition and the consequence, the impurity taboo does not have a defined relationship between the prohibited action and the consequences of breaking the taboo (Cazeneuve 1986, 43). Cazeneuve further states that the consequences of breaking a homeopathic taboo are individual and material, but the consequences of breaking an impurity taboo are general and collective (Cazeneuve 1986, 46). Taboos like all other forms of ritual can be studied from the point of view of their function, meaning and effect (Radcliffe-Brown 1994, 159-161). Cazeneuve concentrated on research into the effect of taboos, which can be psychological and sociological. It is asserted in this division that psychological effects are confined to homeopathic taboos, whilst sociological effects are confined to impurity taboos or true taboos. However, such a division is insupportable.

Equally one cannot agree with the assertion that a taboo is a prohibition, which cannot be logically explained, but which functions in a certain society (Cazeneuve 1986, 41). If it is agreed that taboos have a social function, then it follows that they are logical. If they are logical, then it follows that they have a reasonable foundation. It is not necessary that they can be rationalised by the researcher, because it is important that they can be rationalised by the person, who practices them.

Homeopathic and contagious taboos for pregnant women as such derive from the belief that a mother's welfare, emotional state and activities have an effect on the physical and mental health and character of her child. These beliefs survived longer in the village environment. Numerous ethnologists have not fully understood them and have simply classified them as inexplicable customs, which are relicts of an archaic ontology that survived through oral tradition or through continuity of traditional ways of life. A deeper analysis of their social role leads to the realisation that they reveal much more. That "much more" might be termed a lifestyle concept. Taboos are a reflection of the human inclination towards a stable life without conflicts and anomalies.

One is almost unavoidably led to the presupposition reached by Marcel Mauss, in order to understand taboos. This is that taboos are an all encompassing social phenomenon, in which all types of institutions, religious, legal, moral and economic, are expressed at the same time (Mauss 1970, 1). Taboos are most frequently expressed through symbols. In this case research must be directed towards the unravelment of their meaning. The symbols of an archaic or traditional societies often differ from those of technologically developed societies from an historical point of view. The understanding of the connection between the meaning and function of taboos can only be achieved through knowledge of the system of beliefs and mythic conceptions, from which tabooed actions, emotions, wishes, animal and plant species, objects, certain categories of people, etc., are derived.

The transgression of various homeopathic taboos during pregnancy has important consequences: the child will be bloodthirsty, a sadist or even a murderer. In order to avoid this, the expectant mother must not slaughter chickens, or catch blood, when pigs are slaughtered. She must not eat blood sausage or meat, which has not been completely drained of blood. A story will be related before the discussion is continued.

*They dragged the pig to the threshold of the pigsty. The animal struggled against them, but the uncles held it firmly by ears and tail, dragging it so that it squealed loudly, if not even horribly. Then it began to squeal piteously, like a person in great agony, as if it knew what fate awaited it. While this was going on my aunt went into the house and took a vessel of consecrated salt from the wall cupboard. She took a pinch of salt from the pot and threw it into a blue enamelled pot. Just before she ran out to catch the blood from the pig, she pressed a bottle of spirit and a shot glass into my hands and said: "pour them half." In the courtyard in front of the pigsty, the butcher struck once and expertly stabbed the pig through the heart. The last shudders from the dying body passed into the hands of those, who held it. I saw how one ear hung over an open blue eye, which was surprisingly like the eyes of my kind.*

*That morning, the furniture in the house had already been taken elsewhere. Three tables stood in the centre of the cold, empty room. They were covered with spotless white sheets. Heaps of bloody meat were laid on the table, blood running from them over the white sheets. I was seized by a feeling of tightness. Many years later, I felt a similar feeling of horror and tightness, when my dead grandmother lay in the same place on the white platform.*

The tale is self-explanatory: it shows, what the above-mentioned homeopathic taboos forbid. It can be summed up as the prohibition against killing. The anthropologist Robert Minnich, who studied pig slaughtering (*furež*) in the Halože hills, states: "The killing of the closest of domesticated companions in a peasant society, the pig, is a moral transgression, which reaches its climax in the dramatisation of the fundamental views of the local social and moral order (Minnich 1987, 136-143). Naturally, this is only one view of the study of pig slaughtering, which is clearly places emphasis on homeopathic taboo. There are others, however, e.g. economic and existential studies. The latter excuse the slaughtering, or killing, of the pig from the standpoint of the law of survival. The law of survival combines two diametrically opposed prohibitions, which foresees a specific situation, in which the transgression of the prohibition can be excused.

If the above is applied to the characteristics of homeopathic taboos during pregnancy, then they can be taken as homeopathic taboos in the Cazeneuve classification of taboos (the similarity in the relationship between transgression and punishment).

It also seems, at first sight, that the prohibition is illogical and that the punishment is individual, concrete and material, not general and collective. The prohibition is seen to have an irrational foundation by many people. However, this is not true of pregnant women and all members of a particular group, who believe in their efficacy. It is also possible that a pregnant women will not break the taboo for other reasons, e.g. for fear of sanctions, a feeling of guilt, as a result of transgression through carelessness, or other reasons. The taboo is categorically imperative in this case. It is kept alive by fear of sanction. In this instance, it is, on the one hand, material, concrete and individual (the child will be bloodthirsty, a murderer, etc.), but on the other hand it is general (because the taboo was broken, the group will suffer the presence of a bloodthirsty individual in its midst and will, thus, be compromised). These conclusions highlight problems with Cazeneuve's division of taboos into true taboos and fictitious or homeo-



pathic taboos. Cazeneuve is of the opinion that the object of a homeopathic taboo is not numinous in nature (in this case, killing, blood as a symbol of life and the knocker have a numinous nature in certain situations), that it can be differentiated from a true taboo, because it is motivated. Cazeneuve uses an example of a true taboo from New Guinea. Here, the transgressor of a property taboo suffers a very general punishment (the transgressor becomes swollen and may even die and the entire group suffers) (Cazeneuve 1986, 43, 44). In this case, the punishment is genuinely collective, as well as being individual and material, so everyone is motivated to keep the taboo.

In the case under consideration, all pregnant women, who believed in the consequences, were motivated to avoid breaking the taboo. An exhaustive study of taboos, relating to pregnant women, would show that they touched on all aspects of human life and that, to all intents and purposes, their aim was to create a perfect child. It is the authors opinion that the model for such taboos is the divine creation of man, before his fall from grace. The child, thus, exists in its mother's body in a still undifferentiated, formless modality and the mother's task is to create it through the proper respect of taboos. The care of the group for the individual and the desire of the individual to do his utmost for the group is expressed through the medium of taboos. The group desires a healthy child, because such an individual is intimately connected with the continued existence and functioning of the group. The different, the other is anomalous in all societies. For this reason, the taboo under consideration cannot be reduced to a hygienic or medical prohibition. This would be possible, if the only factors under consideration were the similarity in the relationship between the transgression and the sanction. One should remember that important things sometimes take a relatively simple form. This is also true in the case, when it becomes clear that peasants did not simply regard pig slaughtering as a local holiday, which was vital to their existence, but also a morally and religiously inexcusable act.

BIBLIOGRAPHY see page 289

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Irena Rožman, dipl. etnologinja, mlada raziskovalka in asistentka na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani. Ukvarja se s problematiko kulture rojstva, smrti, družinskega in spolnega življenja v vaških skupnostih v 19. stoletju in v prvi polovici 20. stoletja z vidika socialne in duhovne kulture.

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# SMRT IN SODBA ŽIVIH V PAPUANOVOGVINEJSKI SKUPNOSTI\*

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Borut Telban

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295

**Ključne besede:** umiranje, sodba mrtvih, smrt kot kazen, Ambonwari (Sepik, Papua Nova Gvineja)

## Uvod

Že dolgo je tega, kar so ljudje odkrili moč posmrtnih obredov in spoznali, da smrt ni le problem, pač pa je hkrati priložnost tako za poglobljanje družbenih, kulturnih in političnih sporazumov kot tudi za spodbijanje obstoječega reda s strani tistih, ki imajo drugačne poglede in interese (Taylor 1989:149). Kot analitiki se ne bi smeli osredotočiti zgolj na neka navidezno stalna pravila ali navade in proučevati, kako jih ljudje kršijo ali spreminjajo; naša naloga naj bi bila predvsem pokazati, kako *normalni* dogodki – prepiri, pretepi, kraje, prešuštvo, smrt, in tako naprej – oblikujejo, preoblikujejo in celo izumljajo pravila, ki jih morajo potem ljudje stalno preučevati in premlevati v ustvarjanju in poustvarjanju svojega življenjskega sveta.

Ta članek govori o smrti in sodbi – tako o sodbi mrtvih kot o sodbi živih. Človekov pogled na svet je odvisen od kulture, iz katere izhaja, zgodovinskega obdobja, posameznega kraja in tiste konkretne skupnosti, s katero se kot analitiki ukvarjamo. V starem Egiptu (in kasneje v krščanstvu, v katerega so prodrle tako židovske kot egipčanske eshatologije) so na primer, sodili posameznikovo moralo (v egipčanskem podzemlju so posameznikovo srce dajali na tehtnico in ga primerjali s peresom) ali dejanja (Budge 1967[1895]). V Egiptu je moral pokojnik nagovoriti 42 božanstev in v posebnem monologu – kot je na primer tisti iz *Anijevega papiroso* – ovreči vsa svoja pregrešna dejanja. Po drugi strani pa je člo-

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\* Terensko delo v vasi Ambonwari sem opravljal v letih 1990 - 1992 in 1997, skupaj dvajset mesecev. Del tega članka sem predstavil na mednarodnem simpoziju "Etnološki in antropološki vidiki proučevanja smrti", ki je potekal med 5. in 8. novembrom 1998 v Ljubljani; celoten članek sem 23. novembra istega leta odpredaval na etnološkem inštitutu heidelberške univerze. Zahvaljujem se Bobu Tonkinsonu za njegove pripombe in predloge, ki so prispevali k izboljšanju prvotne različice tega članka. Članek je bil najprej napisan v angleščini. Pri slovenski verziji se nisem trudil za dobeseden prevod, pač pa sem svojo angleško različico, ne da bi kaj dodal ali odzvel, preprosto poslovenil.

vekova prava vera tista, ki so jo sodili in jo še vedno sodijo v islamu in zoroastrianizmu (Brandon 1967: 145, 148, 155). Še več, obstajata dve vrsti posmrtna sodbe, ena takoj po smrti in druga v trenutku pričakovanega konca sveta, ki sta značilni za mnoge svetovne religije, kot so zoroastrizem, islam in krščanstvo.

V vasi Ambonwari, ki se nahaja v provinci Vzhodni Sepik v Papui Novi Gvineji, ljudje sobivajo z duhovi. Ker Ambonwarijci ne prisegajo na nobeno vrhovno božanstvo – če za trenutek pozabimo na stalen proces pokristjanjenja – jim le-to ne more soditi. Zato mrtev objokujejo kar sami in jih le redko sodijo. Prav tako pa, kot trdi Mimica za Iqwayce, “tam ni smrti kot take, tam je le nešteto pogosto naključnih načinov umiranja, postajanja mrtev in biti po smrti” (1996:216). Ljudje se lahko zavedajo svojega lastnega umiranja in lahko žive svoja življenja v pričakovanju svoje lastne smrti. “Toda v nasprotju z navadami v zahodnih urbanih kulturah, v življenjskem svetu Iqwaycev smrti niti ne izkusijo niti si je ne zamišljajo kot radikalno tuj dogodek . . . Smrt ni bitje, ki preži na ljudi in jih iztrga iz življenja. Pač pa so ljudje tisti, ki sami sebe živijo v svoje smrti skozi svoja lastna dejanja ali skozi dejanja nekoga drugega” (ibid.:215, 216; moj poudarek). Umiranje med Iqwayci kakor tudi med Ambonwarijci je način bivanja; umiranje je družbena dejavnost ali medosebna izkušnja. Tako kot življenje, katerega neločljiv del sta tudi umiranje in smrt. Smrt je za posameznika in za njegovo bližnje okolje kazen in treba je najti tiste, ki so za smrt odgovorni. Po ustrezni kompenzaciji in obnovitvi odnosov se ponovno vzpostavi navidezna – pa čeprav iluzorna – harmonija. Kasneje bom v članku predstavil nekatere zadeve, ki se nanašajo na ambonwarijsko razumevanje njihovega umirajočega načina bivanja in sodbe tistih, ki jih spoznajo – po pravici ali po krivici –, da so krivi za bolezen in smrt njihovih bližnjih sorodnikov. Da pa bi lahko ambonwarijsko kozmologijo vsaj malo primerjali z večjimi svetovnimi religijami, bom najprej preletel tista kulturna okolja, pri katerih se predstava o posmrtni sodbi že dolgo pojavlja. Splošno je uveljavljeno mnenje, da najbolj zgodnje pričanje o ideji o posmrtni sodbi prihaja iz Egipta. Ta zamisel – ki združuje etiko z eshatologijo – “predstavlja končno overovitev tradicionalne etike Zahodne družbe” (Brandon 1967: ix).

## Sodni prizor v starem Egiptu

Že davno je, kar so Egipčani sonce poimenovali Ra – kot vidno predstavo boga, kateremu so darovali in žrtvovali. Ko se je v trenutkih stvaritve sveta Ra pojavil, se je čas začel. Šele mnogo kasneje se je pri Egipčanih “pojavi moralna zamisel o soncu, ki je odsevala zmago pravice nad krivico in resnice nad lažjo” (ibid.:cxi). Če to povemo z drugimi besedami, lahko ugotovimo, da vse kaže na to, da podobe srečnega posmrtnega življenja izvirajo iz piramidnih tekstov in da je “doktrina kaznovanja zlobnih in nemoralnih, vključno s sodbo, ki nastopi po smrti, produkt razvoja, ki je značilen za kasnejše obdobje” (Budge 1967:cvi). O sodbi in o tistih, ki jim ni uspelo zagotoviti življenja blaženosti z bogovi, piramidni teksti ne povedo nič.

Tebansko različico Knjige mrtvih (oziroma *pert em hru*, kar so prevedli v “prikazano v luči” ali “prihajanje iz dneva”) so napisali na papirusu v hieroglifih okoli leta 1500 pred našim štetjem. Starejše oblike Knjige mrtvih pa so Egipčani uporabljali že

od leta 4500 p.n.š. Tekst je razglasil vstajenje duhovnega telesa od mrtvih in nesmrtnost duše. "Vsako poglavje in molitev iz te različice naj bi človek izgovoril v drugem svetu, kjer so pravilno izrečene besede omogočile pokojniku, da je premagal vse nasprotnike in dosegel življenje dovršene duše, ki je bivala v duhovnem telesu na domu blaženih" (ibid.:xxx). V stopetindvajsetem poglavju Knjige mrtvih pokojnemu povedo tiste besede, ki naj bi jih izrekel ob prihodu v Maatijevo dvorano oziroma v sodno dvorano – dvorano dvojne pravice in resnice, kjer pokojnika očistijo – tam naj bi se srečal z bogom in tam naj bi stehali njegovo srce ter ga v prisotnosti dvainštiridesetih velikih božanstev ločili od njegovih pregreh (ibid.:xi, xxx, xli, cxix).<sup>1</sup> V starem Nebsenijevem papirusu se teža srca primerja kar s pokojnikom, medtem ko je v Anijevem papirusu na eni strani srce, na drugi pa pero, simbol Resnice in Zakona, simbol boginje Maat (ibid.:261).<sup>2</sup> Prisotni bogovi naj bi bili "vodiči in zaščitniki ter darovalci življenja in sreče pokojnim v novem življenju" (ibid.:cxviii). Hkrati pa je očitno, da so Egipčani že od nekdaj verjeli v obstoj drugih sil, ki so nasprotovala mrtvemu, in ki jih na mnogih mestih v knjigi imenujejo njegovi "sovražniki".

Pokojnike so poistovetili z Ozirisom, to je s soncem, ki je šlo na zahodu in se je potem ponovno vzpelo na vzhodu. Na enak način so polagali mrtve v njihove grobove na zahodnem bregu Nila. Potem ko so šli skozi sodno dvorano, so pot nadaljevali proti vzhodu in tam pričeli s svojim novim bivanjem (ibid.:247 f.n. 2). Vlogo boga mrtvih Ozirisa so določili mnogo prej kot pa so napisali piramidne tekste, ki jih poznamo danes. V kasnejšem obdobju pa je prišlo do spremembe: Egipčani so Ozirisu pričeli pripisovati tiste značilnosti in kvalitete, ki so jih v zgodnjih dinastijah pripisovali Raju ali Ra-Tmuju (ibid.:cxiii). Oziris je postal simbol večnega bivanja in nesmrtnosti. Postal je bog mrtvih in bog živih. Na tega "gospoda večnosti" so se pokojni obrnili in ga prosili, naj njihova telesa reši pred razpadom (ibid.). Tovrstna "doktrina nesmrtnosti . . . se ni spremenila najmanj štiri tisoč let" (ibid.:cxiv).

## Krščanstvo

Če pogledamo v Staro zavezo, vidimo, da sama smrt izvira iz sodbe in kaznovanja. V rajskem vrtu človek še ne pozna ne smrti ne nesmrtnosti; izbira lahko med sadeži z drevesa življenja in tistimi z drevesa znanja. Ker ga kača zavede, si izbere drevo znanja – drevo smrti (Choron 1963: 82). V Stari zavezi ni rešitve pred smrtjo – vsakdo umre. Drugega in drugačnega življenja ni. Ljudje lahko najdejo kvazi-nesmrtnost zgolj skozi svoje otroke. Šele v Novi zavezi prično verniki govoriti o zmagi nad smrtjo, ki naj bi jo dosegli v času poslednjega sodnega dne, ko naj bi se odprli grobovi in ko naj bi vsakdo stopil pred Božjega sina, da bi ga ta sodil. Ne smemo spregledati pomembnega dejstva,

<sup>1</sup> Boginja Maat je bila Rajeva hčerka. Maat je pomenilo odkrit, resničen, "zaresen", pristen, pošten, pokončen, pravi, neomajen (Budge 1967:cxix). V resnici naj bi obstajali dve boginji Maat, ena naj bi bila posebljanje fizičnega zakona, druga moralne pravičnosti.

<sup>2</sup> Egipčani niso imeli srca le za bistven telesni organ, pač pa tudi za središče zavesti, za "boga", ki naj bi bil v vsaki osebi. Ljudje so se bali dveh stvari: da jim je lahko srce odvzeto ter da lahko deluje kot neodvisna priča proti njim na sodnih procesih po smrti (Brandon 1967:37, 38-39).

da gre pri tem za vstajenje telesa, in ne za nesmrtnost duše; duša je namreč poganski koncept, in ne krščanski (ibid.:84).

Zdi se, da v zgodnjih letih krščanstva niti sodba niti prekletstvo posameznika nista obstajala, prav tako pa ni bilo individualne odgovornosti. Vsi mrtvi, ki so pripadali Cerkvi, naj bi spali vse do trenutka Kristusove velike vrnitve ob koncu sveta, ko naj bi se – v nasprotju s tistimi, ki niso bili člani Cerkve – prebudili v raj.

V enajstem in dvanajstem stoletju so drobna prilagajanja počasi spreminjala človekov pogled na svet, vključno z njihovimi izkušnjami in navadami. Človekova razmišljanja in navade so se počasi odmikale od kolektivne predstave o človekovi usodi, od sprejemanja smrti z ravno pravšnjo količino dostojanstva in brez kakršnekoli misli o njenem povelečevanju ali možnosti, da ji človek pobegne, ter od tiste socializacije, ki ni ločevala človeka od narave. Nov poudarek na individualnosti vsake osebe je pomenil, da je – čeprav je bila smrt kolektiven obred, ker ji pač nihče ne more pobegniti –, sodba postala svojstvena vsakemu posamezniku. Vsakogar naj bi sodili, posamezne duše naj bi dali na tehtnico, dobra in slaba dela ločili med sabo ter na koncu ločili še pravične od prekletih. “Varnost kolektivnega obreda” se je soočila z “bojaznijo pred osebnim zasliševanjem” (Aries 1974:37). Poslednjo sodbo ob koncu sveta je zamenjal zaključni test ob koncu vsakega posameznega življenja. V trenutku smrti naj bi se – to mišljenje se je v štirinajstem in petnajstem stoletju le počasi prikradlo v zavest – celotno življenje kot preblisk pojavilo pred očmi umirajočega (ibid.:38). Individualizacija smrti je s seboj prinesla še druge posledice: zanimanje za fizično razpadanje, posebljanje grobov in – tako kot v starem Rimu nekaj stoletij prej – ponoven pojav pogrebnihi napisov. “Od zgodnjega srednjega veka je zahodni človek pričel gledati sam nase skozi svojo lastno smrt: odkril je *la mort de soi*, svojo lastno smrt” in kasneje, v začetku osemnajstega stoletja, “*la mort de toi*, smrt druge osebe” (Aries 1974:52, 56).

## Budizem

V hindujski in budistični konceptualizaciji človekove eksistence sodbe nimajo za zadnje dejanje po smrti, temveč jo vidijo kot nenehen proces skozi nešteta življenja, nekatera že minula in druga še v prihajanju (Brandon 1967: x, 165). Življenje je bilo za Budo čisto trpljenje; zaradi reinkarnacije so bili rojstvo, bolezen, smrt in ponovno rojstvo – v bistvu prav vse – samo trpljenje. Zato je Buda pogledal vase, da bi našel pot, na kateri bi spoznal način, ki bi mu omogočil, da preseže oboje: tako življenje kot tudi smrt. Našel je pot, in ko je premagal svoja hrepenenja, poželenja in lakomnosti, svoja sovraštva, pohotnosti in ljubosumja, je postal razsvetljen. Medtem ko Kristus obljublja rojstvo, ki mu smrt ne bo več sledila, pa Buda obljublja tisto smrt, po kateri ne bo več ponovnega rojstva niti ponovne smrti (Landberg 1966:198). Tako v hinduizmu kot v budizmu je zakon *karme* tisti, ki določa “usodo posameznika po smrti za obdobje pred njegovo inkarnacijo ter hkrati povzroči to inkarnacijo in pogojuje njeno obliko” (Brandon 1967:175). Budizem, v nasprotju s krščanstvom, ne stremi k nesmrtnosti, temveč išče poti, da bi jo presegel.

*Hinduizem, budizem*

- življenje se ponavlja na tem svetu, neskončen niz življenj
- končno razsvetljenje – *nirvana*
- ni božanstva ali najvišjega boga, temveč neoseben proces – *karma*
- sodba je stalen proces; stalne reinkarnacije
- čas in življenje sta zamišljena ciklično

*Judaizem, Egipt, krščanstvo, islam, zoroastrizem*

- življenje je enkratno, v tem svetu se ne ponavlja
- končna sodba, ki ji sledi večna posmrtna eksistenca
- posameznika sodi vrhovno božanstvo, bog
- sodba ob smrti in poslednja sodba
- čas in življenje sta zamišljena linearno

299

Morda je najbolje, če si glavne razlike med hindujsko-budističnimi pogledi in tistimi, ki prevladujejo pri drugih religijah, pogledamo kar na tabeli.

Seveda obstaja več različnih budističnih tradicij. Medtem ko na primer mnogi teravada budisti iz Šri Lanke in Indokine verujejo v "takojšnje ponovno rojstvo" po smrti, vajrayana budisti, še posebej tisti, ki živijo v Tibetu in pa v odmaknjem himalajskem Ladakhu, svojim umirajočim in umrlim berejo navodila (opisana v *Tibetanski knjigi mrtvih*, Evans-Wentz 1960[1927]) in jih vodijo skozi vmesno obdobje, ki ga imenujejo *bardö* (prehodno stanje). To obdobje med smrtjo in ponovnim rojstvom traja tja do devetinsirideset dni (Gielen 1997:75). Medtem ko teravada budisti poudarjajo, da je odrešitev odvisna predvsem od osebnih nepopustljivih poskusov, duhovnih navad in mnogih let meditacije, tibetanski budisti in tisti iz Ladakha (vajrayana budizem) poudarjajo ceremonije in iniciacijske obrede) zagovarjajo mnenje, da so molitve ljubljenih in pa spretno vodstvo njihovega lame enako pomembni (ibid.:90). Po drugi strani pa pripadniki nekaterih sekt v vzhodni Aziji verjamejo, da človekove zadnje misli pred smrtjo določijo njegovo nadaljnjo usodo. Če se ljudje v trenutku smrti popolnoma zaupajo Budi Amitabi, se bodo ponovno rodili v zahodnem raju ne glede na njihove pregrehe za časa življenja (ibid.).

Pomembno je, da so sodni prizori v egipčanski knjigi mrtvih podobni tovrstnim prizorom v Tibetanski knjigi mrtvih. Kralj resnice Dharma-Raja (ki ga teravada budisti kličejo Yama-Raja), ki nastopa kot kralj in sodnik mrtvih v tibetanski različici, se ujema z Ozirisom v egipčanski (Evans-Wentz 1960:35). V obeh razlagah poznajo simbolično tehtanje. Pred Dharma-Rajo se beli kamenčki merijo s črnimi – belo predstavlja dobra in črno slaba dejanja. "V egipčanski sodni sceni nastopa opičjeglavni Thoth (redkeje štokrljeglavni), bog modrosti, ki nadzira tehtanje; v tibetanski sodni sceni nastopa opičjeglavni Shinje; v obeh prizorih najdemo poroto božanstev, od katerih imajo eni živalske in drugi človeške glave" (ibid.:36). Spočetniki zla morajo trpeti *karmične* posledice v peklenem svetu očiščenja. Tipične kazni – od katerih pa nobena ne traja večno – so prikazane na samostanski poslikavi tibetanskega sodnega prizora, ki ima kljub temu, da je bila narejena leta 1919, svoj izvor v starih freskah (v tako imenovanem "kolesu življenja"), ki so jih našli v templjih na tem območju.

Za mnoge svetovne kulture in družbe majhnega obsega velja, da duhovi tistih pokojnikov, ki so nedavno umrli, še naprej komunicirajo z živimi in se vmešavajo v njihova življenja. Odnos med umrlimi in živimi je nenehen proces, ki je izredno pomemben za ohranitev reda in morale v določeni družbi. Primer iz vasi Ambonwari iz province Vzhodni Sepik na Papui Novi Gvineji, kjer sem opravljal dolgotrajno terensko delo, nam to nazorno pokaže.

## Smrt v Ambonwariju – študija primera

Ambonwari je največja karawarijsko govoreča vasica v provinci Vzhodni Sepik na Papui Novi Gvineji. Ambonwarijska kultura si z drugimi sepiškimi kulturami, kot so na primer Iatmul, Chambri in Yimas, deli mnoge skupne elemente. Karawarijsčina je jezik, ki pripada družini spodnjega Sepika; ta je del večje skupine tako imenovanih papuanskih jezikov (Foley 1986). V vasi je dvanajst totemskih klanov in petintrideset patri-linearne rodov. Način bivanja je patri-virilokalen. Največ smrti v vasi nastopi zaradi malarije in uvoženih boleznih dihalnih poti: tuberkuloze, pljučnice, influence. Čeprav je v vasi bolnišnična postaja in čeprav bolni včasih obiščejo bolnici v Angoramu in Wewaku, se ljudje v veliki meri zanašajo na zdravljenja dveh vaških zdravilcev, ki si s sovaščani delita skupno razumevanje sveta in kozmologijo.

