

CDAS Conference 2013, accepted abstracts

CDAS13 -02

Jones

Post mortem organ harvesting media

Keywords: Perinatal death, commodification, organ retention, consent, the body

It has been more than a decade since the organ retention scandal in which two UK hospitals, Alder Hay and the Bristol Royal Infirmary were exposed for the practice of stockpiling organs, bone and tissue samples from children who had had a post mortem. Until 2000, little was known of the scale of this practice of stripping the body of its component parts without parental consent, until a censure was ordered by the Chief Medical Officer.

In the wake of this clandestine practice of retaining dead children's body parts, the dominant discourse concerned consent. In this understanding of body commodification following perinatal death, the discourse of consent masked the greater concerns of some parents which was to restore fragmented bodies to physical and metaphysical wholeness.

Following research with parents concerning their experiences of perinatal death, organs and tissues embodied personhood or held particular symbolic significance such as the heart or ovaries and what would otherwise symbolise a potential future for a child who had died.

Female reproduction and childbirth raises particularly contentious questions about body ownership and integrity. Yet, in such contexts, 'ownership' is more than about owning commodifiable parts (placenta, pituitary gland). The infant corpse outside a parent's protection epitomised the lack of control over what happened to their child's body and their role which continued into death, which was to protect the child as they would have in life.

By seeking to recreate a sense of wholeness for their child parents are in effect, remembering their child and its entire body and one through which they created long lasting memories.

Kerry Jones

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Relics and Specimens: The Art and Traffic of Human Remains

As Laderman (2003) asserts, the order of an entire social structure depends upon putting the dead body in its proper place. In this paper, I look at two seemingly opposed areas of Western culture that have each put the dead body in its 'proper place', a place that defines and demarcates their respective power, authority and history. These areas are the Roman Catholic Church, with their rich tradition of making and displaying relics, and the field of medicine in the creation and promotion of anatomical specimens. I argue that these fundamental Western establishments continue to use the undisposed dead to convey forms of spatial control, ideology, and identity. Both institutions have also influenced and informed a variety of visual artists who integrate human remains into their artwork. I present these works within the context of highlighting the strong connections between personal narrative, institutional identity, and the transformation of the dead body into objects of culture.

Underscoring this discussion is the notion that human remains have an inherent influence and agency that can be harnessed and usurped. Both specimens and relics have compelling features that radiate power within and beyond their place of containment, with a surprising authority that can transform whatever space they are made to occupy. They are the remains of dead persons and yet, objects that are amassed for defining very distinct socio-political and legal boundaries. Furthermore, aside from providing forms of worship, trade, and entertainment, specimens, relics, and art objects impart practices of commodification that are readily transported into vast networks of trade, auction and private collecting.

Key Words: undisposed dead, identity, relics, specimens

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Death as a Value

It is common in a health care setting to hear about people's fear of death. If we look deeper, there is a fear that is bigger: the fear of the dying process, the fear of pain and suffering and losing any life quality while still having to be alive. In medical terms the process of "actively dying" is a paradox, since – most frequently – the dying is not experienced as something active but as the ultimate suffering that one has to endure passively, helplessly - despite all advanced medical technology. Even though the process of actively dying is medically defined with a duration from hours to days, the human perception of the end of life often starts much earlier. Especially in the field of chronic terminal illness, such as cancer, the mental and emotional aspects of active death often start before the physical. The patient enters a stage of mind where physical death equated with the end of suffering becomes desirable despite all fear of the end. Death becomes valuable. This stage cannot necessarily be seen as suicidal, but as a clear conception of one's own physical and emotional limits. It is at this stage that any support for the dying and their families is most valuable. Dying is feared and has been endured for too long. The question what life is worth has been answered: nothing. A new question arises: what is death worth? What is the value of a good death? The paper will focus on the value of a good death under terrible circumstances and how different cultures and religions look at it. Questions that will be considered are: Can it be measured? Can a material or financial value be put to it? What can be charged from the perspective of supportive care services? Is charging for end of life supportive care ethical?

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Bidding, Baking and Waking: the Moral Economy of the Nineteenth Century Folk Funeral

In his 1963 work *The Making of the English Working Classes*, the great Marxist historian Edward Palmer Thompson proposed that, despite - or perhaps because of - the exploitation and loss of status experienced by working people in consequence of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, during the long nineteenth century the working classes actively appropriated traditional popular culture into what Thompson termed the "moral economy", as a means of constructing and asserting their own class identity against that of the capitalist bourgeoisie. From 'bidding' the neighbours to the funeral with specially baked funeral biscuits, and the practice of waking (which is in fact an indigenous English custom that predates and extended well beyond the immigrant Irish communities), to ritualised exchanges of hospitality and other customary gifts, this paper will highlight and interpret some of the popular customs and beliefs which together made up the Victorian and early-twentieth century 'folk' funeral. Far from merely being a waste of precious monetary and material resources, or constituting a threat to public order, as they were often portrayed by contemporary middle-class funeral reform campaigners - and often, indeed, by the folklorists themselves - it will be proposed that vernacular funerary customs functioned as a significant means of actively (re)constructing, consolidating and sometimes also contesting social and emotional relationships between the bereaved.