Smrt pri Ambonwarijcih ne pomeni konec bivanja; raje pomeni nov način bivanja, medtem ko sama bit ostane nespremenjena, ena in ista. To je tisti način bivanja, kjer nekdo še naprej potrebuje sorodnike, hrano, bivališče, oblačila, okrasje, hiše moških, predmete, ki jih uporablja, in tako naprej. Podobno je razmišljal Ernst Cassirer, ko je govoril o začetkih človekove kulture. Zapisal je, da je smrtnost tista, ki jo je treba dokazati, in ne nesmrtnost (1965[1955]:37).

V nadaljevanju bom predstavil primer boleznih in smrti osebe, ki mi je bila v Ambonwariju najbližja: mojega "brata" iz rodu Kumbranggawimari iz klana Rajske ptice. Novica o njegovi smrti avgusta 1998 me je močno pretresla.

Bil je večer prvega avgusta 1997. Z mojim vaškim "bratom" Tonijem Simiwarijo Andiyapijem, njegovim približno 18 let starim sinom Jackom Makanom, Jackovim prijateljem Terrencom in mojim prijateljem Julianom Kapyamarijem smo sedeli v moji novi koči, ki jo je v času moje petletne odsotnosti zgradil (iz dobro ohranjenih stebrov, lubja in listov, ki so ostali od moje predhodne hiše) in uporabljal Jack. Sproščeno smo se spominjali tistega obdobja, ko sem bil zadnjič v vasi, in razglabljali o tem, kaj vse se je od takrat zgodilo. Nenadoma je v kočo priletel majhen netopir. Zaletel se je v Tonija in hitro, kot je prišel, izginil skozi odprtino pod streho. Pogovarjali smo se do enajstih, potem pa odšli spat. S Tonijem sva odšla v njegovo družinsko hišo, Julian je odšel v svojo, Jack in Terrence pa sta ostala v moji. Tonijeva žena je spala z otroki – vključno s hčerama, ki sta imeli vsaka svojega dojenčka – ob zadnji hišni steni, midva s Tonijem pa sva imela najini mreži proti komarjem razpeti ob vhodu. Komaj sem zaprl oči, ko sem zaslišal najprej čudno pokašljevanje, potem pa še počasno, votlo tuljenje, ki je prihajalo iz gozda z južne strani vasi. Nekaj trenutkov kasneje se je podobno tuljenje zaslišalo še na drugi strani vasi. Ker tovrstnega glasu še nikdar nisem slišal, sem vprašal

Tonija, kaj je to. Najprej ni odgovoril, po kratki tišini pa je vendarle tiho dejal: "To so velike kače, udavi. Jutri ti bom povedal, kaj vse to pomeni". Vedel sem, da je bilo to slabo znamenje, pokazatelj, da lahko nekdo umre. Nismo še dobro zaspali, ko me je prebudilo Tonijevo stokanje. Sklonjen je sedel ob ognju. Vsakih pet minut je zapustil koč. Vsakokrat se je vrnil šibkejši in bolj zaskrbljen. Povedal mi je, da ima neustavljivo diarejo. Bil je prepričan, da izgublja kri. Šel sem za njim, da bi se sam prepričal o resnosti njegove bolezni, a nisem odkril ničesar. Toni je govoril o netopirju – slabem duhu –, ki ga je zadel, o dveh udavih – slabih duhovih, ki naj bi se pogovarjali o njem – in veliki možnosti, da bo umrl. Čeprav je sedel tako blizu ognja, da si je skoraj opeknel noge, se je še vedno tresel. Zgodaj zjutraj sem ga odnesel v hišo moških. Ponovno sem pregledal njegovo tekoče blato in videl, da gre iz njega sama voda. O krvi ni bilo ne duha ne sluha. Ob zori je prišel vaški zdravilec Tobija in iz Tonijevega telesa izvlekel dve ptičji koščici. Šele po mojem vztrajnem nagovarjanju je vaški bolničar prinesel tablete proti diareji. Toni je legel in zaspal.

Sedeli smo okoli ognja v hiši moških in razglabljali o tem, zakaj je Toni nenadoma zbolel. Nekateri možje so mislili, da bi morali urediti prepir s sosednjimi Imanmeriji in jim vrniti motor, ki so jim ga po prepiru sneli s čolna in ga skrili v svoji vasi. Tobija je videl glavni razlog za Tonijevo bolezen v dogodkih iz preteklih dni, ko je Tony pretepel ženo in hčerke. Elias pa mi je naštel še druge vzroke, ki naj bi bili po njegovem odločilni za Tonijevo bolezen: čeprav Toni ni mogel podedovati vloge "očeta svojega klana", pa se je po mnenju mnogih ves čas obnašal, kot da mu ta vloga pripada. Gospodaril je celo z motorjem, ki je v resnici pripadal celotnemu klanu. Elias je dodal, da ima Toni na grbi mnoge pregrehe, med drugim tudi to, da nobena izmed njegovih hčera ni poročena, čeprav sta obe pred kratkim rodili. To pa seveda ni bilo združljivo z vaško moralo in je naletelo na obrekovanja. Nekateri vaščani so menili, da Toni še vedno objokuje smrt svojega najmlajšega sina, ki naj bi ga sedaj vabil k sebi v svet duhov. Možje iz klana Rajske ptice so postali jezni na Konggunyapana, glavnega duha-krokodila, češ da Tonija slabo varuje. Glavni razlog za Tonijevo bolezen – vsaj večina ljudi je tako mislila – pa je bilo prešuštvo, ki so ga nedolgo tega odkrili med Tonijem in Rito, Avgustovo ženo. Ta odnos sta ljubimca skrivala več desetletij, o njem pa se je razvedelo šele pred nedavnim, ko je Rita resno zbolela. Ker se je ustrašila, da bo umrla, je svoje prešuštvo priznala. Novica o tem prepovedanem odnosu je vas zadela kot bomba.

Devetnajstega avgusta 1998 je Toni Simiwaria Andiyapi nenadoma umrl. To se je zgodilo le nekaj dni pred tem, ko sta vas obiskala dva moja slovenska znanca. Čeprav ne vem, kaj so v vasi govorili po Tonijevi smrti, in čeprav ne vem, ali so opravili posmrtno divinacijo, si lahko predstavljam opravljanje, ki je sledilo njegovi smrti, in vse tiste vzroke, ki so se vaščanom zdeli kar najbolj verjetni. Nekatere najpomembnejše sem omenil že prej.

Glavni pokazatelj bolezni v vasi Ambonwari je sprememba v človekovih vsakdanjih navadah, v tem, da njegov ali njen *kay* (način, običaj, navada) ni tak, kot bi moral biti. Oseba diha drugače kot običajno, njena koža je bodisi mrzla bodisi vroča, tak človek več časa spi in ne opravlja svojih vsakdanjih dejavnosti. Ljudje pravijo, da je taka oseba bolna, da je "skupaj z boleznijo" (*min mari ngandikin*), da jo "bolezen drži" (*min*



*mari yan sarinyan*). Tako kot mnogi drugi jeziki tudi karawarijščina nima glagola "imeti". Ž držanjem in "uporabo" osebe postaneta bolezen in oseba eno, delita si isti *kay*, isto bit, isto telo (glej Telban 1998 a, b). Da bi se mu stanje izboljšalo, mora bolnik odstraniti (odrezati) bolezen kot del njegove biti. Le na ta način si bo oseba povrnila svoj predhodni *kay* (način življenja). Da pa bi to dosegel, ni dovolj le jemanje zdravil (ljudje pravijo, da že niso bili resno bolni, če so ta delovala), temveč je treba pogledati v preteklost in obravnavati tista dejanja in tiste vzroke, ki so krivi za bolezen. Ljudje pravijo, da so zdravljenja v zdravstvenih centrih in bolnišnicah sicer učinkovita, žal pa ne morejo pomagati Ambonwarijcem takrat, ko je bolezen najhujša, ko imajo tako imenovano "tradicionalno bolezen" (bolezen, katere vir so njihove šege), ker zdravniki v bolnišnicah ne delijo z njimi njihove kozmologije, njihovega življenjskega sveta, ki ga napolnjujejo tako živi kot mrtvi. Šele tedaj, ko se s spoznanjem vzrokov in krivcev ter s kompenzacijo tistih, ki so bili oškodovani, razrešijo pretekli prekrški, ima bolni možnost, da se bo njegov *kay* povrnil v normalno stanje in da bo bolezen izginila.

Pri obredih zdravljenja poskuša zdravilec najti vzroke bolezni (tako da se pogovarja z duhovi in z najbližjimi sorodniki) in odstraniti tiste predmete (kosti, školjke, kamne, želje), ki predstavljajo utelešenje bolezni. Zdravilec poskuša povrniti bolnikov *kay* v predhodno, zdravo stanje. Ker pa *kay* vsakega posameznika vključuje različne skupinske *kay*-e in *kay*-e raznih posameznikov, s katerimi je bolni pogosto v stiku, postane bolezen kolektivni problem (določene družine, rodu ali klana), ki vključuje pretekle in sedanje odnose, vključno tiste z njihovimi najbližjimi duhovi. Kar je najbolj očitno pri teh zdravilčevih dejanjih, je, da ga postavijo v vlogo začasnega vmesnega člana med živimi in pa tistimi duhovi, ki so z živimi že bili v neki povezavi. Da bi nekdo postal zdravilec, mora biti sposoben priti v stik ne le z duhovi umrlih, temveč tudi s klanskimi duhovi-krokodili, duhovi-bobni in drugimi duhovi divjine, ki pripadajo bolnikovemu klanu ali pa žive na njegovi zemlji. Duhovi nadzorujejo zdravilčeva dejanja in ga vodijo na njegovih zdravilnih poteh. Vaškega zdravilca Tobija sem večkrat povprašal o tem, kako lahko sliši glasove duhov. Odgovoril je: "Ravno tako kot sedaj tebe. Ti mi govoriš in jaz te slišim. Duh mi govori naravnost v uho in jaz ga slišim." Še vedno rado veden sem ga vprašal, če ni bolj res, da se glas duha preprosto pojavi v njegovi glavi? Odgovoril je:

"Ne. Glas pride naravnost v moje uho. Ko žvečim ingver, se mi oči obrnejo in moja ušesa se zablokirajo. Ne morem več razumeti, kaj govore ljudje okoli mene. Slišim le še duhove. Tako vsakemu rečem: "Bodi že tiho. Rad bi slišal, kaj mi hočejo duhovi povedati. Zakaj so jezni?" Njihov odgovor bo prišel naravnost v moje uho. Prisotnim povem, da vsi ti odgovori niso nastali v moji glavi, temveč da sem slišal glas duha. Tako bom zvedel, kateri je glavni razlog za slabo počutje bolnega in o tem povprašal otrokovega očeta, ali pa moža, katerega žena je bolna, ali pa njo, če je njen mož bolan. Povedal jim bom, kaj duhovi hočejo, kdaj in kako lahko poravnajo "dolgove". Če me ne poslušajo, lahko bolni umre."

Tisti, ki so grešili, se morajo "odrezati" od dejavnosti, ki je bolezen povzročila. To naredi s plačilom kompenzacije tistemu, ki so ga prizadeli, z osamitvijo, z umivanjem, z darovanjem hrane duhovom v hiši moških in tako naprej. Ambonwarijci pogosto pou-

darjajo, da morajo pravilno paziti na svojo kožo in pravilno opravljati svoja dela. Iz dosedanjih spoznanj lahko potegnemo nekaj sklepov. Zdravega človeka odlikujejo tako vidno zdrava koža kot njegova dejanja, ki so običajna tako zanj kot za druge; nasprotno pa bolnega človeka spoznamo po nezdravi koži in neobičajni dejavnosti, vključno s pasivnostjo. Zatorej se zdravilec v zdravilnem obredu posveti trem bistvenim stvarim: prvič, ekstrakciji sprva nevidnih kamnov, školjk, zob, kosti in trnov izpod nezdrave kože; drugič, povrnitvi *kay*-a v predhodno stanje tako, da odkrije prekrške, ki so bolezen povzročili; in tretjič, ureditvi odnosa med živimi in tistimi duhovi (družinskimi, rodovnimi, klanskimi), ki si z bolnikom delijo kolektivno identiteto.

## Razumevanje ambonwarijskih pogledov na umiranje in smrt

303

V nadaljevanju bom orisal štiri pomembne vidike, ki pripomorejo k boljšemu razumevanju ambonwarijskih pogledov na umiranje in smrt: a) poistovetenje smrti z boleznijo in starostjo (vsaka od njih je proces, v katerem duhovi nastopajo kot sodniki živih); b) telo je treba razumeti skozi njegove navade, ki ga povezujejo z drugimi telesi; c) smrt zadeva skupnost; d) bit-k-moji-smrti naj bi bila značilna za krščanski zahodni svet, medtem ko je bit-k-skupnemu-začetku ilustrativna za ambonwarijsko kozmologijo.

Najprej, približevanje smrti moramo razumeti v smislu približevanja starosti ali stanja "biti bolan". Smrt ali umiranje v Ambonwariju je prej neka trajajoča pozicija kot pa dogodek ali trenutek (cf. Hertz 1960[1909]:28; Rivers 1912:405). Zaradi tega moramo smrt v Ambonwariju razumeti kot proces, v katerem naj bi "paznik" umrlega (*angndar kwanar*) prevzel novo breztelesno obliko duha, ki bi ga lahko še bolje okarakterizirali, če bi ga označili za brezmesnega in brezkožnega ("same kosti") duha (*wundumbunar*, če je moški in *wunduma*, če je ženska), ki ostane "povezan" s svojimi živečimi sorodniki. Vse, kar duh stori, vpliva na ljudi in vse, kar naredijo ljudje, duha bodisi zadovolji ali pa razjezi. Duhovi nedavno umrlih – običajno so to moški, najpogosteje pokojni oče ali brat – vidijo tudi najbolj prikrite dogodke, varujejo rodovne, klanske in vaške zakone in moralo ter kaznujejo krivce, njihove partnerje in otroke. Vaški duhovi ne ustvarjajo zakonov, temveč sodijo. Zakon so ustvarili in sprejeli živi za žive. Toda duhovi – v kozmologiji Ambonwarijcev – so vedno prisotni kot tisti sodniki in izvrševalci, ki uveljavljajo zakon in moralo, ki temeljita na modrosti starcev in vaških prednikov. Mrtvi, vključno s tistimi, ki so živi, a zelo stari, postanejo sodniki in prezgodnja smrt postane kazen.

Drugič, če hočemo razumeti ambonwarijska stališča o smrti, moramo razumeti njihova stališča o telesu. Ambonwarijci razumejo svoje telo, za katerega nimajo besede v svojem jeziku, skozi njegovi dve vidni značilnosti: kožo in dejavnostjo. Telo je določeno s *kay*-em (načinom delovanja) in je podaljšano na predmete, ki jih človek uporablja pri posameznih dejavnostih (Telban 1998a:58). Na primer "veslo in oseba postaneta eno v smislu *kay*-a, načinu veslanja kanuja" (ibid.:59). Na kratko bi lahko rekli, da obstaja tesna povezava med živečim telesom neke osebe (in ne le vidno kožo) in hrano, ki jo ta oseba zaužije, predmeti, ki jih uporablja, navadami in načini, na katere opravlja določene dejavnosti, ljudmi, s katerimi komunicira in se jih dotika, ter načini, na kate-

re so ti kontakti realizirani. Ker je način, na katerega se določeno dejanje izvede, zelo pomemben, je treba upoštevati vpliv enega na drugega. Ta konceptualizacija sveta priskrbi okvir za različne tabuje; na primer, moški ne gre zjutraj na lov, če je noč pred tem spal s svojo ženo (ibid.:60). Ustrezno vzporednico lahko potegnemo s fenomenologijo Jeana-Paula Sartra, ki je dejal: "Telo je celota pomembnih odnosov do sveta" (1956:452; glej tudi Telban 1998a:67 op.3).

Tretjič, smrt v Ambonwariju in z njo povezana sodba tistih, ki so odgovorni zanjo, vključno s pokojnikom, je stvar skupnosti, in zadeva družino, rod, klan in vas. Smrt ni nekaj, kar bi zadevalo zdravnike ali bolnišnico, ne glede na to, da nekdo v njej umre. Ne gre za vprašanje biomedicinskega vzroka in z njim povezane utemeljitve: influenza, pljučnica, malarija, tuberkuloza, meningitis, in tako naprej. Raje se postavlja staro vprašanje: "Zakaj on ali ona?", "Zakaj jaz?"; postavlja se vprašanje "Kako živimo?", "Kaj smo storili narobe?", "Čigavi načini (čigave slabe navade) so povzročili, da je nekdo umrl?" Gre za vprašanja "načina vasi" (*innggan kay*), "načina starcev/prednikov" (*kupambn kay*) in mnogih *kay*-ev (načinov, navad, običajev, zakonov) posameznih vaščanov (Telban 1998 a,b). Ker se *kay* (navade, načini) vsakega posameznika prepleta z različnimi kolektivnimi *kay*-i (navade, načini), postaneta bolezen in smrt tudi kolektivni zadevi (gospodinjstva in rodu, na primer), ki vključujeta preteklo, sedanje in celo predvidene in pričakovane prihodnje odnose, tudi tiste, ki jih imajo s svojimi domačimi duhovi (Telban 1998a:61).

Četrto, bit-k-(moji ali tvoji)-smrti ima v krščanstvu svoj izvor v linearni konceptualizaciji sveta in poudarku na individuumu. Bit-k-(skupnemu)-začetku v Ambonwariju ima svoj izvor v ciklični oziroma regenerativni konceptualizaciji sveta s poudarkom na kozmogoniji pri vseh pomembnejših obredih in v spoznanju, da je vsak individuum družbeno povezan in odvisen od drugih.

Ker smrt znotraj ambonwarijskega pogleda na svet ni trenuten pojav, ampak proces, v katerem gre za stalno interakcijo med živimi in mrtvimi, ker "telo" ni nikdar telo osamljenega posameznika, temveč je podaljšano in prepleteno z drugimi sorodnimi "telesi", ker smrt v Ambonwariju vedno zadeva skupnost in ni *nikoli* zasebna zadeva, je iskanje in sodba tistih, ki so odgovorni za človekovo bolezen in smrt, prav tako trajajoče in spreminjajoče se stanje skupnosti in ni nikdar trenutna, zasebna zadeva.

Kljub temu da smrt zadeva celotno skupnost, pa je hkrati edinstven proces v *kay*-u (bit, eksistenca) vsakega posameznika. Tako kot človek ne postane zavedajoča se ambonwarijska oseba zgolj z rojstvom, temveč mora najprej skozi otroštvo, pa potem skozi iniciacijo, pa poroko, pa starševstvo, da postane taka oseba, prav tako človek zgolj s smrtjo in prečkanjem "mostu" na breg mrtvih ne postane kar avtomatično del prednikov. Skozi otroštvo je oseba le podaljšek svojih staršev in se le postopoma oblikuje v individualno družbeno bitje (Telban 1997, 1998 a,b). Na podoben način pokojnik še vedno obstaja, vendar pa zgolj kot podaljšek živih. Le postopoma se ti umrli posamezniki pridružijo antropomorfnim masi ambonwarijskih prednikov. Prav tako kot mora otrok pretrgati vez s svojimi starši (a še vedno ostane njihov otrok), morajo mrtvi pretrgati svoje vezi z živimi (in *vice versa*) in hkrati z njimi ohraniti tesen kozmološki stik.

Med vaškimi prepiri ali tedaj, ko se Ambonwarijci prerekajo z ljudmi iz drugih vasi, človek pogosto sliši moške, ki radi povedo, da jih umiranje ne skrbi, ker vedo, da jih bodo njihovi bratje, očetje in mamini bratje maščevali. Zdi se, da sta celovitost in bogastvo mreže družbenih odnosov – preteklih, sedanjih in tistih, ki jih pričakujejo v prihodnosti – tista, ki ne ustvarjata le posameznikovega življenja, temveč tudi njegovo smrt. Ljudi, ki nimajo veliko sorodnikov, in tiste, katerih rodovi nimajo moških potomcev, bolj skrbi osamljenost v življenju in smrti kot pa sama smrt.

Tako kot mnogi drugi so tudi Ambonwarijci prepričani, da potem ko oseba umre, njen ali njegov duh ohrani njeno ali njegovo osebnost. Posamezniki se ne skrčijo v ničnost. Še več, pokojnim ni treba dokazovati svoje nedolžnosti ali priznati pregrešna dejanja. Čisto mirno lahko še naprej ostanejo zlobni in slabi. Nihče jih ne bo sodil, še posebej ne v smislu kakršnekoli poslednje sodbe, ki bi jim določila, kako bodo preživeli preostanek svoje eksistence. Poleg tega pa, kot pravijo Ambonwarijci, človek ne more kar tako zamenjati svoje kože. Če je nekdo slab, še ne pomeni, da njegova slabost ni uporabna in da je drugi vaščani ne občudujejo. Človekova slabost je na koncu lahko celo dobra (glej Harrison 1993:120-1). Zakaj bi pokojnika sploh sodili, ko pa ne more poplačati – v dobrinah in denarju – tistih, ki jih je prizadel? Ambonwarijci so dovolj sociocentrični in egocentrični, da sodijo živim, ki so sposobni svoje prekršitve tudi poplačati. Na ta način se družbeni in moralni red vedno na novo ustvarja.

Laži, opravljanje in kraje so stalno na dnevnem redu in nihče se jim ne more izogniti. Zato takrat, ko nekoga kljub nedolžnosti obsodijo, nihče – razen seveda najbližjih sorodnikov obtoženega – ne meni, da so mu storili grozno krivico. Ljudje sploh ne vidijo, da je oseba nedolžna. Pravijo, da je obtoženi v preteklosti storil druga krivična dejanja. Ker pa takrat niso imeli dokazov niti niso sklicali vaškega sodišča, je obtoženi pobegnil kazni. Ne glede na človekovo nedolžnost, njegova preteklost – in sploh ne dogodek, zaradi katerega mu sodijo – mnogim upraviči trenutno kaznovanje. Nihče ne misli, da bi se ljudje morali strinjati glede grešnikove krivde. Ko je človek bolan, ali še slabše, ko umre, ljudje špekulirajo o možnih vzrokih. Pogosto se zgodi, da imajo različne skupine in različni segmenti ambonwarijske skupnosti tudi različne poglede na človekovo krivdo in vzroke za bolezen ali smrt. Trenutni sporazum lahko za nekaj časa potlači vse te različne resnice, ki pa potem ponovno privrejo na dan kot možni vzroki pri novih prepirih, boleznih in smrtih. Končna resnica je redko ena sama.

## Sklep: špekulacija o modernizaciji

V dosedanem razglabljanju lahko opazimo občutne razlike med krščanstvom in ambonwarijsko kozmologijo: prvič, Ambonwarijci menijo, da niso samo njihove lastne zablode in pregrehe tiste, ki jim lahko škodijo, pač pa je lahko nekdo drug tisti krivec, ki s svojim dejanjem prizadene nedolžnega sorodnika, pogosto otroka, ter povzroči njegovo bolezen ali smrt; drugič, tisti Ambonwarijci, ki so resno bolni, in tisti, ki umirajo, običajno priznajo svoje grehe, pa ne zato, da bi bili rešeni v posmrtnem življenju, temveč zato, da bi bili – skupaj s svojimi partnerji in otroki – rešeni v tem življenju. Z drugimi besedami, njihovo priznanje in njihova pripravljenost, da kompenzirajo vse tiste, ki so jim storili

krivico, kaže na njihovo željo po preživetju. Njihovi sodniki so njihovi družabniki, ljudje in duhovi (duhovi umrlih in pomembni rodovni, klanski in vaški duhovi), in ne neko višje božanstvo. Vsaka smrt – zaradi spremljajočih priznanj, divinacije in sodbe – reorganizira družbene odnose med živimi. Namen vsega tega ni, da bi umrlemu priskrbeli boljše mesto v nekem “drugem svetu”, pač pa, da bi obnovili – za nekatere na boljše, za druge na slabše – življenjske razmere tistih, ki preživijo, ter zagotovili, da ne bo še kdo od sorodnikov umrl. V ambonwarijski kozmologiji ni posmrtnih sodbe dobrih in slabih dejanj, v njej ni raja niti pekla, ni pričakovanja poslednje sodbe niti odrešitve. Celotna ambonwarijska kozmologija, ne glede na vse spremembe, ki se stalno dogajajo, temelji na želji po ohranitvi “ambonwarijskosti”, tako v smislu “načina vasi” kot tudi “načina starcev/prednikov”. Koncept biti-k-skupnemu-začetku, ki ga najbolj očitno prepoznamo v kozmogonskem karakterju iniciacijskih obredov, prežema ambonwarijsko kozmologijo, v kateri življenje in smrt sobivata kot dva načina iste eksistence.

Ali je te poglede res mogoče tako jasno razmejiti, kot sem jih predstavil? Krščanstvo na sepiškem območju obstaja več kot sto let, tako da nihče ne bi bil presenečen, če bi nekakšna mešanica ambonwarijske kozmologije in papuanovogvinejske različice ene od glavnih verskih usmeritev ubrala neko svojo smer. Med mojim zadnjim bivanjem v vasi med julijem in septembrom 1997 so me vaščani pogosto spraševali o možnostih konca sveta, o vsemogočih govoricah in različnih prerokih ter o preroškem letu 2000. Pred nekaj leti so Ambonwarijci zgradili novo cerkev, večjo in bolj spektakularno od njihove zadnje glavne hiše moških, Yanbonman. Neke vrste karizmatično glosarično krščanstvo je zajelo vas – ne pa drugih karawarijskih vasi – in danes je v njej precej takih, ki slišijo glas Boga in v transu podobnem stanju govore v čudnih, nerazumljivih jezikih.<sup>3</sup> In potem so tu še drugi, moški in ženske, ki trdijo, da jih razumejo in prevajajo njihov čudni jezik v karawarijsčino in melanezijski tok pisin.

Ker vsakdo ve, kako so se tako imenovani kargo kulti pojavili in ponovno pojavljali v Novi Gvineji in Melaneziji od konca prejšnjega stoletja, si lahko le predstavljamo, kako zlahka bi Ambonwarijci združili svoje lastne “tradicionalne” poglede s svojo različico krščanstva. Na ta način bi lahko misel, ki jo vodi bit-k-skupnemu-začetku, zamenjala misel, v kateri bi prevladovala bit-k-skupnemu-koncu/smrti, kar za Ambonwarijce niti ne bi bil tako neznan pojem. Njihova mitologija namreč govori o peščici preživelih iz dveh nekdanjih vasic, ki sta nekoč ležali nedaleč stran po reki navzgor. Vasi sta bili popolnoma uničeni, ker je neki mož prelomil več resnih tabujev in ženskam in otrokom izdal skrivnosti iz hiše moških. Peščico preživelih so Ambonwarijci sprejeli medse in ti so kasneje oblikovali zadnja dva ambonwarijska klana. Zgodbe o skupni preteklosti pa niso nikdar pozabili. V takih in podobnih primerih ni samo sodba živih tista, ki je prisotna v ambonwarijski kozmologiji, pač pa se njihov pogled na svet že spogleduje s predstavo o sodbi umrlih, še bolj pa z idejo o poslednji sodbi, ki lahko Ambonwarijce v prihajajočih letih še bolj obsede.

<sup>3</sup> V izvrstnem globalnem pregledu milenarističnih gibanj ter bojzani in upanj, ki spremljajo apokaliptična pričakovanja skozi zgodovino zahodne družbe, Thompson pravi: “Sodobni pentekostalizem, katerega pripadniki izkusijo ekstatični krst duha, ki ga pogosto spremlja govorjenje v različnih jezikih, je gonilna sila pri osupljivem napredovanju protestantizma v Latinski Ameriki in Tretjem svetu . . . Karizmatiki . . . verjamejo, da so *karizmata* – darila svetega duha, podeljena učencem ob Pentekostu, kot na primer govorjenje v različnih jezikih – dostopna modernemu človeku” (Thompson 1997: 122, 143).

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# DEATH AND THE JUDGEMENT OF THE LIVING IN A PAPUA NEW GUINEAN COMMUNITY\*

Borut Telban

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308

**Key Words:** *dying, judgement of the dead, dead as punishment, Ambonwari (Sepik, Papua New Guinea)*

## Introduction

Humans have long since discovered the power of death rituals and the fact that death is not only a problem, but also an opportunity and an occasion – both for furthering social, cultural, and political arrangements and for the existent order to be contested by all those with differing perspectives and interests (Taylor 1989:149). As analysts, we should not focus simply on some apparently permanent rules or practices and examine how they are transgressed or changed; rather, our task is to show how *normal* events – disputes, fights, stealing, adultery, death, and so on – construct, reconstruct and even invent the rules which have to be continually negotiated in the production of the on-going life-world.

This paper is about death and judgement – judgement either of the dead or of the living. A people's view depends on culture, a period in their history, a particular place and a specific community with which we, as analysts, are dealing. In old Egypt (and later in Christianity, which both Jewish and Egyptian eschatologies penetrated), for example, it was an individual whose **morality** (weighing one's heart against a feather in Egyptian underworld, for instance) or **deeds** were judged (Budge 1967[1895]). In Egypt, after a person had died he or she had to address 42 gods and in a special monologue – such as the one from *The papyrus of Ani*, for instance – refute all his or her possible wrongdoings. On the other hand, it was a person's **correct faith** that was and

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\* Fieldwork in Ambonwari village was done in 1990 - 1992, and 1997, totalling twenty months. Part of this paper was presented at the International Symposium "The Ethnological and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Death" held in Ljubljana, 5th - 8th November 1998, and the whole article was read on 23rd November at the Institut für Ethnologie, University of Heidelberg. I thank Bob Tonkinson for his helpful comments and suggestions regarding the improvement of the initial version of this paper.

still is judged in Islam and Zoroastrianism (Brandon 1967:145, 148, 155). Moreover, there are two forms of *post-mortem* judgement, the one immediately after death and the other at the anticipated end of the world, which characterize many world religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Islam, and Christianity.

In Ambonwari (East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea) where people and spirits coexist, and where there is no supreme diety – if we ignore for a while an ongoing process of Christianization – those who die are mourned but seldom judged. Also, as Mimica has argued for the Iqwaye, “there is no death as such, but only a myriad of often contingent ways of dying, of becoming dead and of being after death” (1996:216). People can be conscious of their own dying and can live their lives in expectation of their own death. “But unlike the situation in Western urban cultures, death in the Iqwaye life-world is neither experienced nor ideologized as a radically alien event . . . Death is not an entity that preys upon people and snatches them from life. Rather, it is humans who *live themselves into their deaths through their own or somebody else’s actions*” (ibid.:215,216; italics mine). Dying among the Iqwaye as well as among the Ambonwari is a mode of life; it is a social activity, an intersubjective experience, just as life itself, of which both dying and death are an inseparable part. Death is a punishment, of an individual and of a particular section of a community, and those responsible should be found out, and after a proper compensation and restoration of relationships, a seeming – though illusory – harmony is restored. Later in the article I will present several matters pertaining to Ambonwari understanding of their dying mode of existence and their judgement of those who are found – rightly or wrongly – to be responsible for sickness and death, either of themselves or of their close relatives. But first of all, for the comparative reasons, I am going to outline how the notion of a post-mortem judgement is present in some of the world’s most important religions. It is considered that the earliest evidence of the idea that judgement awaited people after death is found in Egypt. This notion of post-mortem judgement – joining ethics with eschatology – “constitutes the ultimate authentication of the traditional ethic of Western society” (Brandon 1967:ix).

## The Judgement Scene in Ancient Egypt

Already in a remote antiquity the Egyptians gave the name Ra to the sun, as a visible representation of God to whom offerings and sacrifices were made. With Ra’s appearance at the creation, time began. It was only later that the Egyptians “invented the moral conception of the sun, representing the victory of right over wrong and of truth over falsehood” (ibid.:cxi). In other words, it seems that the images of a happy life after death had their origin in the pyramid texts, and that “the doctrine of punishment of the wicked and of the judgement which took place after death is a development characteristic of a later period” (Budge 1967:cvi). Of judgement and of those who failed to secure a life of beatitude with the gods, the pyramid texts say nothing.

A Theban version of the Book of the Dead (or *pert em hru* which has been translated as “manifested in the light” or “coming forth from the day”) was written on papyri in hieroglyphics about 1500 B.C., though early forms of the Book of the Dead have



been in use among the Egyptians from about 4500 B.C. The text proclaimed the resurrection of a spiritual body and the immortality of the soul. "Every chapter and prayer of this version was to be said in the next world, where the words, properly uttered, enabled the deceased to overcome every foe and to attain to the life of the perfected soul which dwelt in a spiritual body in the abode of the blessed" (ibid.:xxx). In Chapter CXXV of the Book of the Dead, the deceased is told the words which should be uttered when arriving at the Hall of Maati or the Hall of Judgement – the hall of double right and truth where a deceased person is purged – where one will see God and where one's heart will be weighed in a balance separating him or her from his or her sins, in the presence of the forty two great gods (ibid.:xi, xxx, xli, cxix).<sup>1</sup> In the ancient Nebseni papyrus the heart is weighed against the dead man himself, while in the Ani papyrus, the heart is weighed against a feather, the symbol of the Truth and the Law, Maat (ibid.:261).<sup>2</sup> The present gods were "the guides and protectors and givers of life and happiness to the deceased in the new life", but, "from the earliest times it is clear that the Egyptians imagined the existence of other powers who offered opposition to the dead, and who are called in many places his 'enemies'" (ibid.:cxxxviii).

The deceased were identified with Osiris, that is, with the sun which has set in the west and then rises again in the east. In a same way, the dead are laid in their tombs on the western bank of the Nile. After they go through the Hall of Judgement, they proceed to the east and begin a new existence (ibid.:247 f.n.2). Osiris, the god of the dead, was fully defined long before the known versions of the pyramid texts were written. In a later period, however, a change occurred: the Egyptians began to attribute to him those characteristics and qualities which were in early dynasties regarded as belonging to Ra or to Ra-Tmu (ibid.:cxiii). Osiris became a symbol of eternal existence and immortality. He became the god of the dead and the god of the living. To this "lord of eternity . . . the deceased appealed to make his flesh to germinate and to save his body from decay" (ibid.). This "doctrine of immortality . . . had remained unchanged for at least four thousand years" (ibid.:cxiv).

## Christianity

If we examine the Old Testament we see that death itself has its origin in judgement and punishment. In the Garden of Eden man appears to be created neither mortal nor immortal; he was given the choice between the fruits of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Misled by the serpent, he chose the tree of knowledge – the tree of death (Choron 1963:82). In the Old Testament there is no escape from death, everyone dies, and there is no other life. People can find a quasi-immortality only through their

<sup>1</sup> Maat, a very ancient goddess, was the daughter of Ra. Maat meant straight, right, true, real, genuine, upright, righteous, just, steadfast (Budge 1967:cxix). There are actually two Maat goddesses, one of whom is perhaps the personification of physical law, the other of moral rectitude.

<sup>2</sup> Egyptians considered the heart not simply a vital organ of the body but a centre of conscience, "the god" which is in every person. People feared both that it might be taken away from them and that it might act as an independent witness against them at their trials after death (Brandon 1967:37, 38-39).

children. It is the New Testament where believers claim victory over death on the Last Day of Judgement, when the graves will be opened and everyone will stand before the Son of God and be judged. We should not overlook an important fact, that “[i]t is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul; this latter is not Christian, but pagan” (ibid.:84).

During the early years of Christianity, no judgement or condemnation of an individual seemed to exist, there was no individual responsibility. All dead who belonged to the Church went to sleep until the day of the Christ’s great return at the end of the world when they – in contrast to those who were not the members of the Church – would awaken in Paradise.

In the eleventh and twelve centuries, subtle modifications gradually altered people’s worldview – their experiences and practices – away from a collective notion of destiny, acceptance of death with just the proper amount of solemnity and no thought of escaping it or glorifying it, and from socialization which did not separate man from nature. A new emphasis on the individuality of each person meant that though death – because no one could escape it – was a collective rite, the judgement became peculiar to each individual. Everyone was going to be judged, the individual souls would be placed on the scale, good and bad deeds separated, and finally, the just and the damned would be separated. “The security of a collective rite” became confronted with “the anxiety of a personal interrogation” (Aries 1974:37). The Last Judgement at the end of the World was displaced by the final test, the judgement at the end of each life, to the precise moment of death, when – apparently, this notion took root slowly throughout fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – “each person’s entire life flashed before his eyes at the moment of death” (ibid.:38). The consequences of the individualization of death had other important implications: an interest in physical decomposition, the personalization of tombs, and – as in Ancient Rome many centuries earlier – the reappearance of funeral inscriptions. “Since the Early Middle Ages Western man has come to see himself in his own death: he has discovered *la mort de soi*, one’s own death” and later, beginning with the eighteenth century, “*la mort de toi*, the death of the other person” (Aries 1974:52, 56).

## Buddhism

In Hindu and Buddhist conceptualizations of human existence, judgement has not been seen as a final act following death but rather as an unceasing process through countless lives, some past and others to come (Brandon 1967: x, 165). For Buddha, life was pure suffering; because of reincarnation birth, illness, death, and rebirth – in fact, everything – was suffering. He looked within himself to find a path which would show him how to overcome both life and death. He found the path and by overcoming his longings, cravings and greediness, his hate, lust and jealousy, he became enlightened. While “Christ promises a birth which shall be followed by no death . . . Buddha promises a death which shall be followed by no birth and thus by no further death” (Landsberg 1966:198). Both in Hinduism and Buddhism the law of *karma* determines “the

fate of the individual after death for the period before his next incarnation, and it also causes that incarnation and conditions its form” (Brandon 1967:175). In Buddhism, as opposed to Christianity, the aim is not to gain immortality, but to transcend it. It is probably best to make use of a chart to show the main differences between Hindu-Buddhist views and those of some other religions.

*Hinduism, Buddhism*

- life is repeated in this world, infinite series of lives
- final enlightenment - *nirvana*
- no deity or supreme God, but impersonal process - *karma*
- judgement is a continuous process; continuous reincarnations
- time and life are seen as cyclical

*Judaism, Egypt, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism*

- life is unique, it is not to be repeated in this world
- final judgement followed by eternal post-mortem existence
- judgement of an individual by a supreme deity, God
- judgement at death and the Final Judgement
- time and life are seen as linear

There are several different traditions of Buddhism. While many Theravada Buddhists of Sri Lanka and Indochina, for example, believe in ‘instant rebirth’ after death, Vajrayana Buddhists, especially those living in Tibet and the remote Himalyan corner of Ladakh, have to read the instructions to the dying and the dead (described in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Evans-Wentz 1960[1927]) and guide them through an intermediate *bardö* period (transitional state) lasting up to forty-nine days between death and rebirth (Gielen 1997:75). While Theravada Buddhists emphasize that salvation depends above all on the person’s own relentless efforts, spiritual practice and many years of meditation, Tibetan Buddhists and those from Ladakh - Vajrayana Buddhism emphasizes rituals and initiation rites - argue that the prayers of loved ones and the skilful guiding hand of their lama are of equal importance (ibid.:90). Some sects of East Asia, on the other hand, believe that a person’s last thoughts before his or her death determine his or her future fate. If at the moment of death people fully confide themselves to the Buddha Amitabha, they will be reborn in the Western Paradise regardless of their sins during their lives (ibid.).

It is significant that the judgement scenes in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* are very much alike. In the Tibetan version, Dharma-Raja, the king of truth (whom the Theravadists call Yama-Raja) as the king and judge of the dead, corresponds to Osiris in the Egyptian version (Evans-Wentz 1960:35). In both versions there is the symbolic weighing. Before Dharma-Raja white pebbles are weighed against black pebbles, symbolizing good and bad deeds. “In the Egyptian Judgement Scene it is the ape-headed (less commonly the ibis-headed) Thoth, god of wisdom, who supervises the weighing; in the Tibetan Judgement scene it is the monkey-headed Shinje; and in both scenes there is the jury of deities looking on, some animal-headed, some human-headed” (ibid.:36). The evil-doers have to suffer *karmic* consequences in the hell-world of purgation. Typical punishments - none of which are ever-

lasting – are depicted on the monastic painting of the Tibetan Judgement Scene, which though made in the year 1919 has its origin in the old frescoes (within the so called Wheel of Life) found in the temples in the area.

In many small scale cultures and societies around the world the spirits of the dead, especially shortly after the death, continue to communicate and interfere with the living. The relationship between the dead and the living is a continuous process, extremely important for the preservation of law and morality of a particular community. I will continue with a case study from Ambonwari village, Papua New Guinea, where I have conducted extensive fieldwork.

## Death in Ambonwari – A Case Study

Ambonwari is the largest Karawari speaking village in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Ambonwari culture shares many elements in common with other Sepik cultures, such as Iatmul, Chambri, and Yimas. The Karawari language belongs to the Lower Sepik Family, part of a larger group of Papuan languages (Foley 1986). There are 12 totemic clans and 35 patrilineages. Residence is patri-virilocal. Introduced respiratory diseases – tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza – along with malaria, take a heavy toll of Ambonwari people. Though there is an Aid Post in the village and though people sometimes visit hospitals in Angoram and Wewak, they continue to seek treatment from the two village healers, who reflect people's understanding of their world – that is, their cosmology – and their well-being.

Death for the Ambonwari is not the end of a being; it is the beginning of a new mode of being while the being itself is one and undifferentiated; it is a similar mode of being where one still needs relatives, food, shelter, clothing, decorations, men's houses, things to use, and so on. As Cassirer argued for the beginnings of human culture, "it is not immortality, but mortality that must here be 'proved'" (1965[1955]:37).

Below I present a case study of sickness and death, of someone who has been for many years person to whom I was closest in Ambonwari village: my "brother" from the Kumbranggawimari lineage of the Bird of Paradise clan. News of his death in August 1998 came as a great shock to me.

It was nightfall on the first of August 1997. My village "brother" Tony Simiwaria Andiyapi, his about 18 years old son Jack Makan, Jack's friend Terrence, my friend Julian Kapyamari and I were all sitting in my new house, which during my five years absence had been built (from still very solid material of my old house) and used by Jack. Relaxed, we talked about common memories and of what had happened during my years away from the village. At one point, a flying fox suddenly flew into the house, hit Tony, and as fast as it had entered, disappeared through the opening in the roof. We talked till eleven o'clock and then went to bed, Tony and I into his family house, Julian to his, while Jack and Terrence remained in mine. Tony's wife slept with their children – including her two daughters with their own children – at the back of the house, while Tony's and my mosquito nets were next to the door. I hardly closed my eyes when a strange coughing noise followed by slow, dull howling spread through the night from

one side of the village. A few moments later, a similar howling came from the other side. Because I had never before heard this kind of a sound, I asked Tony what it was. He didn't answer immediately, but after a short period of silence he said quietly: "These are large snakes, boas. I'll tell you tomorrow the meaning of it." I knew that it was a bad omen, indicating that someone might die. We had not been asleep long when hearing Tony moaning next to the fire, I woke up. Every five minutes, he left the house, only to return weaker and more concerned. He explained to me about his diarrhoea. He thought that he was losing blood. I followed him to check his stool but could not find anything. He talked about the flying fox – a bad spirit – hitting him, about two boa snakes – bad spirits talking to each other about him – and the strong possibility that he was going to die. Though he sat very close to the fire, he was still shivering and nearly burned his legs. Early in the morning I carried him to the men's house. Again, I checked his excrement and saw that there was no blood, just water. Tobias, a village healer, arrived at dawn and extracted two bird's bones from his body. After I insisted, an aid post orderly brought some tablets for diarrhoea. Tony lay down and fell asleep.

We were all sitting around the fire in a men's house discussing why this sickness befell Tony. Some men said that they should have settled a dispute with neighbouring Imanmeri and given them back an outboard motor which was now kept in Ambonwari but was not theirs. Tobias said that Tony had beaten up his daughters and wife, so now the punishment came on him. Elias told me that there were other reasons for Tony's sickness: Tony was not the "father of the clan", less so the "father of the village", yet he behaved as one. He even kept the clan's outboard motor all the time. Elias said that Tony's wrongdoings were many. Another reason, Elias said, lay in the marriage situation of his two daughters at that time. Both were single but had a baby. This was – along with accompanying embarrassment and gossip – not what fathers expected from their daughters. Some villagers remarked that Tony was still mourning the death of his youngest son, who was now calling him to join him in the world of ghosts. The men from the Bird of Paradise clan became angry with Konggunyapan, the main spirit-crocodile of their clan, cursing him for not protecting Tony. The main cause for Tony's sickness – at least the majority of people thought so – was an adultery, discovered not long before between Tony and Rita, the wife of August. This relationship was kept secret for many decades, but became public when Rita became seriously sick. Afraid of dying, she had confessed her adulterous relationship, which shocked the whole village like a bomb.

On 19th August 1998 Tony Simiwaria Andiyapi, the closest person to me in the whole village, suddenly died, just a few days before two Slovenian friends of mine visited the village. Though I do not know what the villagers thought about the cause of his death, and though I do not know if they performed divination, I can imagine all the gossip that arose and how the villagers would have discussed all possible causes, some of which I enumerated earlier in this story.

The main sign that someone is sick is that her or his *kay* (way of doing things, manner, habit) is not as it should be. A person's breathing is different from usual, their skin is hot or cold, she or he sleeps more, or does not perform their usual activities. People say

that a person is "with sickness" (*min mari ngandikin*), that is, she or he "has sickness" (in Karawari language as in many other languages there is no verb "to have"). Sickness "has taken hold of a person" (*min mari yan sarinyan*). By holding and "using" a person, the sickness and person become one; they share the same body/being (see Telban 1998 a, b). To get better, a person has to remove (cut off) sickness as a part of the body/being. Only in this way will she or he rehabilitate their previous *kay*. But to cure the sickness one cannot just take medicines (if tablets, pills and so on work, people say that they were not really sick); it is necessary to look at one's past and address those issues which caused the sickness. People say that those healing practices that are part of medical treatment in Hospitals and Health Centres are powerful. They cannot, however, help Ambonwari people when they are seriously sick, that is, when they have so-called "custom sickness", because medical doctors do not share and so cannot address the Ambonwari life-world of the living and spirits. Only by addressing the causes, the alleged wrongdoings, can the *kay* of a sick person return to normal and the sickness be cured.

In healing ceremonies, the specialist tries to find the cause (so that he speaks with closest relatives and spirits) and remove the objects (bones, shells, stones, nails) that are the embodiment of sickness. A healer tries to restore the *kay* to its previous condition. As *kay* of an individual incorporates different collective *kay*, the sickness also becomes the concern of a collective, such as a household or lineage which incorporates past and present relationships, including those with their own familiar spirits. What is apparent from the practices of the healers is that they are able to perform an intermediary role, creating a temporary link between people and spirits. To become a healer, one has to come in contact not only with spirits of the dead, but also with bush spirits, in particular those of the patient's own clan (such as spirit-crocodiles and spirit-slit-drums) and land. The spirits supervise the healers' practices and guide them on their healing paths. I asked one of the healers, Tobias, how he could hear the voice of the spirit. He answered: "Just in the same way as you are talking to me now and I can hear you. The spirit talks into my ear and I hear him." Still curious, I asked him whether in fact the voice simply occurs in his head? He answered:

"No. The voice comes straight into my ears. When I chew ginger, my eyes turn around and my ears become blocked. I am unable to understand what people around me say. I hear only spirits. So I say to everyone: "Shut up, I want to hear what they have to say. Why are they angry?" Their answer will come straight into my ear. I tell those around that I did not get these answers inside my own head but that I have heard the voice of the spirit. So I would know the cause and would ask a child's father, or a husband if his wife is sick, or her, if her husband is sick. I would tell them when the spirit had asked for matters to be settled and tell them how this can be done. If they do not listen, the sick person can die."

The wrongdoers then have to "cut themselves off" from the practice which caused the sickness by following procedures such as payment of compensation, seclusion, washing, food presentation, and so on. Ambonwari people often say that they have to look after their skin properly and accurately perform their acts. In regard to sickness we can make some common observations: a healthy person is defined by visible healthy

skin and her or his habitual activity; a sick person is defined by unhealthy skin and aberrant activity. Thus, a healing ritual is concerned with the extraction of invisible stones, shells, teeth, bones and thorns from beneath the unhealthy skin, the restitution of *kay* by identifying the cause of sickness in wrongdoings, and finally by addressing the spirits of the household, lineage or clan who share collective identity with the sick person.

## Understanding Ambonwari Attitudes towards Dying and Death

316

In what follows I outline four important issues that contribute to a better understanding of Ambonwari attitudes towards death: a) the equation of death with sickness and old age, each of them seen as a process, with spirits as judges of the living; b) body perceived through habits that associates it with other bodies; c) death as a community affair; d) being-towards-(my)-death as distinctive of a Christian Western World while being-towards-(collective)-beginning is illustrative of Ambonwari cosmology.

First, approaching death should be understood in terms of approaching old age, or being sick. Death or dying in Ambonwari is a state, a condition, rather than an event or an instant (cf. Hertz 1960[1909]:28; Rivers 1912:405). Therefore, we should see death in Ambonwari as a process in which a dead person's "watchman" *angndar kwannar* has to take a new form of a disembodied, or better fleshless and skinless (i.e. "bones only") spirit – *wundumbunar* if male and *wunduma* if female – who remains "connected" to his living relatives. What he does affects them, and what they do makes him either angry or pleased. The spirits of the recently dead – usually male, that is, a deceased father or brother – see even the most hidden affairs, protect lineage, clan and village morality and law, and punish wrongdoers, their spouses and their children. The village spirits are not the law, they are the judges. The law is the one made by the living for the living. But spirits – in the cosmology of Ambonwari people – are always there as those judges and executors who enforce the law and village morality based on the wisdom of the elders and the ancestors. The dead, including those who are very old, become judges and a premature death becomes punishment.

Second, if we want to understand Ambonwari's views about death we have to understand their views about the body. For the Ambonwari, their human body, for which they do not have a vernacular word, is perceived through its visible skin and its activity. "It is defined by *kay* (the way of doing things) and extended to the things that are used in particular activities" (Telban 1998a:58). For example "A paddle and a person become one in terms of *kay*, the way of paddling a canoe" (ibid.:59). In short, one could say that there is a close connection between a person's living body – not just the visible skin – and the food one eats, the things one uses, his or her habits, the ways one performs his or her activities, the people one communicates with and touches, and the ways these contacts are effected. One has to consider the impact of one upon the other, since the manner in which a particular practice is done is very important. This conceptualization of the world supplies a framework for different taboos; for example, a man does not hunt the morning after he

has slept with his wife (*ibid.*:60). An appropriate parallel here is provided by the phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre, who said: "The body is the totality of meaningful relations to the world" (1956:452; see also Telban 1998a:67 e.n.3).

Third, death in Ambonwari – and the related judgement of those responsible, including the deceased – is community business, that is, an affair of a family, a lineage, a clan and a village. It is not a matter of medical doctors or a hospital, regardless of a person dying in one. It is not a question of biomedical cause and related justification: influenza, pneumonia, malaria, tuberculosis, meningitis, and so on. It is the old question "why him or her", "why me"; it is the question "how do we live", "what did we do wrong", "whose ways of doing things – that is, whose bad habits – made someone die". It is the question of *imnggan kay* ("the way of the village"), *kupambn kay* ("the way of the elders/ancestors") and the many *kay* (way, manner, habit, custom, law) of village individuals (Telban 1998 a, b). As *kay* (habits, ways) of an individual incorporates different collective *kay* (habits, ways), a sickness and death also become a collective issue (of household or lineage, for example) that incorporates past, present, and even anticipated future relationships, including those with their own familiar spirits (Telban 1998a:61).

317

Fourth, being-towards-(my or your)-death in Christianity has its source in a linear conceptualization of the world and an emphasis on the individual, while being-towards-(collective)-beginning in Ambonwari has its source in a cyclical conceptualization of the world with the emphasis on cosmogony in all important rituals and the recognition of the individual as socially dependent.

Because death in Ambonwari worldview is not an instantaneous occurrence but a process in which there is a continual interaction between the living and the dead, because "body" is never the body of an isolated individual but always extended to and spread over other closely related "bodies", because death in Ambonwari is always a community business and *never* a private affair, the search for and judgement of those responsible for someone's sickness and death are also community business and never a private affair.

Though a matter of a community, death is at the same time also seen as a unique process in everyone's *kay* (being, existence). Just as one is not simply born into a conscious Ambonwari person, but has to go through childhood, then initiation, then marriage, then parenthood, to become one, so one does not simply die and traverse the bridge into the world of the ancestors. Throughout one's childhood, a person exists as an extension of his or her parents and only gradually as an individual social being (Telban 1997, 1998 a, b). When a person dies, he or she, likewise, still exists but only as an extension of the living. Only gradually do these deceased individuals join the anthropomorphic mass of Ambonwari ancestors. Just like a child has to sever the bond with its parents (but still remains their child), so the dead have to sever their bonds with the living (and *vice versa*), while at the same time still preserving a close cosmological contact with them.

During village disputes, or when the Ambonwari quarrel with people from other villages, one often hears men saying that they do not worry about dying as they are well aware that their brothers, fathers and mother's brothers will revenge them. It seems



that it is the wholeness and the richness of the network of social relationships – past, present, and those anticipated in the future – which constitutes not only the life of an individual but also his or her death. Those who do not have many relatives and those whose lineages have no male descendants are more concerned with loneliness in both life and death than with their own death as such.

The Ambonwari, like many others, hold the conviction that after a person dies their ghost retains her or his personality. Individuals are not reduced to nothingness. Moreover, the deceased do not need to prove their innocence or admit their wrongs. They can still be nasty and bad. No one is going to judge them, less so in terms of any kind of final judgement that would then determine how the rest of their existence would be spent. Besides, as the Ambonwari say, one cannot change her or his skin just like that. Also, being bad does not mean that badness is not useful and admired by other villagers, and therefore, in some sense, even good (see Harrison 1993:120-1). Why would the deceased be judged at all when they cannot repay – in goods and money – those they wronged? The Ambonwari are sociocentric and egocentric enough to judge the living, who can then repay their wrongdoings. In such a way, the social and moral order is always established anew.