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Section: Future post-mortem economies built around life extension

Death Related Heritage in a Sustainable Development

Throughout history the topics of birth and death have been effortlessly explored and emphasised – constituting nature's universal milestones.

Most human activities have incorporated these two concepts developing a specific pattern of existence - guided by their principles. As a life cycle is delimited by birth and death so are their creations. But regardless of the indispensability some individuals have chosen to focus their interests toward just one – reflecting as a trademark or lifestyle. However, some people's fascination for just one of these topics, such as death, has sometimes served as a starting point for trends in various domains, like fashion, literature, architecture or travel.

Such associations offer endless possibilities which, in turn can generate positive outcomes both on the built and natural environment.

A concrete example of such an initiative can be achieved by overlapping the timeless topic of death with historical objectives from the built environment. The initiative of associating buildings, which represent a significant part of an area's historical background, with death related aspects can constitute the starting point for a unique branding process.

This type of brand can insure that diversity is present among other destinations which rely mainly on historical objectives. With tourism, serving as frame and guide for development, such initiatives can be seen as mature alternative for sustainable economical development, defining a community's cultural identity and achieving heritage conservation and through tourism's wide range of alternative forms travel a site's specific trademark can be preserved and enhanced.

A similar initiative, where death related heritage and an alternative form of travel – dark tourism are overlapped is currently being explored and developed in the region of Transylvania - Romania. Successfully associating its death related cultural heritage representing the starting point for a series of projects which will tackle national branding in a historically accurate manner.

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Chinese Customary Trusts for the Dead in Hong Kong

Chinese customary trusts were incorporated into the law of Hong Kong after the British leased the New Territories of Hong Kong in 1898 from the Qing Emperor. These customary trusts of land are

organised on a clan basis and are part of no other legal system. The main purposes of these trusts are ancestral veneration and to provide funds for the funeral costs of clan members and the maintenance of clan graves. The respectful treatment of the dead in the selection of grave sites and their maintenance is essential for feng shui and consequent prosperity of the clan. This has led to competition for the most auspicious grave sites in a state which is perceived as having little space for the living or dead. This paper will consider the adoption of the Chinese customary trust into the common law of Hong Kong, the funeral practices associated with Chinese customary trusts, and the development of the customary trust to provide benefits for the living members of the clan as well as the dead.

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The Changing Face of Funerals? Who pays for the funeral and what this can tell us about families today

There has been much work to date on the history of funerals, the role of the funeral director, and how funerals can help or hinder the grief process. Very little attention has been paid to the issue of funerals as a commercial entity however, particularly in terms of who organises and pays for them.

Drawing on data from a study commissioned by Axa Sunlife Direct into state support for funeral costs, this paper examines expectations and attitudes towards familial obligation when it comes to funerals. Alongside the issue of the commodification of funeral services, the changing shape and nature of families will be considered. An argument will be made that in light of the ageing of the population and the resulting projected rise in the death rate more needs to be done to identify who is the funeral director's 'client', possibly prior to death, and why, so as to enable those clients to make sure there are sufficient funds available.

Kate Woodthorpe
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Economic Impact of Family Bereavement: Where Does Responsibility Lie?

Drawing on their own research and other relevant literature, Corden and Hirst discuss financial and economic impacts of death of a family member. Long-term income changes after death are related to previous position in the family – as working breadwinner, main pension holder or recipient of benefits used in household spending. Bereaved partners and parents may be thrust into new economic roles as paid workers or family carers. Alongside changes in income and adjustments to household budgeting come new expenses, such as funeral costs and, for some, outstanding bills and debts from a period of costly family care, or legal and administrative expenses in dealing with an unexpected death or a death far from home. Legacies, insurance pay-outs or compensation payments may ease financial circumstances, but such monies are not value neutral and some families may have to deal with new tensions and even family conflict.

The authors consider where responsibility lies in enabling people to deal with economic impacts of bereavement. Are these private matters, to be addressed by decision-making and financial planning within families? Are there issues for government intervention, within policies to support families, sustain employment and prevent poverty? What can the independent sector contribute?

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The Requiem: making money on the dead

In former times, Requiems were composed by order of rich and powerful people. Mozart, for example, was paid by his mysterious client to write a Requiem (1791), and Luigi Cherubini was commissioned for a Requiem (1815) to commemorate the death of Louis XVI, the king beheaded in 1793 during the French revolution (Marx, 2012). Because the performance of a Requiem, besides being an intercession on behalf of the dead, was also a representational event, Requiem compositions were also commodities. Put rather bluntly, composers made money on the dead, and clients were willing to pay for a good and suitable composition.

Although many Requiems were the result of an economic transaction, the ritual performance of the Requiem in a sense sanctified the commercial product and made the music sacred music. Eric Venbrux refers to this phenomenon as de commodification: in the context of ritual performances “commodities acquire new and priceless values that put them beyond reach of market transactions.” (Venbrux, 2009, p. 213). And this is the way they are subsequently experienced by the listeners in the decades or centuries after their first performance.