Lies, gossip and stealing are daily matters, something engaged in almost by everyone. Therefore, when in a particular case someone is innocent but nevertheless accused, people – not of course that person's closest relatives – do not view the whole thing as a terrible injustice. They do not even see the person as being innocent. They say that there were other wrongs done in the past by the accused but because at the same time they had been unable to prove them, or because there had been no village court, he or she escaped the punishment. Now, regardless of one's innocence, the past – not necessarily a particular event that has just happened – justifies, for some, the present punishment. No one thinks that people should agree about someone's wrongs. When a person is sick, or worse, when he or she dies, people speculate about the causes. It often happens that different groups in the village, and different segments of Ambonwari community, hold different views about someone's guilt and the causes for someone's sickness or death. A temporary agreement can suppress these different truths for some time, simply to recover them again as possibilities in the event of subsequent disputes, illnesses or deaths. The final truth is seldom one.

## **Conclusion: Speculation on Modernization**

We can discern here some significant differences between Christianity and Ambonwari cosmology: first, in Ambonwari it is not only people's own wrongs which can harm them but someone else's wrongs can inflict sickness and death on otherwise innocent relative, often a child; and secondly, in Ambonwari cosmology those who are severely sick and dying, and their closest relatives, confess their wrongs not to be saved in an afterlife but to be – they, their spouses and their children – saved in this life. That is, their confession and their willingness to compensate all those who were wronged show their will to survive. Their judges are their consociates, people and spirits (ghosts

and important lineage, clan and village spirits) and not some supreme deity. Every death – because of accompanying confessions, divination, and judgement – serves to reorganize social relationships among the living. The purpose of all this is not to secure a better place for a dead person in any kind of “other world”, but to reconstruct – for better or worse (for some) – the living conditions of those who stay alive and to ensure that no other close relative will die. In Ambonwari cosmology, there is no post-mortem judgement of good and bad deeds, no heaven and no hell, no anticipation of the Last Judgement, and no salvation. The entire Ambonwari cosmology, regardless of all the changes constantly taking place, is based on a will to preserve Ambonwari-ness, both as “the way of the village” and as “the way of the elders/ancestors”. The concept of being-towards-(collective)-beginning, most obviously recognized in the cosmogonical character of their initiation rituals, pervades Ambonwari cosmology in which life and death coexist as two modes of the same existence.

Are these views, however, as clear cut as I have presented them? Christianity has been in the Sepik Region for over 100 years, so no one would be surprised if the blending of Ambonwari’s cosmology with the Papua New Guinean version of one of the major religious orientations took a specific direction. People often asked me, especially during my last stay in the village between July and September 1997, about the possibility of the end of the world, about all the rumours and all different prophets, and about the prophetic year 2000. Ambonwari had just a few years ago built a new church, larger and more spectacular than their last major men’s house Yanbonman. A kind of charismatic glossalalia Christianity has swept the village – but not the other Karawari villages – and today there are many who hear voice of God and in a trance-like state speak in strange, unintelligible tongues.<sup>4</sup> And then, there are a few others, male and female, who claim to understand them and translate their weird language into Karawari and Tok Pisin.

As everyone is aware of how so-called cargo cults have appeared and reappeared throughout New Guinea and Melanesia since the end of the last century, one can imagine how easy it would be for Ambonwari to merge their own “traditional” views with *their* version of Christianity. In such a way, being-towards-(collective)-beginning orientation could become replaced by being-towards-(collective)-end/death, which for Ambonwari would not be an unfamiliar notion. Their mythology refers to a handful of survivors from two upriver villages that had been totally destroyed because one man broke several serious taboos by revealing the secrets of the men’s house to women and children. Those few who survived were accepted and accommodated by Ambonwari and later formed the last two clans in the village. Yet the story of their past was never forgotten. In this and other similar cases not only the judgement of the living but the judgement of the dead and the Final Judgement could become the prevailing obsessions of the Ambonwari people in the years to come.

<sup>3</sup> In a superb global survey of millenarian beliefs, and fears and hopes accompanying apocalyptic expectations throughout the history of Western society, Thompson writes: “Modern Pentecostalism, whose adherents experience an ecstatic Spirit baptism often accompanied by speaking in tongues, is the driving force behind the stunning advance of Protestantism in Latin America and the Third World . . . Charismatics . . . believe that *charismata* – the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on the disciples at Pentecost, such as speaking in tongues – are accessible to modern man” (Thompson 1997: 122, 143).

## BESEDA O AVTORJU

Borut Telban, dr., docent, je znanstveni so-delavec na ZRC SAZU. Po 38 mesecih antropoloških raziskav na Papui Novi Gvineji je leta 1994 doktoriral na Australian National University v Canberri. V letih 1995-1996 je kot štipendist Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland raziskovalno delal na Univerzi v Manchestru. Njegovo najpomembnejše delo je *Dancing through Time: A Sepik Cosmology*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

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# SMRT IN ŽALOVANJE V BEGUNSTVU: BOŠNJAKI, BOŠNJAKINJE V SLOVENIJI

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Natalija Vrečer

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321

**Ključne besede:** žalovanje, (kulturalna) ovdovelost, Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje, begunci, begunke, Slovenija

## Uvod

V pričujočem članku se nameravam osredotočiti na smrt in žalovanje Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj, ki so v Sloveniji v begunstvu. Po mojem mnenju je njihovo življenje težko razumeti, če se izognemo njihovem srečanju s smrtjo, ki so ga doživeli kot grozljivo svojemu lastnemu življenju, saj so bila v domovini njihova življenja pogosto ogrožena ali pa so jim v vojni umrli sorodniki in prijatelji. Prav tako ne moremo razumeti ljudi v begunski situaciji, če se ne soočimo z različnimi simbolnimi smrtmi, ki so značilne za vse begunce in begunke, ki sem jih spoznala. Vsi so namreč doživeli več naslednjih izgub: izgubo domovine s socio-kulturnim okoljem, jezika, zaposlitve, šolanja, drastično so se jim spremenile socialne mreže, doživeli so padec standarda itd. Trdimo lahko torej, da so procesi žalovanja za življenje v begunstvu značilni in da potekajo na osebni in kolektivni ravni.

Šege Bošnjakov ob smrti so zelo specifične. Razlikujejo se od slovenskih. Moja teza je, da odsotnost integracije beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji povzroča negativne posledice tudi v procesih žalovanja beguncev in begunk. Bošnjaki lahko v Sloveniji šege ob smrti v skladu s svojo tradicijo izvajajo v večji ali manjši meri. Na nekaterih pokopališčih jim ne dovolijo končati pogrebih šeg v skladu z njihovo tradicijo, kot bom pokazala v sklepnem delu članka. Menim, da bi jim možnost dokončanja pogrebnih šeg v skladu s tradicijo omogočila, da bi procese žalovanja bolj učinkovito predelali, poleg tega pa to za slovensko državo ne bi pomenilo dodatnih stroškov.

V tem članku bom predstavila nekaj statističnih dejstev o beguncih in begunkah v Sloveniji, opisala metodologijo, analizirala literaturo o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti, ki je vplivala na istovrstno literaturo v begunstvu, analizirala literaturo na omenjeno temo v begunstvu in na kratko opisala šege Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj v Slove-

niji ob smrti. V besedilu bom poskušala dati tudi napotke za izboljšanje politike reševanja begunskega vprašanja v povezavi s sfero smrti, zlasti za primer Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v Sloveniji. Pisala bom tudi o kulturni ovdovelosti, ki jo Eisenbruch (1990) opredeljuje kot izgubo kulture in družbe in obsega procese kolektivnega žalovanja. Nanaša se torej na različne simbolne smrti in na izkustvo begunstva kot celote.<sup>1</sup>

## Begunci, begunke v Sloveniji in metodologija

322 Prvi begunci, begunke so bili Hrvati in Hrvatice, ki so začeli prihajati v Slovenijo kmalu po njeni neodvisnosti v juniju 1991. Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje so se jim pridružili, pridružile leta 1992. V septembru 1993 je bilo v Sloveniji 35.000 beguncev in begunk in nekaj tisoč tistih, ki niso bili evidentirani.<sup>2</sup> Status bosanskih beguncev in begunk je bil in še vedno je začasen. Po slovenskem Zakonu o zatočišču iz leta 1997 jih imenujejo iskalci začasnega zatočišča. V Sloveniji smo status begunca po Ženevski konvenciji o statusu begunca iz leta 1951 podelili le trem osebam. Po omenjenem zakonu se lahko zaposlujejo le osem ur na teden. Repatriacija iz Slovenije poteka prostovoljno, ne prisiljeno. Aprila 1999 je v Sloveniji približno 3500 beguncev in begunk iz Bosne in Hercegovine, približno 80 % je Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj. Približno polovica jih živi v desetih begunskih zbirnih centrih, drugi pa v zasebnih namestitvah. Poleg njih je v Sloveniji še 2500 beguncev in begunk s Kosova brez ustreznega pravnega statusa. Niso namreč niti begunci, begunke po Ženevski konvenciji o statusu begunca iz leta 1951 niti iskalci začasnega zatočišča po slovenskem Zakonu o začasnem zatočišču, temveč tujci pred odstranitvijo.<sup>3</sup>

Za Slovenijo je značilna odsotnost integracije beguncev in begunk. Otroci in najstniki obiskujejo šole in se na ta način v večji meri integrirajo v slovensko družbo kot druge socialne skupine. Na ta način imajo možnost, da se naučijo slovenščine, medtem ko večina njihovih staršev ostaja v begunskih zbirnih centrih in nima toliko možnosti vključevanja v kulturo države gostiteljice. Begunci in begunke v Sloveniji ostajajo torej v negotovosti svojega začasnega statusa in v "praznini" čakajo na repatriacijo. Njihova situacija spominja na Beckettovo čakanje na Godota, saj so njihove hiše v Bosni in Hercegovini uničene ali pa so jih zasedli Srbi (zlasti tiste v Republiki srbski). Možnost vrnitve je nejasna, postavljena nekam v daljno bodočnost.

Metoda mojega raziskovanja je bila etnografska. Od avgusta 1992 do decembra 1994 sem opravljala terensko delo v Celju, od januarja 1995 do zdaj v Ljubljani. Obiskala sem tudi begunski zbirni center v Mariboru.

<sup>1</sup> angleško: cultural bereavement

<sup>2</sup> Zahvaljujem se Uradu za priseljevanje in begunce za statistične podatke.

<sup>3</sup> V aprilu 1999 se je Slovenija odločila, da bo sprejela še dodatnih 1600 beguncev in begunk s Kosova, ki postopoma prihajajo v Slovenijo, in da bo reaktivirala Zakon o začasnem zatočišču tudi za kosovske begunce in begunke.

## Smrt, žalovanje in ovdovelost v medkulturni perspektivi: študije, ki so vplivale na tiste z isto temo v begunstvu

Zaradi omejenega prostora, ki mi je na voljo za pričujoč članek, se bom osredotočila le na glavne avtorje in avtorice, iz katerih so črpali tisti in tiste, ki so pisali, pisale o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti v begunstvu. Eden izmed najzgodnejših in še vedno eden izmed najpomembnejših je bil nedvomno Freudov esej *Žalovanje in melanholija* (1917). V njem Freud uporablja izraz melanholija za to, kar danes imenujemo depresija. Eden izmed najpomembnejših Freudovih doprinosov je, da je posvečal pozornost intrapsihičnim procesom, ki se dogajajo ob izgubah. Po Freudu je žalovanje proces, ki ga je potrebno predelati, da bi se lahko končal, postopen umik libida ali emocionalne energije od izgubljenega objekta je potreben, da bi se lahko ta emocionalna energija vezala na nov objekt. Freudov esej je za begunske študije pomemben zaradi naslednjih ugotovitev:

1. Žalovanje je normalen proces, za katerega je potreben določen čas, da se tako imenovani posli žalovanja lahko predelajo. Torej ni patološka reakcija. Freud poda tudi zelo dober vpogled v situacije, v katerih so procesi žalovanja ovirani. Dejstvo, da ljudje, in še zlasti begunci in begunke, potrebujejo čas za žalovanje (poudarek N. V.), so omenjali in omenjale tudi kasnejši avtorji in avtorice kot, na primer Englund (1998), Eisenbruch (1984), Harrell-Bond in Wilson (1990). Po njihovem mnenju bi morali to upoštevati zlasti tisti zdravstveni delavci in delavke, ki so se usposabljali na Zahodu, in ne bi smeli patologizirati reakcij, kot se to še vedno prepogosto dogaja. Dojemanje žalovanja kot bolezni je zlasti prisotno med psihologi in nekaterimi psihiatri, kot, na primer, pri Engelu (1961), Sandersevi (1989) in drugih. Sanderseva opredeljuje čustva žalovanja kot simptome, in na žalost ni edina, ki ima tak pristop.
2. Po mnenju Freuda je depresija "na določen način povezana z izgubo objekta, ki ni v sferi zavednega, v nasprotju z žalovanjem, kjer izgube so v sferi zavednega" (1917: 245). V begunski situaciji, kjer veliko izgub nastopi naenkrat, je zelo verjetno, da nekatere, in zlasti način njihovega prepletanja (prim. z Malkki 1995), lahko begunčevemu, begunkinemu zavednemu ostajajo skrite in jih zato težje predelajo.

Da bi pojasnili stopnje pri procesih žalovanja, veliko avtorjev in avtoric posega po psihologiji. Baškauskas (1981) piše o beguncih, begunkah iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike in sledi Marrisovim stopnjam v procesu žalovanja, ki so konzervativem, ovdovelost in inovacija. Po psihologinji Sandersevi (1989) so te stopnje naslednje:

1. šok
2. zavedanje
3. konzervativna stopnja - umik
4. zdravljenje - preobrat
5. obnovev.

Ne glede na to, da je takšna analiza občasno uporabna, moramo biti previdni, da je ne posplošujemo. Te stopnje se namreč od kulture do kulture in tudi od posamez-

nika do posameznika razlikujejo (prim. z Stroebe, v: Firth 1997: 9/10). Vsak posameznik v vsaki družbi doživlja v svojem življenju izgube, ki so posledice izgube objektov, na katere smo bili čustveno navezani. Torej je žalovanje značilno za vsako kulturo. Ne glede na to pa je v procesih žalovanja veliko medkulturnih razlik. Prav tako različni so načini izražanja čustev žalovanja.

Rosenblatt, Walsh in Jackson so delali raziskave v 78 kulturah na podlagi etnografskih opisov. Ena izmed njihovih ugotovitev je, na primer, da imajo potlačitev čustev v nekaterih kulturah za normalno (Bali), medtem ko se v nekaterih drugih kulturah zdi pomembno, da se vezi z umrlimi ohranjajo (Egipt).

Večina literature se osredotoča na vlogo obredov pri žalovanju. Flammov pregled daje teoretsko ozadje te problematike in se osredotoča na antropološko in psihološko literaturo (1994 a).

Eden izmed pogosto citiranih avtorjev je Hertz, ki je pojmoval "šege ob smrti kot refleksijo socialnega reda, ki pa je objektivni izraz konceptov in vrednot družbe" (citirano v Flamm 1994 a: 4). Bloch in Parry pa, na primer, trdita, da obredi ustvarjajo družbeni red, in gledata na te rituale kot na politično dejanje, ki pomaga legitimizirati obstoječo avtoriteto v družbi (1982, citirano v Flamm 1994 a: 6).

Rosenblatt, Walsh in Jackson se opirajo na Van Gennepa. Po njihovem mnenju šege ob smrti omogočajo statusni prehod, tako za mrtve kot ovdovele. Skozi cikel šeg ob smrti se mrtva oseba preseli iz zemlje živih v zemljo mrtvih, ovdoveli osebi pa preneha status žalujočega in dobi status tistega, tiste, ki ne žaluje več" (1976: 7).

Leach je bil mnenja, da obstaja prepričanje, da je obred univerzalno dejstvo. Na obred gleda kot na socialni fenomen, ki posreduje temeljne koncepte in vrednote dane družbe. Pogrebne šege pomagajo žalujočim, da se ponovno reintegrirajo v družbo in omogočajo širši družbeni skupini, da vzdržuje kontinuiteto in znova utrdi svoje vrednote in verovanja (v: Flamm 1994 a: 8-9).

Mnogi avtorji opozarjajo, da pomanjkanje šeg ob smrti, ko so pogrebne šege končane, na Zahodu ustvarja nadaljnje probleme za ovdovele, saj ni sklepnih obredov, ki bi določili časovno mejo žalovanja. Na ta način se žalovanje podaljšuje (Rosenblatt, Walsh & Jackson 1976, Firth 1997 itd.).

Drugi pomembni avtorji in avtorice so: Van Gennep (1908), Durkheim (1915), Goddy (1962), Radcliffe-Brown (1964), Gorer (1965), Turner (1969), Munroz (1984), Bloch in Parry (1982), Bloch (1988), itd.

## **Medkulturna literatura o žalovanju in (kulturni) ovdovelosti v begunstvu**

Začela se je pojavljati v osemdesetih letih, ko so se begunske študije uveljavile kot samostojna akademska znanstvena disciplina. Dejstvo, ki ga pogosto omenjajo, je, da odsotnost obredov žalovanja v begunstvu podaljšuje žalovanje. Za nobeno kulturo namreč ni znano, da bi imela posebne obrede za kulturno ovdovelost. Zdi se, da je med-

kulturno dejstvo, da drugih šeg pri procesih žalovanja kot zgolj tistih za umrlimi osebami, ni.

Eden izmed glavnih avtorjev je nedvomno Eisenbruch, ki je psihiater in antropolog. Opozoril je, da so procesi žalovanja beguncev in begunk, ki nimajo možnosti izvajanja primernih obredov ob smrti, lahko ovirani (1990). Po njegovem mnenju je vzdrževanje tradicionalne kulture pomemben prilagoditveni mehanizem v begunstvu. Eisenbruch je raziskoval begunce in begunke iz Kampučije v Združenih državah Amerike in Avstraliji in ugotovil, da je "zdravstveno stanje beguncev in begunk izboljšano, kadar imajo možnost uporabljanja svojih verovanj skozi obrede, skladne z njihovo kulturo in vedenjem" (1990: 193). Šege ob smrti imajo torej, poleg drugih obredov, pomembno vlogo v procesih žalovanja beguncev in begunk. Pomembno je tudi Eisenbruchovo opozorilo, da morajo vsi, ki se ukvarjajo z begunsko problematiko, razumeti "kulturno konstrukcijo realnosti beguncev in begunk". Veliko beguncev in begunk namreč upa, da se bodo vrnili, in želijo živeti v preteklosti ter nočejo zgubiti stika z, na primer, domovino (1990: 200). Na ta način "življenje v preteklosti" zelo pogosto ponovno vzpostavi občutek identitete, ki ga je razrvala vojna.

Mnogi avtorji in avtorice poudarjajo potrebo po tem, da se šege ob smrti izvajajo in končujejo v skladu s kulturno tradicijo beguncev in begunk, in opozarjajo, da v mnogih predelih sveta ni tako. Harrell-Bondova in Wilson poročata o takih primerih v Afriki. Po njenem mnenju je umiranje tisti del socialnega življenja, pri katerem so se ljudje manj pripravljeni prilagajati novim vzorcem (1990: 230). Zatorej se avtorjema zdi pomembno proučevati, kako humanitarni programi določajo, na kakšen način se ljudje soočijo s smrtjo, in dajati predloge za izboljšanje teh programov. Zdi se, da je medkulturno dejstvo, da humanitarna pomoč ne vsebuje hrane za srečanja ljudi po pogrebu in drugih šegah ob smrti. To je značilno tako za Slovenijo kot tudi za Afriko, kot poročata Harrell-Bondova in Wilson. V Sloveniji večino stroškov za pogreb prispeva vladni Urad za priseljevanje in begunce, v mnogih krajih po svetu ni tako - na primer v Afriki. Harrell-Bondova in Wilson (1990) predlagata tudi, da bi humanitarne organizacije, ki pomagajo beguncem in begunkam, sponzorirale vojne spominske svečanosti v begunskih centrih in naselbinah, če te obstajajo v njihovih državah.

Ker begunci in begunke najpogosteje bežijo zaradi sociopolitičnega in militarnega preganjanja, je tradicionalna kultura v njihovi domovini pogosto zadušena in ogrožena. V medkulturni literaturi o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti v begunstvu najdemo primere, kjer je begunstvo pomenilo edino možnost nadaljevanja tradicionalne kulture. Takšen primer so, na primer, begunci in begunke iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike po drugi svetovni vojni. Medtem ko so bili za Sovjetsko zvezo po drugi svetovni vojni značilni procesi rusifikacije, so imeli begunci in begunke iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike priložnost izvajanja in ohranjanja njihove tradicionalne kulture (Baškauskas 1981). Podoben primer so razseljeni Kampučijci v Avstraliji in Združenih državah Amerike, ki so bežali pred Pol Potovim režimom v sedemdesetih letih.

Tradicionalni zdravitelji in religiozni inštruktorji imajo pomembno vlogo pri ohranjanju tradicionalne kulture v begunstvu. Tradicionalni zdravitelji izseljenih Kampučijcev se imenujejo *kruuji*. Ljudem pomagajo predelati kulturno ovdovelost in



funkcionirajo kot "viri kulturnega znanja" (Eisenbruch 1991: 2). Delujejo kot posredniki med ovdovelimi posamezniki in družbo. Poleg tega, da pomagajo ovdovelim, da se ponovno integrirajo v družbo, nadzirajo tudi javno artikulacijo osebnih čustev žalovanja. Tudi Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje v Sloveniji imajo religiozne inštruktorje, ki opravljajo to vlogo, kot bom pojasnila kasneje v besedilu.

Zgoraj navedeni primeri nam dokazujejo, da so procesi žalovanja v begunstvu lahko tudi konstruktivni, rezultat katerih je lahko, na primer, tudi ohranitev v domovini ogrožene tradicionalne kulture. To je še en dokaz, da so čustva žalovanja normalne reakcije in jih ne moremo patologizirati. Pridružujem se besedam Malkkijeve, ki pravi, da "... čeprav je mnogo beguncev in begunk preživelo nasilje in izgube, ki dobesedno presejajo predstave večine ljudi, ne smemo predvidevati, da begunski status sam po sebi pomeni prepoznavno psihološko stanje, ki ga lahko posplošimo" (Malkki 1995: 510).

Nekateri drugi avtorji in avtorice, ki se ukvarjajo s problematiko žalovanja in (kulturne) ovdovelosti v begunstvu, so: Eastmond (1988), Flamm (1994 a, b), Woodcock (1991) itd.

## Šege ob smrti bošnjaških beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji

Pogrebi Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v Sloveniji so podobni tistim v Bosni in Hercegovini, razlikujejo pa se v sklepni stopnji pogreba. Vendar na različnih slovenskih pokopališčih dopuščajo Bošnjakom in Bošnjakinjam, da v večji ali manjši meri končajo pogrebni obred v skladu s svojo tradicijo, kot bom opisala na koncu besedila. Poudariti moram tudi, da tisti Bošnjaki, ki niso preveč religiozni (zlasti komunisti, komunistke), niso pokopani v skladu z bošnjaško tradicijo. Med njimi so pogosti zlasti tisti, katerih otroci so živeli v Sloveniji že pred vojno v Bosni in Hercegovini, in želijo, da bi njihove starše pokopali po slovenskih šegah. Sorodniki umrlih določajo, po kateri kulturni praksi bo potekal pokop. Prav tako nekateri begunci in begunke, ki so se že akulturirali v slovensko družbo, sprejemajo njene šege ob smrti.

Večina Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v begunstvu v Sloveniji pa pri pokopu upošteva naslednje obrede: Ko umre moški ali ženska, ostane telo v hiši en dan.<sup>4</sup> Za pripravo telesa umrlega in za same pogrebne šege je značilna delitev dela po spolu. Če umre moški, njegovo truplo pripravita *hodža*, religiozni učitelj v srednji šoli, ali *imam*, prav tako religiozni vodja. Oba opravljata enake naloge.<sup>5</sup> Če umre ženska, njeno telo pripravi *bula*, religiozna inštruktorica za ženske. Telesa umrlih umijejo in ovijejo v *čefin*, tkanino. Pomen *čefina* je v tem, da pridejo vsi enaki, vse enake pred boga. Žalujoči ne nosijo črnine. Včasih so ženske nosile ruto, danes jo le nekatere. Po bošnjaški tradiciji na grobove ne nosijo rož, saj menijo, da so dejanja Muslimanov tista, ki so najpomembnejša. Pod vplivom slovenskih pogrebnih obredov nosijo rože na grobove tudi nekateri Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje.

<sup>4</sup> Pomanjkanje prostora v begunskih centrih je včasih preprečilo navado, da je umrla oseba ostala doma en dan.

<sup>5</sup> Beseda *imam* izvira iz arabščine, beseda *hodža* pa ima nacionalno, politično konotacijo.

Pogreb imenujejo *dženaza*. Udeležujejo se ga lahko le moški. *Hodža* uči koran na grobu, vsi molijo, na primer, *kabursko dovo*, ki je posebna molitev za to priložnost. Ženske včasih počakajo ob pokopališčih ali pripravljajo hrano doma. Ko se moški vrnejo po pogrebu, imajo *tevhid*, to so po opredelitvi Bringe "islamske kolektivne molitve za duše umrlih" (1995: 256). Zraven pijejo sokove in jedo. Sedem dni po pogrebu je še en *tevhid*, enako po štiridesetih dneh. Končni obred po štiridesetih dneh se imenuje *četeresnica* in označuje konec intenzivnega procesa žalovanja. Ženskam je po tem dnevu dovoljeno, da gredo iz hiše, moškim pa tako in tako ni bilo potrebno ostati v hiši 40 dni. Po tem času se moški lahko spet poročijo, zlasti če imajo otroke. Za ženske pravijo, da se jim ni treba ponovno poročiti, čeprav včasih se. Po letu dni je proces žalovanja končan.

Ponovni pokopi so se začeli kmalu po koncu vojne, takoj ko je bilo spet varno potovati po Bosni in Hercegovini. Vendar pa prekopavanja niso prav pogosta. Večino beguncev in begunk, zlasti starejših, ki so umrli v begunstvu v Sloveniji po koncu bosanske vojne, so pokopali v njihovi domovini. V pogovorih, ki sem jih imela s pripadniki, pripadnicami te socialne skupine, so pogosto izrazili, izrazile željo, da ne želijo biti pokopani, pokopane v tujini. V okupiranih območjih Bosne in Hercegovine, kot je, na primer, Republika srbska, Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj še vedno ne morejo pokopavati v njihovih vaseh in mestih, zato jih pokopljejo v krajih, ki so najbližji njihovim domovom.

Glede na religijo muslimanov se po smrti začne večno življenje. Tisti, ki je delal dobra dela, bo šel v *dženet*, nebesa, tisti, ki pa je delal slabe stvari, bo šel v *džehenem*, pekel. Sojenje bo potekalo pred bogom, ki bo presojal o dobrih in slabih delih. Na sodni dan bodo mrtvi spet oživel. Smrt je božja volja, zato se moški ali ženska proti njej ne moreta boriti. Ker pa je smrt le pot na drugi svet, naj je ne bi jemali preveč dramatično, zato preveč čustveno izražanje žalosti ni kulturno zaželeno. *Hodža*, *bula* in *imam* obiščejo žalujočega po pogrebu. Spomnijo ga, da je smrt posledica božje volje. Njihova naloga je tudi, da nadzirajo čustva žalosti in spomnijo žalujočega, da je življenje večno in je smrt le prehod na drugi svet. Naslednji govor, katerega namen je povezati življenje in smrt, včasih govorijo pred ali po *dženazi*:

"Dragi bratje! Danes smo se zbrali, da pospremimo našega brata ali sestro, in vsi tukaj prisotni moramo to razumeti kot sporočilo, da smo vsi smrtniki in da bo za vsakega od nas prišel čas smrti. Danes se naš brat (sestra) vrača svojemu Stvaritelju. Vsak je kdaj grešil in potrebuje *halal*<sup>6</sup>, zato dragi bratje, ali ste pripravljeni *halaliti* našemu bratu vse? Alah je z njim zadovoljen."

Begunski zbirni centri v Sloveniji funkcionirajo kot prostori kolektivnega žalovanja. Kar nekaj ljudi se je preselilo v zbirne begunske centre iz zasebnih namestitvev, da so lahko delili izkušnje vojne in begunstva in dobili socialno podporo. To je bilo še zlasti značilno za obdobje vojne v Bosni in Hercegovini, ko so se čustvene vezi v skupnosti okrepile. Solidarnost so izražali, izražale na različne načine. V enem izmed begunskih zbirnih centrov v Ljubljani, na primer, ženi niso povedali, da ji je na fronti v Bosni in Hercegovini umrl mož, saj so menili, da fizično in psihično ni dovolj močna, da bi lahko sprejela žalostno novico. Počakali so, da postane močnejša in sposobnejša prenesti izgubo.

<sup>6</sup> *halal*: oprostiti komu

## Sklep

Največja razlika med tradicionalnim pokopom v Bosni in Hercegovini in v Sloveniji je, da morajo Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje v slednjem uporabljati krsto namesto *tabuta*, ki je, če si spet sposodim opredelitev Bringe, "krsta brez pokrova, ki jo uporabljajo Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje, ko nesejo telo umrlega h grobu" (1995: 256). Na nekaterih pokopališčih, kot na primer na ljubljanskem, ne smejo obrniti *kaburja*, *groba*, in *mejta*, trupla, z desno stranjo proti Meki. Na nekaterih pokopališčih jim dovolijo, da dajo nekaj zemlje pod krsto, v Ljubljani, na primer, jim to ni dovoljeno. Mesto Maribor je lahko v tem primeru za zgled, saj tam Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje lahko dokončajo pogrebne obrede v skladu s svojo tradicijo, izjema je le obvezna uporaba krste. Prav tako je Maribor eno izmed redkih mest v Sloveniji, v katerem so grobovi Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj skupaj, kot to določa njihova tradicija. Multikulturni pristop tega mesta v smislu pogrebnih obredov Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj dokazuje, da upoštevanje kulturne različnosti ni grožnja 'homogenosti' družbe, temveč pomeni korak bližje k enakopravni civilni družbi.

Upam, da sem tudi s svojim pisanjem dokazala, da upoštevanje kulturne različnosti ni ekonomski problem (in tudi, če bi včasih bil), temveč problem razumevanja, tolerance in spoštovanja tujih kulturnih praks.

Sklepne šege ob smrti Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj nas lahko marsikaj naučijo o obredih, ki olajšujejo procese žalovanja. To pa je nekaj, kar bi bilo vredno iskati v naši na pol izgubljeni tradiciji, ki bi jo bilo mogoče potrebno na novo izumiti – zlasti, kot se zdi, v mestih.

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# DEATH, GRIEF AND MOURNING IN EXILE: BOSNIAN MUSLIMS IN SLOVENIA

330

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Natalija Vrečer

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**Key words:** *grief, mourning, (cultural) bereavement, exiled Bosnian Muslims, refugees, Slovenia*

## Introduction

For the purpose of this article I decided to focus on death, grief and mourning of Bosnian Muslims in exile in Slovenia. I think that any understanding of people in exile in Slovenia would be incomplete, if we do not take into account their encounter with death, whether as a threat to their own life which was very often present when they escaped from their home-country, whether the encounter with death was in a loss of relatives and friends or whether we decide to face various symbolic deaths that were characteristic for all the refugees that I met, as all of them suffered many of the following losses: the loss of the home-country with its sociocultural environment, the language, employment, school, drastically changed social networks, decrease in standard etc. Therefore, we can say that mourning processes are characteristic for the life in exile and they occur on personal and collective levels.

The mortuary rituals of the Bosnian Muslims are very specific, they differ from the Slovenian ones. My thesis is that the absence of integration of refugees in Slovenia causes some negative consequences also for the mourning processes of refugees. Namely, Muslims in Slovenia can perform the mortuary rituals more or less according to their cultural tradition, but in some cemeteries they are not allowed to complete those rituals in accordance with their tradition as I will explain in the concluding part of my paper. I argue that the completion of funeral rituals in accordance to their tradition would enable them to work through the grieving processes more effectively and besides, it would not represent additional costs for the Slovenian state.

In this paper I would like to present you some statistical data on refugees in Slovenia, to describe methodology, to give definitions of the concepts used, to analyse literature on death, grief, mourning and bereavement, which influenced literature of the same topic in exile from the cross-cultural perspective, to analyse literature on death,

grief, mourning and cultural bereavement in exile and to describe briefly mortuary rituals of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia. Through the text I will also try to give some recommendations for the improved policy toward refugee question regarding the sphere of death, especially regarding the situation of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia.

## Refugees in Slovenia and Methodology

First refugees (Croats) started to come to Slovenia soon after its independence in June 1991. Bosnian Muslims joined them in 1992. In September 1993 there were 35.000 refugees in Slovenia and a few thousand of those whose status was illegal.<sup>1</sup> The status of Bosnian refugees was and still is considered temporary. In legal terms, according to the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum from 1997, they are considered asylum seekers, namely, Slovenia has only three refugees according to the Geneva Convention about a Status of Refugee from 1951. The Law of Temporary Asylum allows them to be employed only eight hours per week. Repatriation from Slovenia is gradual, it is not forced. Nowadays (April 1999), there are about 3500 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in Slovenia, approximately 80% are Bosnian Muslims. Approximately half of them live in ten refugee centres, the rest of them live in private arrangements. There are additional 2500 refugees from Kosovo without a legal status yet, namely, they neither have a status of refugees according to Geneva Convention from 1951, neither of asylum seekers according to the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum, but of foreigners before deportation.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of integration of refugees is characteristic for Slovenia. Children and adolescents attend schools, therefore, they integrate into the Slovenian society more than other social groups. Thus, they have the opportunity to learn Slovene, while most of their parents remain in the refugee collective centres and do not have many opportunities to mix with the host population. The refugees in Slovenia are left in the uncertainty of their temporary status, in the so called "limbo" and wait for the repatriation. Their situation resembles Waiting for Godo's story as their houses in Bosnia-Herzegovina are destroyed or occupied by the Serbs (especially in the Republika srbska) and the prospects for the return are unsure, fixed somewhere in the distant future.

The method of my research was ethnographic. From August 1992 to December 1994 I did the fieldwork in Celje, from January 1995 until now in Ljubljana, I also visited refugee camp in Maribor.

## Definitions

Let me first define the concepts *grief*, *mourning*, *bereavement* and *cultural bereavement* that I use in the paper. The concepts grief, mourning and bereavement are often used interchangeably. However, there are differences in meaning. By *grief* I mean

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the governmental Office for Immigration and Refugees for the statistical data.

<sup>2</sup> In April 1999 Slovenia decided to accept another 1600 refugees from Kosovo who are entering the Slovenian state gradually and to reactivate the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum which will be valid also for the refugees from Kosovo.

different emotions that arise from the response to loss. Among these emotions Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson (1976: 9) enumerate sorrow, anxiety, guilt, loneliness, anger, fear, numbness and general tension. According to Firth, *mourning* is the way in which such emotions are expressed, "often in a culturally determined ways, and often for a specified time in a particular society" (1997: 9). To define *bereavement* I will use Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson's definition: bereavement is "...the period of time following a death, during which grief occurs, and also the state experiencing grief" (1976: 2). Eisenbruch defines *cultural bereavement* as a loss of culture and society (1990). In this way cultural bereavement encompasses collective grief and refers to various symbolic deaths and to the experience of exile as a whole.

### **Death, Grief, Mourning and Bereavement in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Studies that Influenced those with the Same Topic in Exile**

For the purpose of this article I will mention only the main authors who influenced the literature on death, grief, mourning and bereavement in exile. One of the earliest and still one of the most important was definitely Freud's essay on Mourning and Melancholia (1917). In this essay he uses the word mourning interchangeably with grief and melancholia refers to what is now called depression. One of the main contributions of Freud's work is that he paid attention to the intrapsychic processes which occur during the losses. According to Freud grieving is a process that has to be worked through in order to be completed and gradual withdrawal of libido or the emotional energy is needed from the lost object in order to be reinvested into a new object. The main implications of Freud's work for the refugee studies are the following:

1. Grieving is a normal process and certain lapse of time is needed for this the so called grief work to be worked through, therefore it is not a pathological reaction. However, Freud also gives a very good insight into situations in which the inhibited grief would appear. That **people and particularly refugees need time to grieve**<sup>3</sup> is a finding which is echoed later also by many authors as, for example, (Englund: 1998, Eisenbruch: 1984, Harrell-Bond and Wilson: 1990) who emphasized that especially western trained health professionals should give time to the refugees to work through the grieving and mourning processes and not to pathologize their reactions as it is still too often the case. However, the belief that grief is an illness, is still present, especially among psychologists and some psychiatrists as, for example, Engel (1961), Sanders (1989) etc. Sanders describes the emotions of grief as symptoms and, unfortunately, she does not seem to be the only one who approaches normal reactions as symptoms.
2. In Freud's opinion depression is "in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious" (1917: 245). In refugee situa-

<sup>3</sup> The emphasis is mine.

tion when many losses occur at the same time, we can suspect that some of them and the way of their intertwining (cf. to Malkki 1995) might be hidden from refugee's consciousness and therefore even more difficult to work through.

In order to explain the stages of the grief processes, many authors draw on psychology. Baškauskas (1981) writes about the Lithuanian refugees in the USA and follows Marris's stages in grief process which are conservatism, bereavement and innovation. According to the psychologist Sanders (1989), these stages are the following:

1. shock
2. awareness
3. conservation-withdrawal
4. healing-the turning point
5. renewal

In spite of the fact that such analysis is sometimes useful, we have to be careful not to apply these generalizations universally. They differ from culture to culture and we can expect that also from one individual to another (cf. to Stroebe, in: Firth 1997: 9/10). Every individual in every society experiences losses during his life time as consequences of lost attachments, therefore grief is present in every culture. However, there are many differences in mourning processes in different sociocultural environments. There are also differences in the emotional expressions of grief as well.

Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson did the research in 78 cultures on the basis of ethnographic descriptions. One of their findings is also, for example, that the repression of feelings is in some cultures considered normal (Bali), while in some other cultures it is important to retain ties with the deceased (Egypt).

Most of the literature focuses on the role of ritual in mourning. Flamm's review gives a theoretical background of this topic and focuses on the anthropological and psychological literature.

One of the most frequently quoted authors is Hertz who saw "mortuary rites as reflections of the social order which in turn is the objective expression of the concepts and values of a given society" (quoted in Flamm 1994 a: 4). However, Bloch and Parry claim that the rituals bring about the social order and view these rituals as a political exercise used to legitimate the existing authority within a society (1982, quoted in Flamm 1994 a: 6).

Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson drew on Van Gennep and viewed mortuary rituals as "providing status passage, both for the dead and for the bereaved. A dead person, over the cycle of death ceremonies, is passed from the land of the living to the land of the dead; a bereaved person is passed from the state of the mourner to the state of the nonmourner" (1976: 7).

Leach wrote that there seems to be an agreement that ritual is an universal feature of human societies. According to him, ritual is a social phenomenon which communicates the basic concepts and values of a given society. Funeral rituals also help the mourner to re-integrate into society and enable the wider social group to maintain its continuity and to re-affirm its own values and beliefs (in: Flamm 1994 a: 8-9).



Many authors also emphasize that the lack of mortuary rituals once the funeral is over in Western societies creates further problems for the bereaved as there is no final ceremony which would put a time limit on the bereavement period and in this way grief is prolonged (Rosenblatt, Walsh & Jackson 1976, Firth 1997 etc.).

Other important authors are Van Gennep (1908), Durkheim (1915), Goody (1962), Radcliffe-Brown (1964), Gorer (1965), Turner (1969), Munroz (1984), Bloch and Parry (1982), Bloch (1988), etc.

## **The Cross-Cultural Literature on Grief, Mourning and (Cultural) Bereavement in Exile**

334

It started to appear in the 80's, when refugee studies were established as a special academic discipline. A fact that is very often mentioned is that the absence of the institutionalized mourning processes in exile prolongs the duration of grief as no culture is known to have special rituals for cultural bereavement. Namely, it seems to be a cross-cultural fact that there are not known any mourning practices other than those regarding death of relatives.

One of the key authors is definitely Eisenbruch, a psychiatrist and an anthropologist, who warned that refugees who are deprived of adequate mortuary rituals might experience arrested grief (1990). He considers the culture maintenance an important adjustment mechanism in exile. Eisenbruch researched Cambodian refugees in the USA and Australia and found out that "the well-being of refugees was improved when they were allowed to validate their beliefs through culturally appropriate rituals and behaviour" (1990:193). Mortuary rituals, beside other rituals, therefore, play a very important role in the grief processes of refugees. Eisenbruch's another important point is his plea for all involved in refugee matters to try to "understand the refugee's cultural construction of reality", namely, many exiles nurture a hope of return and wish to live in the past and do not want to loose their attachment to, for example, homeland (1990: 200). Thus "living in the past" very often reconstitutes the sense of identity which was disrupted by war.

Many authors emphasized the need for mortuary rituals to be performed and completed according to the cultural tradition of refugees and that in many parts of the world it is not so as, for example, Harrell-Bond and Wilson report for Africa. According to these authors dealing with dying is an area of social life in which people are less willing to adjust to new patterns (1990:230). They, therefore, consider it important to investigate how refugees cope with death under assistance programmes in order to help to implement them. It seems to be a cross-cultural fact that there is no food given by humanitarian aid for social gatherings around funeral and other mortuary rites. This is true also for Slovenia and also, for example, Africa as Harrell-Bond and Wilson report. In Slovenia refugees get almost all the costs of the funeral covered by the Slovenian Office for Refugees and Immigrants, but in many places in the world they have to pay themselves (Africa). Harrell-Bond and Wilson (1990) also suggest that refugee assisting agencies should sponsor war memorials in refugee camps and settlements if they exist in their country.

As refugees most usually escape from sociopolitical and military persecution, the traditional culture in their home country is often suppressed and endangered. In the cross-cultural literature on death, grief and bereavement in exile we find examples, where the exile represented the only possibility for the continuation of traditional culture. Such an example are the Lithuanians exiled in the USA after the second world war. While in post second world war Soviet Union intensive processes of rusification were occurring, the Lithuanians in the USA had a chance to practice and preserve their traditional culture (Baškauskas 1981). Another example are resettled Cambodians in Australia and the USA fleeing from Pol Pot regime in the seventies.

Traditional healers and religious instructors play very important role in preserving traditional culture in exile. The traditional healers of exiled Cambodians are called *kruus*. They help people to overcome cultural bereavement and function as "repositories of cultural knowledge" (Eisenbruch 1991: 2). They function as mediators, brokers between the bereaved individual and the society. Beside helping the bereaved to become integrated into the society, they also control public articulation of private emotions of grief. Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia also have religious instructors who perform that role, which I will explain later on in the text.

The above-mentioned examples show us that grief processes in exile can also be very constructive processes that result, for example, in preserving the endangered traditional culture. This is another proof that the emotions of grief are normal reactions and can not be pathologized. I would echo Malkki's words that "...although many refugees have survived violence and loss that are literally beyond the imagination of most people, we must not assume that refugee status in and of itself constitutes a recognizable, generalizable psychological condition" (Malkki 1995: 510).

Some other authors who dealt with the theme of grief, mourning and (cultural) bereavement in exile are: Eastmond (1988), Flamm (1994 a, b), Woodcock (1991) etc.

## **Mortuary Rituals of Bosnian Muslim Refugees in Slovenia**

The funerals of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia resemble those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but very often with the exception of the final stage of the funeral. However, in some Slovenian cemeteries, they allow Bosnian Muslims to finish their funeral practices according to their tradition to a greater extent and in some to a lesser extent as I will explain at the end. I also have to emphasize that those Muslims who are not very religious (especially communists) do not practice all of the traditional practices. Among them are also children of some refugees who lived in Slovenia for decades before the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and want to have their parents buried near them and sometimes according to the Slovenian practices. Namely, the relatives of the deceased decide which cultural practices will be followed at the burial. Some of those refugees who have already acculturated to the Slovenian society sometimes accept its mortuary practices.

336 However, most of the Bosnian Muslims in exile in Slovenia follow the following mortuary rituals. When a man or a woman dies, the body stays in the house one day.<sup>4</sup> A gendered division of labour is characteristic for the preparation of the dead body and also for the funeral. If a man dies, *hodža*, a religious secondary school teacher or *imam*, who is also a religious leader, prepare the body for the funeral. Their roles are interchangeable.<sup>5</sup> If a woman dies, *bula*, who is a female religious instructor, prepares her body. Bodies are washed and wrapped in *čefin*, a shroud. The meaning of *čefin* is that everybody will come in front of god the same. Those who mourn do not wear black, it was a tradition that women wore scarf, nowadays only some women wear it. According to the Muslim tradition, flowers are not to be put on the grave as it is believed that the deeds of the Muslims are the most important. However, because of the influence of the Slovenian mortuary rites, some Bosnian Muslims also bring flowers on graves.

The funeral of Bosnian Muslims is called *dženaza*, only men are allowed to attend it. *Hodža* teaches Koran on the grave and they tell prayers, as, for example, *kaburska dova*, which is a special prayer for this occasion. Women sometimes wait outside the cemetery or prepare food at home. When men return home after the funeral, they have *tevhid*, which are, according to Bringa's definition, "Islamic collective prayers for the souls of the dead" (1995: 256). They also drink juices and eat. Seven days after the funeral there is another *tevhid*, as well as on the 40<sup>th</sup> day and very often after a year. The final ceremony forty days after the burial is called *četresnica*, which marks the ending of the intensive mourning process. Women are allowed to go out of the house now, however, it was not necessary for men to stay in the house for 40 days. After that time men are allowed to remarry, especially if they have children, women, they say, do not need to remarry again, although they sometimes do. After one year the mourning process is supposed to end.

Reburials started to occur soon after the end of war, when it became safe to travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, reburials are not very frequent. Many refugees who die in exile in Slovenia after the Bosnian war are buried in their home country, especially the elderly. In our conversations the members of this social group frequently expressed a wish that they do not want to be buried in a foreign country. In the occupied places of Bosnia-Herzegovina as it is the Republika srbska, for example, they still can not be buried in their villages and towns, therefore they bury them in the places which are nearest to their real homes.

According to Muslim religion the eternal life starts after death. The one who did good deeds will go to *dženet*, heaven, the one who did bad deeds will go to *džehenen*, hell. Judgement will occur in front of God, where good and evil deeds will be judged. When the judgement day will occur, all the dead will become alive again. Death is god's destiny, a man or a woman can not fight against death. As death is only the way to the other world, it should not be taken very dramatically, therefore too many emotional expressions of grief are not culturally appropriate. *Hodža*, *bula* and *imam* visit the bereaved after the burial. They remind the bereaved that death was a consequence of

<sup>4</sup> The lack of space in refugee centres sometimes prevented the custom that a dead person stayed at home for a day.

<sup>5</sup> The word *imam* derives from Arabic, while the word *hodža* is a national notion, with a political connotation.

god's will. It is the task of *hodža*, *bula* and *imam* to control the emotions of grief and to remind the bereaved that life is eternal and death is merely a passage to another world. The following speech, the intention of which is to connect life and death, is sometimes spoken before or after *dženaza*:

“Dear brothers! We have gathered today to see our brother or sister off and all of us present here should take that as a message, that we are all mortals and the time of death will come for us, too. Today our brother (sister) is returning to his (her) Creator. Everybody has once sinned and he (she) needs *halal*<sup>6</sup>, so dear brothers, are you willing to *halal*<sup>7</sup> our brother for everything? Allah is satisfied with him”.

Refugee collective centres in Slovenia function as places of collective grief. Quite a number of people moved to the centres from private arrangements in order to share their war and exile experiences and get social support. This was especially characteristic during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina when the feelings of community were strengthened. Solidarity was expressed in different ways. In one of the refugee collective centres in Ljubljana, they, for example, did not tell a woman that her husband died on the front in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because they considered her physically and psychologically too weak. They waited that she would get stronger and would be able to face the loss.

337

## Conclusion

What differs from the traditional burial from Bosnia-Herzegovina is that in Slovenia they have to use coffins instead of *tabut*, which is, if I borrow Bringa's definition again “a lidless coffin used by Muslims for carrying a dead body to the grave” (1995: 256). In some towns as, for example in Ljubljana, they also can not orient *kabur*, the grave and *mejti*, which is the body of the dead person with their right sides towards Mecca. In some cemeteries they are allowed to shovel the earth underneath the grave themselves, not in Ljubljana, for example. Maribor can set an example, because refugees there are allowed to complete all the mortuary rituals according to their cultural tradition, the only exception is the obligatory use of the coffin. Maribor is also one of the rare towns in Slovenia, in which the graves of Muslims are together as their tradition demands. This city's multiculturalist approach regarding mortuary rituals of Bosnian Muslims proves that acknowledging cultural diversity is not a threat to the ‘homogeneity’ of society, but a step toward more egalitarian civil society.

I hope that I have proved once again that acknowledging cultural diversity is not a financial matter (and even if it would sometimes be so), but a matter of understanding, tolerance and respect for foreign cultural practices.

The final ceremonies of Bosnian Muslims can also teach us about very appropriate mortuary rituals for working through the grief and this may be something important to search for in our half-forgotten tradition, maybe to reinvent it again, as it seems it would be needed at least in the cities.

<sup>6</sup> *halal* = that we forgive him

<sup>7</sup> in original: *halaliti*

LITERATURE see page 328

## BESEDA O AVTORICI

Natalija Vrečer, mag., piše doktorat o antropologiji beguncev in begunk na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Ljubljana. Zaposlena je na Mirovnem inštitutu v Ljubljani. Njen strokovni interes je zlasti v prepletanju psihološke in feministične antropologije z begunskimi študijami in problematiko človekovih pravic. Objavila je številne članke iz omenjenih (pod)disciplin in uredila zbornik Vsakdanje življenje beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji.

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# THE PROBLEM OF LONGEVITY AND DEATH IN DAOISM

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Maja Milčinski

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339

## IZVLEČEK

### **Problem dolgoživosti in smrti v daoizmu**

Članek obravnava odnosa Zhuang Zi-ja in Lie Zi-ja do resnice na primeru njunih pojmovanj smrti in njihove opise intuitivnega razumevanja Poti, do katerega sta pogosto prišla prek razsvetljenja. Poleg razumevanja jezika sta postavila v ospredje zanimanja smrt, saj njuni filozofski diskurzi ne gradijo na izkušnjah resnic pri razmišljanju o svetu, temveč na bivanju v svetu, ki pa, seveda, vključuje tudi probleme dolgoživosti, življenja in smrti (kot pomembnega dela procesa življenja) ter različnih praks, povezanih z eksistenco telesa, postajanja, spreminjanja in izginjanja. Zhuang Zi-jeva in Lie Zi-jeva pojmovanja so soočena z evropskimi modeli soočanja s smrtjo. Za slednje so značilni usodna zanemarjenost neznana magična sila, ki napravi človeka nemočnega, ko se sooči s smrtjo; na smrt se gleda kot na božjo kazen; proces je mogoče racionalno opazovati, vendar le, ko umira nekdo drug, ne mi sami; zadržani poskusi asimiliranja idej o smrti.

Predstavljene so različne podobe smrti iz kitajskih filozofskih in religijskih virov. Posebna pozornost je usmerjena v Lie Zi-jevo sedmo poglavje, kjer poteka pogovor med mojstrom in enim izmed njegovih učencev o temeljnih dilemah človeške eksistence. Poudarek je na treh stopnjah te debate, ki je še vedno tako aktualna kot takrat, ko je bilo besedilo Lie Zi napisano:

- prva stopnja: o nezmožnosti doseganja nesmrtnosti
- druga stopnja: o absurdnosti poskusov doseganja dolgoživosti
- tretja stopnja: o danih perspektivah človeške eksistence in smislu ter nesmislu samomora.

**Ključne besede:** kitajska filozofija, daoizem, smrt, samomor, nesmrtnost

**Key words:** Chinese philosophy, daoism, death, suicide, immortality

The stories known under the names Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi present the masters as mystics to whom the emptiness and silence are their homeland and again next time as wise men who confronted with the basic existential questions that vividly burn everyone are staying very much down to earth while confronting the disciples who grow dumb at their answers.

This second side of Lie Zi - be it a real man of flesh and blood, or just a imaginary group of wise and unknown people who most probably at the time of their lives have not

even known for one and the other - will be presented here on the basis of one of the stories, or better a dialogue, which is given in the text known as *Lie Zi*.<sup>1</sup> I shall allow myself to construct also a commentary to the story in his style, not as an abstract philosophical tractatus, but as into our time (and into European world) moved image of a human being who is writhing with burden of existentials, which are not spared to anyone of us.

As for the problem of life in death, I would like, before moving to *Lie Zi* mention also two *Zhuang Zi*'s understandings of life and death.

340

"So it is said, with the sage, his life is the working of Heaven, his death the transformation of things. /.../ His life is a floating, his death a rest. He does not ponder or scheme, does not plot for the future. A man of light, he does not shine; of good faith, he keeps no promises. He sleeps without dreaming, wakes without worry. His spirit is pure and clean, his soul never wearied. In emptiness, nonbeing, and limpidity, he joins with the Virtue of Heaven."<sup>2</sup> or:

"Life is the companion of death, death is the beginning of life. Who understands their workings? Man's life is a coming together of breath. If it comes together, there is life; if it scatters, there is death. And if life and death are companions to each other, then what is there for us to be anxious about."<sup>3</sup>

To reach the point where life and death become "unimportant" to us, so that we look upon them with equanimity, we have to dive into the Void. This idea we also meet elsewhere. With the Daoists and in Buddhism, it is not directly connected with the dialogue about Emptiness; instead, the debate is about Dao, Nothingness, the search for truth, and the meaning of life and death. At the beginning of all these quests, the illusion of a stable Ego that continues on and on appears as an obstacle. Around this illusion, a system of categorizing phenomena builds up, trapping a person in stereotyped evaluations of things and events.

This is also the case in the dialogue from the *Lie Zi*<sup>4</sup> in which two persons appear:

**Yang Zi** - a learned and experienced man and **Meng Sun Yang** who could be also somebody from today's world, who might, although healthy, entering the advanced age feel and anticipate that his bodily and mental functions are slowly drying up. After the years spent in prosperity and in accumulation of learning, the life events have reminded him of a "a very simple, clear, and rather foolish truth, the truth, that is not easy to discover, and very painful to bear, namely, 'that the people die and are not happy'".<sup>5</sup> When on horizon the death appears he starts the search for immortality. This is where the story begins:

"Meng Sun Yang asked Yang Chu:

'Suppose that a man values his life and takes care of his body;

<sup>1</sup> *Lie Zi ji shi*. Zhonghua shuju. Beijing, 1985. The quotations for this paper are taken from the English translation of *Lie Zi: The Book of Lieh-tzu*, A.C.Graham (trans.). Columbia University Press, New York, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> *Chuang-tzu. The Inner Chapters*, A.C.Graham (trans.). Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1981, p. 168-169.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1., p. 147-148.

<sup>5</sup> Camus, A., *Caligula*. Gallimard, Paris, 1984.

may we hope by such means to live for ever?"

"It is impossible to live for ever."<sup>6</sup>

Meng Sun Yang might have, although with anxiety expect such an answer. As much as the religious Daoism (dao-jiao) after all its alchemical undertakings could not offer the magical elixir, which would enable the human being to reach immortality, did also the European science, although in a more concealed manner, nurture such aspirations. They were as unsuccessful as the ones of Daoists.

Freud has shown how deeply rooted this aspiration is<sup>7</sup>:

"Our relation (towards death) has not been sincere. During conversation we have been prepared to defend the standpoint that death is an unavoidable outcome of everything alive, that everybody of us by one's nature is bound for one's death and has to be prepared to settle the debt, since death is something natural and cannot be denied or avoided. However in everyday reality we usually behave as that it would be completely different. We have been very open to disclose the tendency to shove the death aside, to exclude it from life. We have tried to conceal it; since there exist even a proverb: 'I have been thinking about this as much as about my own death.' Namely, not at all. Our own death cannot even be imagined and as soon as we try it, we realize, that we are just the observers. According to this, in the psychoanalytic school we would risk such a formulation: In essence, nobody really believes in one's own death, which is actually the same as: Subconsciously we are all sure into our own immortality."<sup>8</sup>

Anybody who is able to assimilate such an insight is already quite far, however, we are not sure if Meng Sun Yang succeeded in it, since he continues with his questions to the master, who patiently keeps on answering him:

"May he hope to prolong his life?"

"It is impossible to prolong life. Valuing life cannot preserve it, taking care of the body cannot do it good. Besides, what is the point of prolonging life? Our five passions, our likes and dislikes, are the same now as they were of old. We have heard it already, seen it already, experienced it already. Even a hundred years is enough to satiate us; could we endure the bitterness of still longer life?"<sup>8</sup>

Could Meng Sun Yang realize that with such questions he is still - although through the back door - pushing for immortality. In this regard one of Bible's story, The Book of Job, is very instructive. It starts as:

"There lived in the land of Uz a man of blameless and upright life named Job, who feared God and set his face against wrongdoing. He had seven sons and three daughters; and he owned seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred asses, with a large number of slaves. Thus Job was the greatest man in all the East."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 4. 0

<sup>7</sup> Freud, S., *Zeitgemässes über Krieg und Tod*. Gesammelte Werke. S. Fischer V., Frankfurt/M, 1972, X., p. 323-355.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Study Bible. Rev. stand. version, Eyre Spottiswoode. London, 1980. The Book of Job.



God took a liking to him, but the evil spirit Satan, persuaded God to test Job again. Satan assumed that the man was showing honesty, justice and piety only to keep the big estate that he had been given, and together with this also the reputation which he was enjoying amongst his people. God followed Satan's inspiration.

Calamities now overcame Job: First, Caldeans stole all the cattle, the thunder bolt killed all the stablemen, a hurricane destroyed the house and killed the children that were playing there. However, this immense misfortune did not weaken the righteous Job.

"At this Job stood up and rent his cloak; then he shaved his head and fell prostrate on the ground, saying:

Naked I came from the womb,  
naked I shall return whence I came.  
The LORD gives and the LORD takes away;  
blessed be the name of the LORD.

Throughout all this Job did not sin; he did not charge God with unreason."<sup>10</sup>

This test still did not satisfy Satan. He persuaded God to strike Job also bodily. In the illness that followed, Job suffered many ulcers over his entire body. He could not remain in the house and retired to the rubbish-heap. Even his wife made fun out of him "Are you still unshaken in your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he answered, "You talk as any wicked fool of a woman might talk. If we accept good from God, shall we not accept evil?" Throughout all this, Job did not utter one sinful word.

His friends came for a visit to make some wise statements, such as, "he must have some heavy sins upon him", that he was so heavily stricken by God. They scolded him when he begged God to tell him what his guilt was and they said to fear God was wise and intelligent and if he did this he would avoid misfortune. He suffered such pains that he regretted the day he was born.

Finally God in his omnipotence was revealed to Job. "Who is blaming God is responsible", and to this Job could only answer: "I know now, that you are omnipotent. That is why I relent and I repent in dust and ash." The Bible concludes: "Furthermore, the LORD blessed the end of Job's life more than the beginning; and he had fourteen thousand head of small cattle and six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and as many she-asses. He had seven sons and three daughters; and he named his eldest daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Kerenhappuch. There were no women in all the world so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance with their brothers.

Thereafter Job lived another hundred and forty years, he saw his sons and his grandsons to four generations, and died at a very great age."<sup>11</sup>

The lesson of this naive story, for which it is not clear how it came into the Bible is: you will live long and be blessed on the earth, if of course you will obediently believe into the anthropomorphic God, who not only is absolutely omniscient and omnipotent,

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

since he has all the time by his side advisor Satan, who can order various additional tests for the devotedness of single individual to the God. The reward for good behavior is, as we see, longevity and material prosperity. In Job's story the possibility that Job might have been rewarded for his loyalty with a period of longevity and prosperity, one hundred and forty years of life, several thousands of camels, and that the death would be moving *ad calendae Graecas*, is not denied.

This in fact, is well known psychodynamic mechanism of shoving aside of the unpleasant notions from the field of consciousness, which we saw was very familiar also to Meng Sun Yang. Once again Yang Zi placed him on ground while showing him, how monotonous everything what happens with us in this world from day to day and year to year is, especially if one sees the world and life from a little higher perspective. It is even harder for a person captured into the fringes of intrusive banalities which keep him in the whirlpool from which one cannot see any outlet.

Such was also Meng Sun Yang's situation who said:

"If it is so, and if destruction is better then prolonged life, you can get what you want by treading on blades and spearpoints, rushing into and boiling water.<sup>12</sup>

Seneca, as we know offered this model and has used it himself. "It is not important, if a person dies sooner or later, but only if one dies with dignity and has therefore all the rights to choose the death, which is most convenient for oneself", wrote Seneca in his 70<sup>th</sup> letter to "his friend Lucilius".<sup>13</sup>

However, if we imagine Meng Sung Yang as our contemporary who followed professional and social trends, we would know how the suicide rate, especially in Central Europe is growing and is becoming an entirely legitimate cause of death. Even suicidologists have started to talk about the right to suicide and recall a booklet with the title "Suicide, Mode d'Emploi-Histoire-Technique-Actualité!"<sup>14</sup> Even International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) cannot do anything against such trends. Meng Sun Yang would know that the dictum by St. Augustine (354-430) "Qui se ipsum occidit homicida est"<sup>15</sup> and all the reprisals, that have been carried in this early Christian era, are not of any use today.

Yang Zi has transcended such approaches by:

"No. While you are alive, resign yourself and let life run its course; satisfy all your desires and wait for death. When it is time to die, resign yourself and let death run its course; go right to your destination, which is extinction. Be resigned to everything, let everything run its course; why need you delay it or speed it on its way?"<sup>16</sup>

Yang Zi's views on life cannot be limited to a medical pragmatics which governs today's debate on life, death and suicide. He thinks, that when one is freed from doubts

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. I.

<sup>13</sup> Seneca, *Pisma prijatelju*. Obzorja, Maribor, 1966; VIII/70, p. 201-206.

<sup>14</sup> Soubrier, J.P., *La prevention du suicide, est-elle encore possible depuis la publication autorisee d'un livre intitulé: "Suicide. Mode d'Emploi-Histoire-Technique-Actualité?"*. Crisis, 1984; 5/2, p. 119-124.

<sup>15</sup> Agostino, S.A., *La città di Dio*, C.Costa ed. Soc. editrice internazionale, Torino, 1939; I, p. 17-27, 91.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. I.

of a kind under which Meng Sun Yang has suffered, also the questions of life and death (and by it also of suicide) are transcended. By this one is also ready to accept all what is left when the question of life and death are transcended. This, however, is a long path.

In the 7th chapter of *The Book of Lie Zi* (Yang Zhu) the basic problems of existence in classical China are discussed as relevant as we see them today. To ask a daoist philosopher for advice on how to become immortal might not have been, at the time when this was happening, naive or obviously absurd. Welch<sup>17</sup> stated that although the daoist movement has always been a mixture of heterogeneous elements among which were philosophy, everyday hygiene, church duties and especially alchemy, they never really became a compound. In the realm of alchemist elements we can count also the stories about a mystical island Pen Lai, which at the time was searched for by various expeditions. It was believed that the people who lived there, did not know death, because they possessed the elixir of life which had been discovered by alchemist sciences. It is supposed that it was the otherwise poisonous compound of cinnabar and mercury-sulphide.

C.G. Jung described the attitude towards death<sup>18</sup> as: "Life is energy stream, which is in principle irreversible and very clearly orientated /.../ on standstill as its aim. /.../ As the curve of the projectile ends in its aim, the life ends in death, which therefore is the aim of all life. Even its ascent and climax are but the steps and means for reaching this aim, death namely." This is logical and acceptable.

In the time of classical Chinese philosophy there lived in Palestine an unknown teacher who described himself as Qohelet, which would mean in Hebrew "gatherer". He wrote a book which has been accepted into Biblical canon as "Ecclesiastes" and is since then an important chapter of the Old Testament. The frame of the book is the insight that everything is nothingness and that death is the border which destroys and unpredictably crosses all human plans and endeavors. The direct consequences of this are hatred to life and desperation<sup>19</sup>. In this connection it might be instructive to quote some of the thoughts from Ecclesiastes which are very close to Yang Zi's arguments against the striving for longevity:

"What do people gain from all the toil  
at which they toil under the sun?  
A generation goes, and a generation comes,  
but the earth remains forever.  
The sun rises and the sun goes down,  
and hurries to the place where it rises.  
The wind blows to the south,  
and goes around to the north;  
round and round goes the wind,  
and on its circuits the wind returns.

<sup>17</sup> Welch, H.: *The Parting of the Way*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1957, p. 216.

<sup>18</sup> Jung, C.G.: *Seele und Tod* (1934). In: Jung, C.G.: *Wirklichkeit der Seele*. DTV, München, 1992, p. 117-127.

<sup>19</sup> *Sveto pismo, Stara zaveza II*, Pridigar, 595-616. Levantinski škofijski ordinariat v Mariboru, 1958; *The Holy Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1990, p. 614-626 (Ecclesiastes).

All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they continue to flow.  
All things are wearisome;  
more than one can express;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
or the ear filled with hearing.  
What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is  
what will be done;  
there is nothing new under the sun."<sup>20</sup>

Consequently Ecclesiastes discovers the vanity of the seeming values which are worshiped by people: Wisdom? "What happens to the fool will happen to me also; why then have I been so very wise?"<sup>21</sup> Effort? "I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the wise who come after me - and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish?"<sup>22</sup> Anyway: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die;"<sup>23</sup> "a time for war and a time for peace;"<sup>24</sup> "nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it;"<sup>25</sup> "for the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other."<sup>26</sup> "The same fate comes to all, to the clean and the unclean."<sup>27</sup>

The rich man, Ecclesiastes, has started to indulge in debauchery. No experience could reform his final judgement: Vanity beyond all vanity. Everything is vain!

Such certainly is one of the typical situations which invite thoughts of suicide. How would the doctors today perceive such a suicidal intention? If Meng Sun Yang would really commit such an act, they would describe it as "rational suicide", committed in a lucid mental state. Medicine against the will of that person has no right to intervene. If it is so, we can ask ourselves if the real prevention of suicide is not actually in the field of philosophy and religion. This however cannot be put directly in the spirit of moral condemnation and prohibition, as it was in the case of St. Augustine. The repercussions of such an act were therefore extremely shameful in regard to the body of the deceased as well as to his family. It is strange, but true, that nowadays even the "International Association for Suicide Prevention" has to take a more tolerant approach to the phenomenon of suicide in a society which proceeds even to the gradual

<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastes 1/3-9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 2/15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 2/18, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 3/1, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 3/8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 3/14.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 3/19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 9/2.

liberalization of euthanasia. All kinds of pragmatic approaches in regard to the prevention of suicide, as can be grasped from the statistical standpoint, remain sterile.

How did Master Yang Zi deal with Meng Sun Yang's provocation?

"Be resigned to everything, let everything run its course; why need you delay it or speed it on its way?"<sup>28</sup>

It is worth analyzing these final words: the point of this final wisdom is that anyone who is about to retain one's essence and dignity has to accept one's own impermanence, without restraining the earthly pleasures when there is time for them. To combine these two approaches one has to take farewell of one's life at the time of one's life. Yang Zi however does not mean that one should commit suicide while still young but rather something close to Meister Eckhart's<sup>29</sup> "Abgescheidenheit" (or "Abgeschiedenheit"), translated as "detachment", but might be explained with the sense of separation, objectivity, self-reliance, equanimity. Some would describe this as a complete standstill, rest in oneself; to be with oneself in the soul, in regard to the people and the world to remain withdrawn. However this state is not the same as that practised by a stoic who has withdrawn from life and is keeping oneself far from the reach of any emotion, joy or suffering. "The detached person", according to Meister Eckhart is the way Jesus Christ was able to live his passion in complete detachment. He was able to live, suffer and rejoice while remaining detached (germ. "ledig") to everyday outer reality.

In the same way we can read Ecclesiastes in its basic lamentation. Not to deny reality as it is offered to us, but to accept it with a certain reserve. When we already think that Ecclesiastes transcended his pessimism, namely when he gives his toast to the young, encouraging them to take joy in life, he darkens this very stimulative pasus with the perspective that one has to pay for the joys:

"Rejoice, young man, while you are young, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Follow the inclination of your heart and the desire of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement."<sup>30</sup>

He remains bitter to the end of his life. The joys of life are darkened in advance with the perspective of death and final judgement after it. Since he was not able to accept the endless cycle of life and impermanence, the one that has been so clearly described by Rabindranath Tagore, an Indian philosopher and poet (1861-1941): ".../ And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away, in the very next moment to find in the left one its consolation."<sup>31</sup>

As Meng Sun Yang has thought - when death approaches one has to perceive it as unimportant, as well, and give in. We can borrow the illustration of this phase in human life from the final days of Socrates as described in Platon's *Phaidon*<sup>32</sup>. When ac-

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. I, p. 148.

<sup>29</sup> V: Maître Eckhart: Du détachement et autres textes. Jarczyk, Laborriere ed. Rivages poche. Payot, Paris, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 20, 11/9.

<sup>31</sup> Tagore, R.: *Gitanjali*. Macmillan, London, 1913, 87.

<sup>32</sup> Platon: *Poslednji dnevi Sokrata*. Slovenska matica, Ljubljana, 1988; *Faidon*, 117-238.

cused by the traditional, conservative stream in Athens in 399 b.Ch., it is obvious from his defense that his attitude is to let himself be killed and thereby fulfill his last mission.<sup>33</sup> That was the door into the Essential - the Real - all that for which he was striving in his life. However he did deny suicide and kept to the notions of orphics and Pitagoreans<sup>34</sup> that the people should be like guardians in life - and never leave the place until we are dismissed. His attitude was that one should not kill oneself until God notifies you, which was the situation that he himself was in. It is time to die - that was also what his inner voice (daimonion) had been telling him.

As to Yang Zi, who had been trying to describe the situation "when the death is approaching" to Meng Sun Yang, one could understand it also in the way how Socrates, under the influence of hemlock, was expecting his death and yet kept teaching, sometimes also in a very ironic way as when he told pragmatist Crito: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius, will you remember to pay the debt?"<sup>35</sup> Why should he have any debts toward the god of medicine Asclepius and his subordinates? Because they found such a practical method of euthanasia?

The above patterns of approaching human existence are although distanced in time and space, very similar in certain basic conceptions about life, death and suicide.

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Maja Milčinski, dr., je poučevala in raziskovala na več univerzah v Aziji, Evropi in Kanadi. Sedaj je izredna profesorica za azijske filozofije in religije na Oddelku za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani in na Teološki fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. V slovenščino je prevedla devet knjig iz klasične kitajščine in japonščine. Je avtorica del *Kitajska in japonska modrost* (1999), *Kitajska in Japonska med religijo in filozofijo* (1995), *Pot praznine in tišine* (1992) ter številnih člankov, objavljenih v Evropi, ZDA, na Kitajskem in Japonskem.

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<sup>33</sup> Guardini, R.: *Der Tod des Sokrates*. Rowohlt, Hamburg, 1958, p. 171.

<sup>34</sup> Pitagora (570-496 b.Ch.).

<sup>35</sup> The works of Plato, p. 189. The Modern Library, New York, 1956.



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# POJMOVANJE SMRTI V STARI MEHIKI IN RELIGIOZNI SINKRETIZEM V DANAŠNJIH OBREDIH OB SMRTI

(s posebnim poudarkom na kulturi *zoque*, Chiapas)

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Marija Mojca Terčelj

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349

**Ključne besede:** Mehika, smrt, humor, obredi

*!Dime cómo mueres y te diré quién eres!*  
(Povej mi, kako umreš in ti povem, kdo si!)  
(mehiški pregovor)

Tujec, ki ne pozna mehiškega predkrščanskega izročila in njegovega specifičnega odnosa do smrti, ostane v dneh pred prvim novembrom več kot osupel ob pogledu na skladovnice sladkornih okostnjakov in mrtvaških glav, ki krasijo poulične stojnice večjih mest v osrednji Mehiki. Dobrih štirinajst dni pred 1. novembrom kupujejo Mehičani posebne sladke kruhke v obliki okostnjakov, mrtvaške igrače in čokoladne lobanje, ki jih poklanjajo prijateljem in sorodnikom. S pisanih lobanj se smeji imena "Jorge", "Pepe", "Oscar" itd. Obdarovanje in uživanje lastne smrti spremlja poseben humor. Prijatelji si med seboj poklanjajo tudi lističe z duhovitimi in pikrimi domislicami na račun človeških napak, življenja in smrti, kot na primer<sup>1</sup>:

Mojca vino a los zoques estudiar,  
para lograr un sabio doctorado,  
más, nunca se puso a pensar,  
que su sapiencia aquí ha fracasado.

Más un día arribó la Calaca  
y la llevó a pasear entre tumbas  
sin saber que le gustaba la maraca  
y el ritmo de sabrosas cumbias.

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<sup>1</sup> Mojca je prišla študirat Soke,  
da dosegla bi učeni doktorat;  
a nikoli ni pomislila,  
da bo znanost njena tu propadla.  
In že jo Smrt, prilizjenka, povleče,  
da skupaj z drugimi skeleti zdaj uživa  
vsa svoja umna dela in ves študij -  
v temni luknji pleše svoj *danzón*.

Prišla je neki dan Lobanja,  
jo peljala med grobove na sprehod,  
ne da bi vedela, da tudi ples ji všeč je  
in ritem vroče kumbije.



Ya que, zalamera, la Muerte la atrajo,  
y, junto a otros esqueletos disfruta  
de grandes estudios y mucho trabajo  
bailando danzón en tenebrosa gruta.

V Mizquicu, majhnem kraju blizu glavnega mesta, prirejajo vsako leto 1. novembra tako imenovani "festival mrtvaških glav", na katerem podelijo nagrade za najboljše kostume in igrače. Zadnji dve desetletji se po Mizquicu sprehajajo tudi "Batmani", "Drakule" in podobni filmski junaki, uvoženi iz Združenih držav Amerike. Izdelovanje sladkornih mrtvaških glav je pravzaprav mehiška izpeljanka anglosaksonskih buč na vse svete - *Halloweena*, le da je uživanje tovrstnih sladkarij povsem mehiška specifičnost. Prav tako je mehiška specifičnost, če na eni najprometnejših avenij Ciudadada de México doživite naslednje: široka povorka spremlja okrašeno krsto, pred katero stopajo elegantni *mariachis* v blišču in zvoku glasnih trobent, promet pa usmerjajo veseli klovni v živopisanih oblačilih, ki s konfeti obmetavajo mimooidoče.

Če se oddaljimo od večjih urbanih središč, bomo spoznali malce drugačno podobo praznovanja 1. novembra. Mehiško podeželje ne pozna sladkornih mrtvaških glav, povork in festivalov, goji pa bogat repertoar tisočletja starega kulta prednikov, ki si je v zadnjih petsto letih nadel sinkretično podobo "vseh živih in vseh mrtvih". Praznovanje smrti, s specifičnim poudarkom na obredju pokojnih prednikov, zavzema v mehiškem prazničnem letu posebno mesto. Ponekod se začne že na dan svetega Luke (18. oktober) in traja vse do svetega Andreja (30. november), kulminacijo pa doseže 1., 2., in 3. novembra. Za različne avtohtone etnične skupine, kot tudi za mestiško prebivalstvo, vsi sveti niso le spomin na umrle, ampak resnično srečanje dveh svetov: sveta živih in sveta rajnih. Pokojniki v prvih dneh novembra obiščejo svoje domove, na kar se živi skrbno pripravijo. Različne avtohtone skupine in tudi mestici olepšajo hišne oltarje in pripravijo praznična jedila, med katerimi ne sme manjkati *tamales*<sup>2</sup>, sladkega kruhka in kuhane čokolade<sup>3</sup>.

Sokeji<sup>4</sup> in Maji iz Chiapasa okrasijo hišne oltarje, na katerih so podobe družinskih zaščitnikov in pokojnikov. Čez oltarje obokajo zeleno vejevje, med katerim prednjačijo veje ameriškega visokogorskega bora (*ocote*), ki ga tudi sicer najpogosteje uporabljajo v obredne namene. Med cvetjem, ki ga prejmejo pokojniki so najbolj zastopane naslednje

<sup>2</sup> *Tamal*: koruzna masa z dodatkom fižola, pikantne omake, mesa in (ali) zelišč, zavita v koruzni ali palmov list.

<sup>3</sup> Sladko čokoladno pijačo, *caca*, *cacao* (soke) ali *chocolatl* (nahua), pripravljajo v Mehiki na star. srednjeameriški način: v litru vode vrejo tri kroglice surove kakavove mase (vsaj pol ure do uro), ki ji dodajo nekaj sladkorja. Ko je pijača dovolj homogena, jo v majhnih bučkah ponudijo. Beseda *caca*, ki izvira iz proto mixe-zoque-popoluca jezika, se je oblikovala približno 1400 pr. Kr. na obali Soconusca (Chiapas), kjer je predolmeško prebivalstvo začelo udomačevati koruzo, fižol, buče, čilsko papriko in kakav, ki so postali glavne živilske sestavine stalno naseljenih visoko razvitih poljedelskih civilizacij Srednje Amerike: Olmekov, Majjev, Toltekov in Mexikov.

<sup>4</sup> Praznovanje vseh svetih sem v Mehiki opazovala štirikrat: oktobra in novembra 1990 in 1991 v vaseh Pantepec in Tapalapa v severovzhodni kordiljeri Chiapasa (Soke), 1996 v Pantepecu in v Zahodnem chiapaškem visokogorju (Maya-Tzotzil) in 1997 v Tuxtli Gutiérrezu (Soke).

cvetlice: tagetes<sup>5</sup>, lilije, kale, marjete in krizanteme.<sup>6</sup> Pred podobami prednikov prižgejo sveče ter *copal*<sup>7</sup> in vmes postavijo obredno hrano in pijačo. Tla pred oltarji posipajo z borovimi iglicami. Sveče in kadila morajo biti prižgane ves čas praznovanja, tako kot je tudi hrana izpostavljena na njem ves čas od 31. oktobra do 3. novembra. Jedi, ki jih navadno ponudijo pokojnikom, so: *tamales*, narejeni iz palmovih listov, mali sladki kruhki, kuhana čokolada, kava ter žganje in cigarete, če je pokojnik kadil in užival alkohol. Poleg vsega tega ponudijo pokojniku tudi tisto jed, ki jo je najraje užival. Sokeji pravijo, da duše sicer ne morejo jesti te hrane, vonjajo pa jo, kar da je isto.

Medtem ko poteka domača priprava na srečanje Sokejev in njihovih prednikov že nekaj dni pred prvim novembrom, pa čiščenje, barvanje in krašenje grobov poteka šele prvega dopoldne. Podobno je tudi med gorskimi Maji. Pokopališč skozi vse leto ne obiskujejo (prednike imajo doma na oltarjih), tako da je treba prvega novembra zjutraj najprej zavilhteti mačeto in počistiti grmovje, da se nato lahko začne okraševanje grobov. Nagrobno okrasje je podobno oltarnemu: čez grob obokajo veje *ocote*-ja, ki so jih okrasili s cvetjem, pod to pa naslednji dan postavijo hrano, sveče in kadila, enako kot na domačih oltarjih.<sup>8</sup>

Prvega novembra popoldne preživijo Sokeji doma, kjer se ob hišnih oltarjih sreča vsa družina. Šele 2. novembra gredo na pokopališče. Pokojnikom igrajo na instrumente - navadno na *jarano*, doma izdelano violino in kitaro - se z njimi pogovarjajo, jedo in pijejo.<sup>9</sup> 3. novembra obiskujejo Sokeji iz Chiapasa grobove svojih otrok<sup>10</sup>, nekateri Indijanci pa ta dan počastijo pokojnike, ki so umrli nasilne smrti. Med umrlimi vlada namreč posebna hierarhija in temu primerno je praznovanje: samo dušam odraslih in pošteno umrlih pripada osrednje praznovanje. Ker duše umrlih lahko škodijo zdravju in psihofizični harmoniji živih, se je treba od njih pravočasno posloviti.<sup>11</sup>

Po predkrščanskem izročilu Sokejev zaznavajo duše umrlih (kot vsa druga transcendentna bitja) realnost živih samo prek vonja in zvoka, zato je edina možna komu-

<sup>5</sup> "Flor de muerto" ali cvet pokojnika, kakor tej močno dišeči oranžni cvetlici pravijo mestici, imenujejo Sokeji *anima joya*, Indijanci Nahua pa *sempuchi* ali *cempasuchi*.<sup>5</sup> Dišeče oranžne cvetove *tagetes*a uporabljajo Sokeji, Maji in Nahuaji tudi pri zdravljenju, zlasti pri t.i. *limpias* ("čiščenjih": v primeru, ko zdravljene "izgubi dušo") in vročih kopalih (v primeru podhlajenja).

<sup>6</sup> Kale, marjete in lilije rastejo v Sierru de Pantepec (pribl. 1300m nadm. viš.) kar v gozdu in v okolici naselij, medtem ko jih gorski Maji z območja San Cristóbal de las Casasa posebej gojijo.

<sup>7</sup> Skupno ime za smolo različnih dreves iz družine *Burseraceae*, kateri dodajo lokalna zelišča, suhe vejice cimeta in druge dišavnice.

<sup>8</sup> V Pantepecu ima le nekaj grobov kamnite nagrobne. To so grobovi tako imenovani *ladinos* (akulturirano avtohtono prebivalstvo), vse drugo so parcele, zaznamovane s svetlimi modrozelenimi lesenimi križi, ki jih Indijanci vsakega prvega novembra zjutraj na novo prebarvajo.

<sup>9</sup> Nekateri mehiške indijanske skupine poznajo tudi nočne obiske grobov; na primer Taraski iz okolice jezera Pátzcuaro v Michoacanu, ki se v razsvetljenih čolnih ob polnoči spustijo z obale na pokopališče otoka Janitzio.

<sup>10</sup> Obstaja veliko etničnih in lokalnih različic; Totonaki iz Veracruzua, na primer, počastijo umrle otroke na *octavo*, osmi in deveti dan po vseh svetih.

<sup>11</sup> Ponekod, npr. v Veracruzuu, ob koncu praznovanja posipajo pot med domovi in pokopališčem s tagetesom, da se duše lažje vrnejo na tisto mesto, ki tostranstov povezuje z onstranstvom. Sokeji in gorski Maji poznajo različne zaščitne pred nevarnostjo duš, med drugim prav tagetes uporabljajo kot terapevtsko sredstvo.

nikacija med živimi in mrtvimi - med tostranstvo in onstranstvo - prek glasbe, dišav in kadil.<sup>12</sup> Uporaba številnih vonjev v obredju za rajne (cvetje, kadila, aromatična hrana in pijača, zlasti pa alkohol in tobak) postane s tem povsem jasna. Avditivne in olfaktorične stimulanse, značilne elemente tako imenovanih obredov prehodnosti (*rites de passage*), so antropologi našli med vsemi kulturami sveta, vendar jim nekatere, med njimi prav srednjeameriške, dajejo še posebej visoko označevalno vrednost.<sup>13</sup> Čutilni efekti postanejo konkretni simboli tranzicije, ker že sami po sebi vsebujejo (ali pa nakazujejo) spreminjanje. Obredna glasba, ropot, kadila in pijača pripomorejo k prehodu v "drugo" stanje in s tem označijo tudi prehod ključnih življenjskih in socialnih kategorij. Po ugotovitvah kanadske antropologije čutil pa obstaja še posebno tesna povezava med vonjem in prehodnostjo oziroma pojmom spremembe. Vzrok naj bi bil v sami vonjalni anatomiji in karakteristiki vonjav. Vonj je vedno v prehajanju, v spreminjanju, "that is because smells constantly escape from their objects, and because of the way they normally signal processes of transformation, ..., that they are used to mediate (and manage transition) between social categories"<sup>14</sup>.

## Religiozni sinkretizem

Da bomo bolje razumeli današnja sinkretična obredja smrti in pokojnikov, moramo nujno poznati pojmovanje smrti v predkolonialni Mehiki. O njem pričajo različni viri: materialni ostanki, predkolumbovski kodeksi in zgodnje kolonialne kronike. Če združimo drobce tega mozaika, dobimo le približno podobo predkolonialnega pojmovanja, saj so Španci temeljito počistili s pisanim gradivom. Tako je dal na primer prvi škof in kronist na polotoku Yucatán, Diego de Landa, zažgati vse majevske knjige, kasneje pa sam spisal zgodovino Majev.<sup>15</sup> Da jo je prikrojil, ni dvoma, saj je gledal z dvojnimi predsodki: evropskim racionalnim (partikularističnim) načinom mišljenja, ovitimi še v misijonarsko strast pokristjanjevanja.

Natančna določitev predšpanskih religiozih prvin je velikokrat nemogoča.<sup>16</sup> Pri tovrstnih analizah nam je v veliko pomoč metoda pokristjanjevanja. Substitucijska politika Katoliške cerkve je bila načrtna in premišljena: iskala je čim ustreznejše analogije, nadomeščala pomembnejše avtohtone kulte z obredjem pomembnejših svetnikov, pri

<sup>12</sup> Podobno vlogo glasbe, cvetja in dišav, prek katerih pridejo Sokeji v stik z zaščitniki rodovitnosti, smo pokazali na drugem mestu; glej: "Joyo naque, joyo soc toc - flor costurada, flor amarrada. Flor y el simbolismo de los floreados", *Cultura y etnicidad zoque*, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, UNICACH-UNACH, 1998, pp. 129-136.

<sup>13</sup> Prav zato so postali obredi prehodnosti med mehiškimi Indijanci, kot tudi med ljudstvi Indonezijskega arhipelaga (Moluca) in Indije, najbolj priljubljen predmet tako imenovane antropologije čutil.

<sup>14</sup> David Howes, "Olfaction and transition: an essay on the ritual uses of smell", in: *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 /3, 1987, p. 398.

<sup>15</sup> Diego de Landa: *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, 1557. (Ponatis v: Editorial Porrúa, México, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> Pri sestavljanju preteklosti moramo upoštevati kar najrazličnejše informacije; pri opiranju na enovrstne vire se rado zgodi, da zaidemo v zmotne razlage. Tako se včasih zgodi, da iščemo izvor v starih srednjeameriških kulturah, nazadnje pa odkrijemo, da ima religiozni element korenine v Evropi. Španci so skupaj s krščanstvom zanesli na novo celino tudi predrščanske prvine ibernskega polotoka in v Mehiki je prišlo do večkratnega sinkretizma.

čemur je lahko prišlo do naključnih prekrivanj ali pa do koledarske spremembe evropskih praznikov.

Praznik vseh svetih je v cerkveno praznično leto vpeljal papež Bonifacij IV v 7. stoletju.<sup>17</sup> Število mučencev je bilo tako naraslo, da jim Cerkev ni mogla pravično razdeliti godov. Zato je določila 13. maj za dan, ko se je spominjala vseh mučencev skupaj. Papež Gregor IV je iz praktičnih razlogov prestavil praznik s 13. maja na 1. november, kjer se je srečal s starodavnimi obredi za rajne duše. Verne duše (2. november) je uradna zahodna Katoliška cerkev priznala kot liturgični dan šele ob koncu 13. stoletja. Cerkev si je namreč ves srednji vek močno prizadevala ločiti uradno liturgijo od predkrščanskega obreda smrti in izkoreniniti poganski "kult prednikov". Že leta 390 je hotel Avguštin odpraviti šege uživanja hrane in pijače na grobovih, Amalarij iz Metz (780 - 850) pa je prvi vpeljal bogoslužje za umrle 2. novembra z utemeljitvijo, da je poganska obredja bolje nadomestiti kot pustiti nenadzorovana. Kljub dolgotrajnim prizadevanjem za reformo poganskih obredov so se ti v Evropi ohranili skozi stoletja, sprva na grobovih, kasneje kot hišni običaji. Danes spominjajo nanje le še prižiganje sveč in krašenje grobov. Darovanje hrane, pijače in kadil se je z grobov umaknilo na domove.<sup>18</sup> Po vsej Evropi je bila še dolgo ohranjena vera, da se rajni te dni vračajo na svoje domove ali pa na grobovih opazujejo žive.

Lahko bi torej sklepali, da je obredno uživanje hrane, obilica kadil in prisotnost glasbe na pokopališčih mehiških Indijancev morebiten vpliv Evrope. Da ni tako, bomo videli v nadaljevanju. Španci so, na podoben način kot v Evropi, hoteli izkoreniniti kult prednikov tudi na novi celini. Zakaj pa se je tam obdržal kljub petsto letom pokristjanjevanja, pa je naše nadaljnje vprašanje.

V 16. stoletju se je krščanstvo, pomešano s starimi iberskimi elementi, preselilo na novo celino in v Mehiki našlo še plodnejša tla. Tukaj so se bila med seboj oplodila že različna kulturna in verska izročila Srednje Amerike in se stalila v tisto obliko, ki so jo spoznali osvajalci in misionarji ob svojem prihodu.

Prvi kronisti šestnajstega stoletja: Bernardino Sahagún, Bernal Díaz de Castillo in Diego Durán poročajo o različnih praznovanjih v čast umrlih. Ta praznovanja so bila razporejena čez vse obredno koledarsko leto, največ pa jih je bilo med Azteki v njihovem 9., 10., 13., 14. in 18. mesecu.<sup>19</sup> Najpomembnejša praznika umrlih sta bila *Miccaiuhitl*, praznik "velike smrti" ali spomin na vse odrasle pokojnike, in pa *Miccalhuitontli*, praznik "male smrti" ali vseh umrlih otrok. Durán poroča, da je bil slednji praznik vseh nedolžno umrlih, pravkar rojenih ali mrtvorojenih otročičev, od tod pomanjševalnica v imenu. *Miccaiuhitl* so začeli praznovati 3. avgusta in ga nadaljevali 23. avgusta, ko so rajnim na grobove prinašali naslednje darove: *tamales*, kuhano čokolado, purane, sadje, cvetno okrasje, kadila ter podobe božanstev posmrtnega življenja in

<sup>17</sup> Niko Kuret, Praznično leto Slovencev, Družina, Ljubljana, 1989, str. 92-93.

<sup>18</sup> Mimogrede naj omenim, da sem pri terenskih raziskavah na Dolenjskem in Kozjanskem še pred dobrimi desetimi leti srečala običaj, da so v noči s 1. na 2. november pustili rajnim kozarec vina in kozarec vode na kuhinjski mizi.

<sup>19</sup> Azteško sončno leto je bilo razdeljeno na osemnajst časovnih enot po dvajset dni in se je končalo s petimi posebnimi presežnimi dnevi. Maji so poznali dva koledarja: sončnega, ki je bil prav tako razdeljen na osemnajst časovnih enot po dvajset dni, in obrednega, ki ga njihovi potomci v Chiapasu in Gvatemali še uporabljajo.

rodovitnosti, narejene iz široidnih semen in lubja. Durán tudi omenja, da so na grobovih obredno plesali in igrali. Ti obredi so bili v kolonialnem obdobju prestavljeni na 1. november, a so do današnjega dne ohranili veliko elementov, na primer: uživanje iste obredne hrane, glasba, cvetni darovi, kadila itd.

## Pojmovanje življenja in smrti

Religije in ideologije različnih civilizacij stare Mehike so temeljile na splošni kozmološki razlagi sveta in človeka v njem. To razlago je pogojevalo dobro in natančno opazovanje naravnega okolja, vremena in nebesnih teles. Stvarstvo so uravnale sile nasprotij, katerih temeljno je bilo - tako pri Majih kot pri Nahua: Praoče - Pramati. Iz tega prvega para sledi vsa nadaljnja dialektika: moško - žensko, svetloba - tema, vroče - hladno, močno - šibko, rojstvo - smrt, stvarjenje - uničenje itd.

Pojmovanje življenja je bilo v cikličnem ponavljanju: izničenje rojeva vnovično stvarjenje, smrt omogoča novo rojstvo. Rojstvo nosi seme smrti, tako kot smrt že vsebuje svoj antipod. Zato so bili isti bogovi udeleženi pri stvarjenju sveta (Quetzalcóatl, Tezcatlipoca) in pri njegovem izničenju. Bili so stvarniki in uničevalci hkrati. V tem tiči skrivnost nerazdružljivega prepletanja simbolov in obredij rodovitnosti in smrti.

Deseti mesec azteškega koledarja, v katerem so prebivalci Tenochtitlana obhajali enega svojih številnih praznikov smrti (*Miccailhuittl*), se je imenoval *xócotl huetzi* ali "pobiranje sadežev". V tem mesecu so se vrstila obredja rodovitnosti: darovanju cvetja (*tlaxochimaco*) in prazniku ognja je sledilo obredje "velikega drevesa", ko so posekali drevo s petindvajsetimi vejami in ga okrasili s plodovi "matere Zemlje" (koruza, sadje, cvetje, *tamales*). Drevo je moralo sprva ležati (horizontalna raven), kasneje pa so ga postavili pokonci in ga okrasili še s podobami bogov (vertikalna raven).

Elemente rodovitnosti in umiranja je vsebovalo tudi praznovanje boginje **Teteo innan**, imenovane **Toci** (kar pomeni "naša stara mati"). *Teteo innan* je bila mati vseh mehiških bogov, tudi stvariteljev, nekakšna "pramati". V enajstem mesecu so ji darovali plodove zemlje v obliki sadežev in hrane, hkrati pa tudi cvetove smrti *campoolxóchtli* ali tagetes. V štirinajstem mesecu ali *quecholli* so spomnili boga *Mixcóatl*. Darovali so mu sužnje, hrabrim vojščakom (bog je bil povezan z bojem) pa so na grobove postavili hrano, ki so jo nato zažgali (po naključju so to obredje izvajali okoli 1. novembra). Darovi in obredno uživanje hrane ob praznovanju mrtvih je bilo več kot le pomoč dušam v onstranstvu - bilo je simbol življenja oziroma vnovičnega življenja v smrti.

O nerazdružljivi povezavi življenja in smrti in njeni veliki simbolni vrednosti pričajo daritve človeških življenj, ki so jih namenjali vsem pomembnejšim bogovom stvarnikom. Obredna smrt je nosila poslanstvo prenavljanja oziroma vnovičnega vstajenja, zato so darovalci lastnih življenj pojmovali svojo smrt kot najvišji, transcendentni cilj. Umirali so s ponosom, saj so predstavljali samo božanstvo, kateremu so bili darovani. Sahagún poroča, da so se veselili tudi njihovi sorodniki, v trdni veri, da gredo žrtve neposredno k bogu.

Ženska, ki so jo darovali boginji Toci, je poosebljala samo boginjo. Obležena v njena oblačila je igrala božjo namestnico, zato so vsi njeni deli pomenili relikvijo. Tudi

sužnji, ki so jih prvega dne *xócotl huetzi* žive in z zvezanimi rokami in nogami pometali v ogenj, so predstavljali boga ognja *Xiuhtecutli*. Pobarvali so jih rumeno. Še preden so izdihnili, so jih izvlekli iz plamenov in jim izrezali srca. Ta so predstavljala božjo hrano, torej seme ali zametek novega ognja. Enako pomembno vlogo so imela srca (semena, sadeži) novega dežja in novega sonca. Določena božanstva so tudi uživali: darovane žrtve so razkosali, jih razdelili in pojedli, kar je pomenilo prilaščanje božje moči.

Religiozna simbolika stare Mehike je bila zelo figurativna in konkretna, vsaj ko je šlo za resnična človeška telesa. Azteki so poleg tega poznali tudi abstraktnjšo, simbolno obliko uživanja božjega telesa. Lomljenje širovega kruha, ki so ga bojevniki užili pred vojskovanjem, presenetljivo spominja na krščansko obhajilo. Z uživanjem tega kruha so vojščaki prejeli moč boga *Huizilopochtlija*. V tem primeru gre za isto simbolno obliko, ki jo pozna današnja krščanska evharistija.

**Napak bi bilo**, če bi trdili, da so vse srednjeameriške kulture poudarjale življenje in smrt na tako drastično ekspliciten način, kot sta ga poznala vrhunca dveh izrazito ekspanzivnih imperijev, azteškega in majevskega, ki sta fenomen človeškega darovanja vpeljala relativno pozno in bolj iz politično-ideoloških vzrokov, seveda z religiozno prevleko. Arheološke najdbe dokazujejo, da je izrazito poudarjanje človeških žrtev v večji meri prisotno šele v postklasičnem obdobju (900-1520 po Kr.).<sup>20</sup>

## Kozmični model

Vsaka mehiška piramida, ki je bila za podstavek templju, je upodabljala majhen kozmični model. Razvitejše civilizacije Srednje Amerike so si kozmično realnost predstavljale kot geometrijsko telo stopničasto piramidalne oblike, zgrajeno iz več horizontalnih ravni stvarnosti ali svetov, ki jih med seboj povezujejo vertikalne kozmične osi. Središče stvarstva je bil svet dane zemeljske realnosti. Imel je obliko pravokotnika, ki ga je na vsakem vogalu podpiral en božji steber (štirje *Tlaloki* pri Aztekih). Vsako stran neba je simboliziralo eno božanstvo, ena barva, lastnost itd. Središčno, navpično os so navadno upodabljali v obliki *ceibe*, svetega drevesa ali drevesa življenja. Središča vasi (trgi) gorskih Majev iz Chiapasa imajo še danes pravokotno obliko. V sredini trga stoji *ceiba*, na vsakem izhodu pa stoje po trije svetlo modri križi. Ti niso krščanski znak, temveč ostanek majevske dediščine. Križ je predstavljal štiri strani neba z vsemi njihovimi religiozno-simbolnimi pomeni. Prostor je v stari Mehiki igral več kot geometrijsko vlogo. Bil je svet.

Pod ravnjo tuzemske stvarnosti so si Maji predstavljali štiri spodnje svetove, Azteki pa v poznem obdobju kar devet. Vsak svet ali raven je igrala posebno vlogo in imela svojega božjega zaščitnika, navadno par. Enako so si predstavljali tudi zgornje ravni ali svetove. Maji so poznali devet zgornjih svetov, Azteki so jim dodali še štiri, tako jih je bilo skupaj trinajst. Najvišji zgornji svet je bil svet boga *Omeotla*, ki je imel moški in ženski značaj hkrati, najnižji spodnji svet pa je bilo kraljestvo smrti.

<sup>20</sup> Predhodne arheološke najdbe, razen nekaj izjem, ne upodabljajo človeških žrtev. Protooolmeške reliefne skulpture okostnjakov, ki so jih našli v Izapi v Chiapasu, so tako za svoj čas (8. st. pr. Kr.) prava izjema. Tudi v zgodnjeklasičnem obdobju (200-900 po Kr.) je tovrstnih upodobitev malo, saj so v Teotihuacanu našli le dve freski, ki predstavljata smrt.

## Bog življenja in bog smrti ter posmrtno življenje

Zemlja, kot štirivogalna ravna ploskev, je ljudstvom stare Mehike predstavljala središče stvarstva. Vladali so ji tako imenovani "gospodarji zemlje", z najstarejšo boginjo, iz katere so izšla vsa druga božanstva staromehiškega panteona. V neposredni povezavi s tem svetom so bili tudi bogovi, ki so podpirali zemeljsko ploščo in njene štiri vogale. Zgornje svetove so si stara mehiška ljudstva predstavljala kot "goro sveta" ali piramido s trinajstimi stopnicami, šestimi na vzhodu, šestimi na zahodu in eno središčno na vrhu neba. Različnim nebesnim ravnem so vladala različna božanstva, stvarniki človeka, živali in rastlin. Spodnji svetovi so v skladu z zgornjim oblikovali podzemno piramido z devetimi stopnicami spodnjega stvarstva, štirimi na zahodu, štirimi na vzhodu in središčno, ki ji je vladalo božanstvo podzemlja.

356

Sonce je v štiriindvajsetih urah obšlo vse stopnice: vsako jutro se je po vzhodnem stopnišču vzpelo do zenita in popoldne po zahodnem spustilo za obzorje. Od tod se je odpravilo na nočno pot. Tako kot mora ponoči sonce obiti vseh devet spodnjih svetov, so morale tudi duše umrlih na dolgo pot po devetih podzemljih, da so prišle v *Mictlán*, svet mrtvih ali senc (pri Aztekih), ki mu je vladal *Mictlantecuhtli*, bog smrti. Potovanje v *Mictlán* je bilo težko. Duše so šle najprej prek gora, potem prek osmih puščav, nazadnje pa so morale prebroditi široko reko. Celotna pot je trajala štiri leta, duše pa so bile ves ta čas izpostavljene nevarnostim: lahko so jih poškodovale krusljive skale, zadele strupene puščice ali ostri obsidianovi noži. Zato so poznala nekatera ljudstva stare Mehike posebna obredja za duše pokojnikov, ki so trajala natanko štiri leta po smrti svojcev. Tovrstna obredja so se v prirejeni obliki ohranila do danes. Sokeji jih po špansko imenujejo *cabo del ano*. Ob vsaki obletnici smrti postavijo pred pokojnikovo sliko na hišnem oltarju cvetje, kadila, sveče in hrano. Tla posipajo z borovimi iglicami, kamor pokleknejo poklicane žene molivke. Osem večerov zapovrstjo molijo rožni venec, deveti dan zjutraj pa vse darove s hišnega oltarja odnesejo na grob, kjer ponovijo deveti obred.

Vse duše pa niso šle v *Mictlán* - ta je bil le za tiste, ki so umrli normalne smrti. Junaška smrt je pokojnika vodila neposredno v nebo, v *Tonatiuh ichan*. Duše umrlih vojščakov so tam spremljale boga sonca na poti od vzhodnega obzorja do zenita, duše žena, umrlih pri porodu (*mohihua quetzque* ali "hrabre žene"), pa so ga spremljale od zenita do zahodnega obzorja. Po štirih letih so se spremenile v kolibrije. Duše umrlih v nesrečah (utopljeni, zadavljeni itd.) in po hudih boleznih so šle v *Tlalocan*, svet boga dežja *Tlaloca*. V *Tlalocanu* je vladala večna pomlad, trpljenja pa niso poznali. Otroška smrt je vodila v kraj blizu *Tlalocana*, v *Chichihuacuauhco*, kjer so morale duše čakati na uničenje tega sveta in reinkarnacijo v nova človeška bitja. Medtem so se hranile z mlekom, ki je kapljalo z vej svetega drevesa *huahuahuate*.

Medtem ko je dan rojstva (konstelacija zvezd in vpliv bogov) določal usodo življenja na zemlji, je usodo posmrtnega življenja določal način smrti. Mehiški pregovor še danes pravi: *Dime cómo mueres y te dire quien eres* ("Povej mi, kako umreš, in ti povem, kdo si!"). Zaslužno življenje na zemlji in moralne vrline, ki so še kako pomembne za posmrtno življenje kristjanov, niso imele nobenega vpliva na posmrtno življenje starih Majev in Mexikov. Prihodnost je bila v umiranju samem. Zaslužnejša smrt je določala zaslužnejše

posmrtno življenje. Sicer pa tudi navadna smrt ni vodila v pekel, temveč v *Mictlán*, kraj, kamor pridejo duše sicer res po dolgi in naporni poti, a ko pridejo, so deležne gostoljublja njegovega gospodarja *Mictlantecuhtlija*. Ljudstva stare Mehike niso poznala pekla in njegovega terorja kazni. V *Mictlánu* (ali *Metnali* pri Majih), ki je bil zadnji svet podzemlja, je tudi ponoči sijalo sonce in duše so živele podobno kot na tem svetu.

Ko govori o pojmovanju starosti, razlaga Laureano Reyes Gómez primerjavo sončnega obhoda s človeškim življenjem v današnjem izročilu Sokejev<sup>21</sup>. Sonce ima šestnajst različno poimenovanih dnevnih faz: vzhod, tri dopoldanske faze med vzhodom in zenitom, zenit, tri popoldanske faze med zenitom in zahodom, zahod, tri nočne faze med zahodom in polnočjo, polnoč ali čas nič in tri temne jutranje faze med polnočjo in vzhodom. Analogno sončnim fazam imenujejo Sokeji en zdrav življenjski cikel, na primer: *noman pijtu jama*<sup>22</sup> (dete), *kimun jama* (otrok pri osmih-devetih letih), *yujk jama* (adolescent - "ko sonce žge"), *kujk jama* (sončno poldne ali tudi "človekovo poldne"), *jama dsu'e* (zrelost), *tsai'a*, *pitse'a*, *notjeykah jama* (zaton), *tsu'an* itd. - adolescent je rastoče sonce, mladenič je poldne, zrel človek je rano popoldne, pozna srednja leta so več faz zahajajočega sonca (do devetinpetdesetega leta), s šestdesetim letom je človek vstopil v noč; od tega leta pa do petinosemdesetega poznajo Sokeji tri faze noči, ko nastopi "mrk" ali rizična točka odhoda. Opolnoči pride že na vrsto zanostitev, novo seme sonca, ki mu sledijo tri embriološke faze do rojstva ali vzhoda. Ta ekliptični obhod sonca (človeka) kaže na predkolumbovsko izročilo sončnega obhoda okoli piramide in na prepletanje smrti in novega rojstva. Smrt je torej prehod v novo rojstvo.

## Sklep

Naj sklenem svoj prispevek z naslednjimi mislimi:

Na območju današnje Mehike je kljub prepletanju več predkolumbovskih religioznih izročil in preplastevanju le-teh s krščanstvom mogoče ugotoviti, da so se med omenjenimi etničnimi skupinami ohranili tisti bistveni elementi, ki so povezani s predkolumbovskim, predazteškim in celo predmajevskim kultom rodovitnosti: življenja in smrti hkrati.

Medtem ko je načrtna španska evangelizacija uspela zabrisati meje med elementi različnih kulturnih izvorov in izkoreniniti marsikatero predšpansko religiozno prakso, so na dejanskem obrednem kot tudi miselno-simbolnem nivoju ostale zelo evidentne tiste kulturno-religiozne sestavine, ki so neposredno vezane na najbolj temeljno eksistencialno bistvo fizičnega in kulturnega preživetja določene (čeprav transformirane) družbe: njeno nadaljevanje. To je predvsem vidno v kultih rodovitnosti in kultih prednikov med preživelimi avtohtonimi skupinami. Navsezadnje je vidno tudi v dejstvu, da je mnogo elementov avtohtonih kultur prevzela mehiška mestiška in urbana sredina. Umreti v Mehiki, pa čeprav v tridesetmilijonskem glavnem mestu, ni isto kot umreti v Evropi.

<sup>21</sup> Laureano Reyes Gómez, "Gradación zoque de la edad", *Cultura y etnicidad zoque*, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, UNICACH-UNACH, 1998, pp. 167-187.

<sup>22</sup> *Jama* (hama) pomeni sonce.



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# THE CONCEPTION OF DEATH IN ANCIENT MEXICO AND THE RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM OF PRESENT-DAY DEATH RITUALS

(With Special Emphasis on the Zoque Culture, Chiapas)

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Marija Mojca Terčelj

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359

**Key words:** *Mexico, death, humor, rituals*

*!Dime cómo mueres y te diré quién eres!*  
(Tell me, how you die, and I'll tell you, who you are!)"  
(Mexican proverb)

A foreigner who is not acquainted with Mexican pre-Christian tradition and its specific attitude to death, could be surprised during the days preceding November 1 when he is confronted with the stacks of candy skeletons and skulls which embellish the street stalls of all major towns in central Mexico. About a fortnight prior to November 1, Mexicans buy special sweet bread with coils of dough depicting skeletons or skulls baked on top, toy skeletons and chocolate skulls, to present their friends and relatives with them. From these multi-coloured skulls names like "Jorge", "Pepe", "Oscar" smile at you. These presents and the indulgence in one's own death are accompanied by a particular kind of humour. Friends exchange little notes with witty and pungent ideas about human errors, life and death, like for instance<sup>1</sup>:

Mojca vino a los zoques estudiar,  
para lograr un sabio doctorado,  
más, nunca se puso a pensar,  
que su sapiencia aquí ha fracasado.

Más un día arribó la Calaca  
y la llevó a pasear entre tumbas  
sin saber que le gustaba la maraca  
y el ritmo de sabrosas cumbias.

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<sup>1</sup> Mojca came to study the Zoques,  
to become a learned doctor;  
but never did she think,  
that all her science would fall through here.

One day the Skull came,  
and took her for a walk among the graves,  
not knowing that she likes dancing too and the  
hot rhythm of the cumbia.

And look, the sweet talking Death is already dragging Mojca.  
To join the other skeletons and indulge  
in her highbrow works and bookish study -  
in a dark pit she now dances her *danzón*.

Ya que, zalamera, la Muerte la atrajo,  
y, junto a otros esqueletos disfruta  
de grandes estudios y mucho trabajo  
bailando danzón en tenebrosa gruta.

In Mizquico, a small place close to the capital, every year a "Festival of Skulls" is organised on November 1, during which prizes are given to the best costumes and toys. In the last two decades Mizquico has seen an invasion of "Batmen", "Draculas" and similar movie characters, imported from the USA. The making of sugar skulls is actually a Mexican derivative of the Anglo-Saxon *Halloween* pumpkins, but that the sweets are actually eaten is an exclusively Mexican phenomenon. Another entirely Mexican feature is the following scene on one of Mexico City's main avenues: a large parade accompanies a decorated coffin, in front of which elegant *mariachis* march in the glitter and sound of loud trumpets, while traffic is directed by merry clowns in multi-coloured clothes who sprinkle the spectators with confetti.

But as soon as we leave behind the major urban centres, we get to know a rather different kind of celebrations November 1. In the Mexican countryside there are no sugar skulls, parades or festivals: here people foster the rich repertoire of a millennia old ancestor cult which in the course of the past five hundred years has taken the syncretic image of "all living and all dead". Celebrating death with special emphasis on the ritual of the deceased ancestors occupies a special place in the Mexican festival calendar. In some places activities start as early as St Lucas' Day (October 18) and last until St Andrew's Day (November 30), culminating on November 1, 2 and 3. To the various autochthonous ethnic groups and to the mestizo population All Saints Day does not only remind them of the dead, but also of the real encounter of two worlds: the world of the living and that of the deceased. During the first days of November the deceased visit their homes and the living prepare for this occasion very carefully. The different autochthonous groups and mestizos ornate their house altars and prepare festival dishes which always include *tamales*<sup>2</sup>, sweet bread and *cacao*<sup>3</sup>.

The Zoques<sup>4</sup> and Mayas from Chiapas decorate their house altars on which we find portraits of the family's patron saints and of the deceased. Over the altars arches of green branches twigs are set up among which the major role is reserved for branches of the American high-mountain pine (*ocote*) which is generally used for ritual purpo-

<sup>2</sup> *Tamal*: maize dough with added beans, spicy sauce, meat and/or herbs, wrapped in a maize or palm leaf.

<sup>3</sup> Sweet chocolate drink, *caca*, *cacao* (Zoque) or *chocolatl* (Nahua) is prepared in Mexico in the old, Mesoamerican way: three cubes of raw cacao are boiled in one litre of water, to which some sugar is added (boiling takes half an hour to one hour). When the drink is homogenous enough, it is served in small cups. The word *caca* is derived from the proto Mixe-Zoque-Popoluca language which formed around 1400 BC on the coast of Soconusco (Chiapas), where a Pre-Olmec people domesticated maize, beans, pumpkins, Chilean peppers and cacao which later became the staple food of the permanently settled, highly developed agricultural civilisations of Mesoamerica: the Olmecs, Mayas, Toltecs and Mixtecs.

<sup>4</sup> I have been able to witness the celebration of All Saints in Mexico four times: in October and November of 1990 and 1991 in the villages of Pantepec and Tapalapa in the north-eastern cordillera of Chiapas (Zoque), in 1996 in Pantepec and in the western high mountains of Chiapas (Maya-Tzotzil), and in 1997 in Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Zoque).

ses. Among the flowers given to the deceased the most commonly used are: *tagetes*<sup>5</sup>, lilies, marigolds and chrysanthemums.<sup>6</sup> In front of the images of the ancestors candles and *copal*<sup>7</sup> are lit and in between ritual food and beverages are placed; the floor before the altar is strewn with pine needles. The candles and incense must remain lit during the entire celebration period, and the food too is set before the altar from October 31 to November 3. The dishes usually offered to the deceased consist of *tamales*, made of palm leaves, sweet rolls, cocoa, coffee, brandy and cigarettes, if the deceased was a smoker and enjoyed alcohol. Beside all this the deceased is also offered his favourite dish. The Zoques say that though the souls cannot eat the food, they can smell it and that amounts to the same.

While the domestic preparations for the meeting of the Zoques and their ancestors are under way already some days prior to November 1, the cleaning, painting and embellishing of the graves has to wait until the morning of November 1. A similar sequence is observed among the mountain Mayas. Cemeteries are not visited during the year (since people have their ancestor on the house altars) and as a consequence in the morning of November 1 they first of all have to swing the machete to clean the shrubs before they can start decorating the graves. The grave ornamentation is similar to those on the house altars: over the grave an arch of *ocote* branches is erected, decorated with flowers and under this arch food, candles and incense will be placed during the following days, just as it is done with the home altars.<sup>8</sup>

The Zoques spend the afternoon of November 1 at home and the whole family congregates around the house altars. On November 2 the cemetery is visited. There they play for the deceased on instruments - usually on a *jarana*, a home-made violin and guitar - they talk to them, eat and drink.<sup>9</sup> On November 3 the Zoques from Chiapas visit the graves of their children<sup>10</sup>, while some Indians worship on this day the deceased who were the victims of a violent death. Among the dead a special hierarchy is indeed observed and celebrations are adapted to it: the central celebration is dedicated exclusively to the souls of adults and to those who died honestly. Because the souls of

<sup>5</sup> "Flor de muerto" or flower of the dead as the mestizos call the strongly scented orange flower, is called *anima joya* by the Zoques, *sempuchi* or *cempasuchi* by the Nahuatl Indians. The strongly scented orange flowers - *tagetes* - are used by the Zoques, Mayas and Nahuas also for healing purposes, especially for so-called *limpias* ("cleansing", when a patient has "lost his soul") and in hot baths (in case of hypothermia).

<sup>6</sup> Marigolds and lilies grow wild in the woods in Sierra de Pantepec (approx. 1300m a.s.l.) and close to settlements, whereas the mountain Mayas from the area of San Cristóbal de las Casas have to grow them.

<sup>7</sup> Common name for resin of different trees from the family of *Burseraceae*, to which local herbs are added, dry cinnamon sticks and other aromatics.

<sup>8</sup> In Pantepec only a few graves have tombstones. They are the graves of the so-called *ladinos* (autochthonous population turned mestizo), the rest are lots marked by light blue-and-green wooden crosses, which the Indians repaint on the morning of every November 1.

<sup>9</sup> Some Mexican Indian groups also visit the graves at night; for instance the Tarasca from the environs of Lake Pátzcuaro in Michoacan, who in lighted boats set out at midnight from the coast to the cemetery on the island of Janitzio.

<sup>10</sup> There are many ethnical and local varieties; the Totonaca from Veracruz, for instance, worship dead children on *octavo*, on the eighth and ninth day following All Saints.

the dead can do harm to the health and psychophysical harmony of the living, it is necessary to take leave from them in time.<sup>11</sup>

According to the pre-Christian tradition of the Zoques the souls of the dead (like all other transcendent beings) can perceive the reality of the living only through **smell and sound** and therefore the **only possible communication between the living and the dead** - between **this world and the other world** - is through music, smell and incense.<sup>12</sup> The abundant use of smells in the rituals for the dead (flowers, incense, aromatic food and drinks, and especially alcohol and tobacco) is thus quite clear. Auditory and olfactory stimuli, characteristic elements of so-called rites of passage (*rites de passage*), have been discovered by anthropologists among all cultures of the world, but some of them, and among them precisely the Mesoamerican ones, attribute a particularly high significance to them.<sup>13</sup> Sensory effects change into concrete **symbols of transition**, since all by themselves contain (or refer to) change. Ritual music, noise, incense and beverages are instrumental to the transition into the "other" state and also denote the transition of the essential vital and social categories. According to the findings of the Canadian anthropology of senses there exists a particularly close connection between smell and the **transition** or the concept of change. The reason for this seems to be in the very olfactory anatomy and in the characteristics of smells. A smell is continuously in transition, changing, "that is because smells constantly escape from their objects, and because of the way they normally signal processes of transformation, ..., that they are used to mediate (and manage transition) between social categories"<sup>14</sup>.

## Religious syncretism

In order to better understand the present-day syncretic rituals of death and the deceased, we have to know about the conceptions of death in pre-colonial Mexico. There are several sources on this issue: material remains, pre-Columbian codices and early colonial chronicles. If we combine the pieces of this mosaic, all we get is an approximate idea of pre-colonial conceptions, because the Spaniards thoroughly eradicated all written material. Take for instance the first Bishop and chronicler on the peninsula of Yucatan, Diego de Landa, who had all Mayas books burned and later wrote a history

<sup>11</sup> In some places, for instance in Veracruz, the end of the celebrations is marked by strewing the road from home to the cemetery with tagetes, to make it easier for the souls to return to the place which connects this world with the other world. The Zoques and mountain Mayas have various protective means against the dangers the souls threaten them with, among others tagetes are used for therapeutic purposes.

<sup>12</sup> How a similar role is played by music, flowers and aromatics, through which the Zoques enter into contact with the protectors of fertility, is discussed elsewhere, see: "Joyo naque, joyo soc toc - flor costurada, flor amarrada. Flor y el simbolismo de los floreados", *Cultura y etnicidad zoque*, UNICACH-UNACH, 1998, pp. 129-136., San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México.

<sup>13</sup> For this very reason the transition rites among the Mexican Indians as well as among the peoples of the Indonesian Archipelago (the Moluccas) and India have become the favourite subject of the so-called anthropology of senses.

<sup>14</sup> David Howes, "Olfaction and transition: an essay on the ritual uses of smell", in: *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 /3, 1987, p. 398.

of the Mayas himself.<sup>15</sup> There is no doubt that he faked this history for he have viewed it with a double prejudice: that of a European rationalist (particularist) way of thinking, wrapped in addition in his missionary zeal to christianise.

Accurate determination of religious elements as pre-Spanish is often impossible.<sup>16</sup> In analyses of this kind we can, however, deduce quite a lot from the method of evangelisation. The substitution policy of the Catholic Church was systematic and premeditated: it always looked for the closest possible analogy, replaced major autochthonous cults with the rituals of major saints, and in this process accidental overlapping or calendar modifications of the European festivals may have occurred.

The festival of All Saints was introduced in the church festival year by Pope Bonifatius IV in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> The numbers of martyrs had increased to an extent the Church was no longer able to award every saint his own day. May 13 was therefore determined to be the day to remember all martyrs. For practical reasons Pope Gregory moved the festival from May 13 to November 1, where it met with the ancient rituals for the deceased souls. All Souls (November 2) was accepted by the official Roman Catholic Church as a liturgical day only toward the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the Middle Ages the Church engaged in huge efforts to separate the official liturgy from the pre-Christian ritual of death and to eradicate the pagan "ancestor cult". As early as 390 AD Augustine wanted to abolish the custom of consuming food and drinks over graves, and Amalarius of Metz (780 - 850) was the first to introduce mass for the dead on November 2, with the justification that it was better to replace pagan rituals than to leave them unsupervised. In spite of centuries of efforts to reform pagan rituals they survived in Europe throughout the centuries, in the beginning at the graves and later as house customs. Nowadays only the lighting of candles and decorating of graves remind us of those customs. Offering food, beverages and incense moved from the graves to the homes.<sup>18</sup> Throughout Europe the belief survived for a very long time that the deceased return to their homes on these days or to watch the living from their graves.

The above short survey might induce us to conclude that the ritual consummation of food, the abundant incense and the presence of music in the cemeteries of Mexican Indians might be the result of European influences. We shall see below that this is not so. The Spanish wanted to eradicate the ancestor cult in the New World in the same way as they had done in Europe. Our next question must then be: how did it manage to survive five hundred years of christianising efforts?

<sup>15</sup> Diego de Landa: *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, 1557. (Reprinted in: Editorial Porrúa, México, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> In recomposing the past we have to take account of the most different information sources; relying on a single section of sources often leads to erroneous explanations. It often occurs that the origin is searched for in ancient Mesoamerican cultures, and that in the end we discover that the religious elements have their roots in Europe. Together with Christianity the Spanish brought with them pre-Christian elements from the Iberian peninsula to the New Continent and this caused a range of syncretic developments in Mexico.

<sup>17</sup> Niko Kuret, *Praznično leto Slovencev, Družina, Ljubljana*, 1989, pp. 92-93.

<sup>18</sup> It is worth mentioning that field research which I carried out in Dolenjsko and Kozjansko some ten years ago among others revealed the custom that during the night between November 1 and 2 a glass of water were left for the deceased on the kitchen table.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Christianity, mixed with ancient Iberian elements, was transferred to the New World and found an even more fertile soil in Mexico. Here indeed the different cultures and religious traditions of Mesoamerica had already fertilised one another and melted into the specific form the conquerors and missionaries met with upon their arrival.

The first chronicles of the sixteenth century: Bernardino Sahagún, Bernal Díaz de Castillo and Diego Durán report on different celebrations in the honour of the dead. These celebrations were spread all over the ceremonial calendar year, among the Aztecs most of them were concentrated in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> months.<sup>19</sup> The principal festivals of the dead were *Miccaiuitl*, the festival of the "great death" or the memory of all deceased adults, and *Miccalhuitontli*, the festival of the "little death", that of all deceased children. Durán reports, that the latter was the festival of all innocent who died immediately after birth and of dead-born babies, which explains the name's diminutive form. The celebrations of *Miccaiuitl* commenced on August 3 and were continued on August 23 when the following offerings were brought to the graves of the deceased: *tamales*, cocoa, turkeys, fruit, flower ornamentations, incense and images of the deities of **life after death and fertility**, made of foxtail grass seeds and bark. Durán also reports that people used to dance and play music on the graves. During the colonial period these customs were transferred to November 1, but even today they still preserve many ancient elements, for instance: consummation of the same ritual food, music, flower offerings, incenses etc.

## The conception of life and death

The religions and ideologies of different civilisations of ancient Mexico were based on a general cosmological explanation of the world and man in it. This explanation was determined by reliable and accurate observation of the natural environment, the weather and the celestial bodies. The creation was governed by opposite forces, who - with the Mayas as well as with the Nahuas had their origin: in the first Father - the first Mother. From this first pair all the remaining dialectics follow: man-woman, light-darkness, hot-cold, strong-weak, birth-death, creation-destruction etc.

The conception of life lay in its cyclical repetition: destruction gives birth to new creation, death enables rebirth. Birth carries in it the seed of death, as much as death already contains its antipode. Therefore, the same gods were involved in the creation of the world (Quetzalcóatl, Tezcatlipoca) and in its destruction. They were creators and destroyers at the same time. Here lies the mystery of the inseparable interconnectedness of the symbols and rituals of fertility as well as of death.

The tenth month of the Aztec calendar, during which the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan celebrated one of their numerous festivals of death (*Miccaiuitl*), was called

<sup>19</sup> The Aztec solar year was divided into eighteen time units counting twenty days each and ended with five special surplus days. The Mayas had two calendars: a solar one which was similarly divided into eighteen time units of twenty days each, and a ritual calendar, which is still used by their descendants in Chiapas and Guatemala.

*xócotl huetzi* or “picking the fruit “. During this month a number of fertility rituals took place: offering flowers (*tlaxochimaco*) and the festival of fire was followed by the ritual of the “big tree”, when a tree with twenty-five branches was cut down and decorated with the produce of “mother Earth” (corn, fruit, flowers, *tamales*). The tree first had to be stretched out flat (the horizontal level), later it was erected and decorated with images of the gods (the vertical level).

Elements of fertility and dying were also incorporated in the celebration of the goddess **Teteo innan**, called **Toci** (meaning “our grandmother”). *Teteo innan* was the mother of all Mexican gods, even of the creators, some kind of “the Mother”. During the eleventh month she was offered the produce of the earth in the form of fruit and food, but also the flower of death *campoalxóchitl* or tagetes. During the fourteenth month or *quecholli* the god **Mixcóatl** was remembered. To him slaves were sacrificed and food was placed on the graves of brave warriors (the god was connected with war) and then burned (accidentally, these rituals were performed around November 1). Offerings and ritual consummation of food as part of celebrating the dead represented more than only assistance to the souls in the other world - it symbolised life or the new life in death.

365

The inseparable connection between life and death and its high symbolic value is witnessed to by the sacrifices of human lives, dedicated to all the major gods, the creators. Ritual death carried in it a message of renewal or resurrection and therefore those who sacrificed their own lives viewed their death as the highest, transcendental goal. They died proudly since they represented a deity to which they were sacrificed. Sahagún reports that their relatives too rejoiced, firmly believing that the sacrificed beloved would join god directly.

A woman sacrificed to the goddess Toci personified the goddess herself. Dressed in the goddess's clothes she acted as god's deputy and all her parts were therefore reliquaries. Even the slaves who were thrown into the fire alive and with tied arms and legs on the first day of *xócotl huetzi* represented the god of fire *Xiuhtecutli*. They were painted yellow and before they actually died they were dragged out of the fire and their hearts were cut out. The hearts represented divine food, that is the seed or embryo of new fire. An equally significant role was played by the hearts (seeds, fruits) of the new rain and the new sun. Certain deities were also consumed: the sacrificed victims were cut to pieces, divided among the people and eaten and this act amounted to taking possession of divine power.

The religious symbolism of ancient Mexico was highly figurative and concrete, at least when real human bodies were involved. But the Aztecs also knew a more abstract, symbolic form of consuming god's body. The sharing of foxtail bread which warriors ate before going to battle cannot fail to remind us of the Christian holy communion. By eating this bread the warriors were endowed with the strength of the god *Huitzilopochtli*. In this case the same symbolic form is involved as is known in present-day Christian Eucharist.

It would, however, be erroneous to claim that all Mesoamerican cultures focused on life and death in such drastic and explicit ways as was the case with the peaks of two notably expansive empires, those of the Aztecs and the Mayas, which both introduced the phenomenon of human sacrifice relatively late and primarily for political and



ideological reasons, though, of course, under a religious cover. Archaeological findings prove that the striking focus on human sacrifices was not really common to any greater extent prior to the Post-classical period (900-1520 BC).<sup>20</sup>

## The cosmic model

Every Mexican pyramid which functioned as the base of a temple represented a small cosmic model. The more developed civilisations of Mesoamerica imagined cosmic reality as a geometric body of terraced pyramidal shape, constructed with several horizontal levels or worlds, interconnected by vertical cosmic axes. The centre of the universe was the world of the given earthly reality. It had the form of a rectangle, supported at every corner by a divine pillar (four *Tlalocs* with the Aztecs). Every side of the sky was symbolised by one deity, one colour, one property etc. The central vertical axe was usually depicted in the form of a *ceiba*, a holy tree or the tree of life. The centres of the villages (markets) of the mountain Mayas in Chiapas still have a rectangular form today. In the centre of the market stands a *ceiba* and at each exit from it stand three light blue crosses. These are not Christian signs though, but belong to the Mayan heritage. The cross represented the four sides of the sky with all their religious and symbolic meanings. In ancient Mexico space played more than a geometric role. It was holy.

Below the level of earthly reality the Mayas imagined four underworlds, and the Aztecs in their late period even nine. Every world or level played a special role and had its divine protector, usually a pair of them. Similar was the idea of the upper levels or worlds. The Mayas knew nine upper worlds, the Aztecs added four more so that there were a total of thirteen. The highest upper world was that of the god *Omeotl*, who had a male and female nature alike, and the lowest underworld was the realm of death.

## The god of life, the god of death and life after death

Earth, a four-cornered flat surface, meant to the peoples of ancient Mexico the centre of the cosmos. It was ruled by the so-called "masters of the world", including the oldest goddess from which all other deities of the ancient Mexican pantheon stemmed. Directly connected with this world were also the gods who supported the earth plate and its four corners. The upper worlds were imagined by the ancient Mexican peoples as "the mountain of the world" or as a pyramid with thirteen steps, six to the east, six to the west and a central one on top of the sky. Different celestial levels were ruled by different deities, the creators of man, flora and fauna. In accordance with the upper worlds the underworlds formed an underground pyramid with nine levels of the subterranean creation: four to the east, four to the west and a central one ruled by the deity of the underworld.

<sup>20</sup> Previous archaeological findings, with few exceptions, do not depict death nor human sacrifices. Proto-Olmec relief sculptures of skeletons found in Izapa (Chiapas) were a high exception in their period (8<sup>th</sup> century BC). During the Early Classical Period (200-900 AD) there are few such depictions: in Teotihuacan only two frescoes were found which represent death.

In the course of twenty-four hours the Sun travelled across every step: every morning it climbed the eastern steps up to the zenith and in the afternoon descended by the western steps behind the horizon. From there on it went on its nightly journey. In the same way the Sun has to travel all nine underworlds, the souls of the deceased had to cover the long road through the nine underworlds to arrive at *Mictlán*, the world of the dead or shadows (with the Aztecs), ruled by *Mictlantecuhtli*, the god of death. The journey to *Mictlán* was very hard. The souls first had to cross mountains, than eight deserts, and finally they had to wade across a wide river. The whole journey lasted four years and all the time the souls were exposed to various dangers: they could be injured by falling rocks, hit by poisonous arrows or by sharp obsidian knives. Some peoples of ancient Mexico therefore had special rituals for the souls of the deceased which lasted exactly for four years after their death. Such rituals have been preserved into the present, though in a modified form. The Zoques call them (in Spanish) *cabo del ano*. Upon every anniversary of his or her death they place flowers, incense and food in front of the deceased's picture on the house altar. The floor is strewn with pine needles and women prayers kneel there. Eight nights in a row they pray the rosary and on the ninth day they carry all the offerings from the house altar to the grave where the ninth ritual is repeated.

367

Not all souls, however, went to *Mictlán*, because it was reserved to those who died a normal death. A heroic death sent the deceased straight away to heaven, to *Tonatiuh ichan*. The souls of fallen warriors there accompanied the god of the Sun on his way from the eastern horizon to the zenith, and the souls of women who died in child birth (*mohihua quetzque* or "brave women") accompanied him from the zenith to the western horizon. After four years they changed into humming-birds. The souls of those who died in accidents (drowned or suffocated etc.) or in great pain went to *Tlalocan*, the world of the rain-god *Tlaloc*. In *Tlalocan* eternal spring reigned and no suffering ever occurred. A child's death took it to a place near *Tlalocan*, to *Chichihuacuauhco*, where the souls had to wait until the destruction of this world and to be reincarnated into new human beings. Until then they were fed by milk which dripped from the branches of the holy tree *huahuahuate*.

While the day of birth (the constellation of the stars and the influences of the gods) determined a person's fate on Earth, the fate of a deceased's life after death was determined by the way he died. A Mexican proverb of the present still says: *Dime cómo mueres y te dire quien eres* ("Tell me how you die and I'll tell you who you are!"). A deserving life on Earth and moral virtues which are of the utmost significance to life after death of a Christian, did not have the least impact on life after death of the ancient Mayas and Mixtecs. The future was harboured in the act of dying. A more deserving death led to a more deserving life after death. But even a quite normal death did not lead to hell, but to *Mictlán*, the place at which the souls arrive only after a long and hard journey, but when they get there, they enjoy the hospitality of its master, *Mictlantecuhtli*. The peoples of ancient Mexico did not have to fear hell or the terror of punishment after death. In *Mictlán* (or *Metnal* with Mayas), the last world of the underworld, the sun shone even at night and the souls lived similarly as in this world.

Laureano Reyes Gómez explains the comparison of the Sun's journey with man's life in the present-day tradition of the Zoques<sup>21</sup>. The Sun has sixteen differently named daily phases: sunrise, three morning phases between sunrise and the zenith, three afternoon phases between the zenith and sundown, sundown, three nightly phases between sundown and midnight, midnight or zero time and three dark morning phases between midnight and sunrise. In analogy with the Sun's phases they call one healthy life cycle for instance: *noman pijtu jama*<sup>22</sup> (child), *kimun jama* (child from eight to nine), *yujk jama* (adolescent—"when the sun burns", *kujk jama* (high noon or "man's high noon"), *jama dsu'e* (maturity), *tsai'a*, *pitse'a*, *notjeykah jama* (sundown), *tsu'an* etc.. - an adolescent is a rising sun, a young man is high noon, a mature person early afternoon, and the senior middle years are several phases of the setting Sun (until the age of fifty-nine), upon his sixtieth birthday a person enters the night; between sixty and eight-five years of age the Zoques know three phases of the night; when "solar eclipse" occurs or the risky point of departure. But when midnight comes new insemination already occurs, the new semen of the Sun, which is followed by three embryological phases up to birth or sunrise. This ecliptic journey of the Sun (and of man) indicates that there must have been a pre-Columbian tradition of the Sun's passage around the pyramids and to the interconnectedness of death and rebirth. Death is thus the transition into rebirth.

## Conclusion

I would like to conclude this article with the following reflections:

In the area of present-day Mexico despite the presence of several interwoven pre-Columbian religious traditions and overlaying Christianity it is possible to establish that among the mentioned ethnic groups those essential elements have been preserved which are connected with Pre-Columbian, pre-Aztec and even pre-Mayan fertility cult of life and death alike.

Whereas the systematic Spanish evangelisation succeeded in erasing the boundaries between the elements of different cultural origins and eradicate many pre-Spanish religious practices, on the actual ritual as well as mental and symbolic level those cultural and religious elements have remained quite evident which are directly connected with the most fundamental existential essence of physical and cultural survival of a certain (though transformed) society, that is its **continuation**. This is quite evident from the fertility cults and ancestor cults among the remaining autochthonous groups. And, after all, it is also evident from the fact that many elements of the autochthonous cultures were adopted by the Mexican mestizos and urban centres. To die in Mexico, even in a capital which counts thirty million of inhabitants, is not the same as to die in Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Laureano Reyes Gómez, "Gradación zoque de la edad", *Cultura y etnicidad zoque*, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, UNICACH-UNACH, p. 167-187.

<sup>22</sup> *Jama* (hama) = the Sun.

#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Marija Mojca Terčelj, mag., etnologinja in filozofinja, je kustosinja Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja za stike Slovencev z neevropskimi kulturami. Kot nova raziskovalka Oddelka za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani je med letoma 1988 in 1994 v presledkih raziskovala kozmologijo, medicino in obredja rodovitnosti med Indijanci Zoques v Mehiki. V Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju je zaposlena od leta 1996. V letu 1997 je v muzeju pripravila študijsko razstavo z naslovom Baragova zbirka predmetov iz Severne Amerike, leta 1998 pa razstavo in obsežni katalog z naslovom Iz dežele sončnega sijaja in mesečevih senc : Beblerjeva indonezijska zbirka. Vzporedno pripravlja doktorsko nalogo z naslovom Sokejevska kozmologija kot interpretacijski model in kot predmet etnološke (antropološke) razlage.

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Marija Mojca Terčelj is an M.A. in ethnology and philosophy and curator at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum for the Relations between the Slovene and Foreign Cultures. As a new researcher at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana she studied with intervals from 1988 to 1994 the cosmology, medicine and fertility rites among the Zoques Indians of Mexico. She has been employed at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum since 1996. In 1997 she prepared in the museum a study exhibition entitled *The Baraga Collection of objects from North America*, and in 1998 the exhibition and extensive catalogue entitled *From the land of sun shine and moon shadows: The Bebler Indonesian Collection*. She is also working on her doctoral dissertation on the subject "Zoques cosmology as an interpretation model and as the object of ethnological (anthropological) explanation."

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370

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371

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Etnolog

Glasnik Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja

Letnik 9 (60), leto 1999, št. 1

ISSN 0354-0316

UDK 39(497.4)(05)=163.6+111U=133.1

Lektura (slovenščina) / Slovene language editing:

Mirjam Mencej

Oblikovanje / Design:

Mojca Turk

Tehnična ureditev, stavek / Layout:

T2 studio d.o.o., Ljubljana

Izdal in založil / Published by:

Slovenski etnografski muzej

zanj

mag. Inja Smerdel

Tisk / Printed by:

Sitograf trade d.o.o., Ljubljana

Naklada / Print run:

600 izvodov / copies

Ljubljana 1999