Nowadays, concert halls and ensembles are in search of new audiences. One of the means to reach new audiences is to ritualize the concerts. Musical performances linked to special moments in the year draw large audiences - think of Christmas concerts, in this respect, and performances of J.S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion in Lent. In the Netherlands, we have recently seen the emergence of the Requiem concert, performed in the fall, more specifically around the date of November 2nd, All Souls' Day. Mourning, grief, consolation and commemoration are easily linked to the Requiem concerts to draw large audiences and thus make money on the performance of the Requiem. From the perspective of the organizers of these concerts, the Requiem is once again a commercial product.

In this paper I will reflect on the tension between the Requiem as a commodity and its de commodification by performance. This tension will be explored in past and present. The main question addressed is how economic motives are hidden by performances, by rituals and sacred acts.

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Marx, W. (2012). *De morte transire ad vitam?* Emotion and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Requiem Compositions. In D. J. Davies & C.-W. Park (eds.), *Emotion, Identity and Death. Mortality across disciplines* (pp. 189-203). Farnham: Ashgate.

Venbrux, E. (2009). Commodification of death. In C. D. Bryant & D. L. Peck (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience* (pp. 211-213). Los Angeles: Sage.

**I'm a Funeral Director and I want to talk about Dying:
Funeral Care - Service or Commodity?**

In this paper, Dr Anne Gleeson, Australian Funeral Director and Poet explores the limitations of current models of Funeral Care given the developments in Palliative Care, Advanced Care Planning and the emerging needs of the baby boomer generation, as consumers and decision makers in the funeral process. The paper is informed by current bereavement theory, emerging academic research on the final stages of life, and her professional experience.

She ponders whether a more inclusive attitude to funeral staff by other professionals could help meet some of the reported needs of people at the end of their life. While challenging the funeral industry to be educated and appropriately responsive to 2013 needs, this paper also explores possible reasons, (including the dichotomy of service and product provision), behind the resistance she and other funeral workers have encountered.

Anne examines her actual experience of funeral care as part of the end of life, both from the individual and family's perspective, as well as her own as Funeral Director and Celebrant. She looks closely at the concept of "a good death" and proposes that in-line with the more contemporary home-based and home-like and informed approach to palliative care, the funeral industry could be providing a service that adds to the quality of the end stage of life.

In proposing a more integrated system of funeral care, Anne is advocating a more harmonious transition to caring for deceased people, so that families might confidently care for, or have their loved person cared for, by people who are not strangers.

Central Highlands Funerals, Daylesford, Australia

The Commodification of the Grief Counseling Experience

I propose an exploration of how and why bereaved patients are encouraged to seek grief counseling services following the death of a partner or close family member. This referral has become such a routine part of healthcare in the United States that individuals seldom pause to consider whether the experience has been therapeutic or not.

When counselors market themselves as “grief experts” and numerous social service agencies exist to serve the needs of the bereaved, are patients being irresponsible when they fail to take advantage of these services? If grief is a socially-constructed concept, are grief counselors and others merely stepping in to fill in a void that was formerly filled by our family members, neighbors and friends?

While the choice to rely on a grief counselor is not necessarily a bad one, I would like to examine how this role has become more significant over time and whether its commodification is likely to be beneficial, detrimental or neutral to the majority of individuals grieving an important loss.

Susan E. Zinner
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Saving 'pituitary dwarfs': Britain's National Pituitary Collection

A cultural resistance to commodifying bodily material has historically prevailed in Britain. One of its modern manifestations occurred in 1989 when a law prohibited the sale of human organs for transplantation, a practice that had been exposed in a kidneys-for-cash scandal in London. However the new statute ignored other such for-profit activities, notably two decades during which sixty thousand pituitary glands were being harvested annually, without consent, by post-mortem room technicians who were paid for each gland they procured. Government departments funded this systematic collecting, while being aware of its shady status in law. They defended the practice with reference to a higher good: if pituitaries were not cut out during every post-mortem examination performed in Britain, several hundred children would be doomed to become 'pituitary dwarfs'. This paper provides a case study, based on archival material, of a practice that prefigured later twentieth-century British scandals which exposed the non-consensual removal of body parts at autopsy. The discrete collection of pituitary glands was one of the ways through which such harvesting came to be routine.

Dr Helen MacDonald
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Towards a Conceptualisation of Digital Death?

In Western medical terms, 'death' generally refers to brain death (Lock, 2001). The time, date and cause of death are recorded, and a death certificate issued. In contrast, the time, date and cause of social death - "the final event in a sequence of declining social involvement" (Mulkay 1991) – are more difficult to pinpoint. Nor is social death necessarily synchronous with physical death – indeed it may occur after physical death, as the social identity of the deceased is maintained by the bereaved (Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996).

As technology adopters increasingly live out aspects of their lives online, it is timely to consider 'digital death', and to reflect on how it may intersect with physical and social death. If physical life ends when brain activity ceases, and social life ends with the extinction of social identity and interaction, does digital death occur when internet use is discontinued?

In this talk, I will explain why 'digital death' is hard to pin down, and how the artefacts that are the basis of digital identities may well live on after the physical death of users, acquiring new value and meaning through the accretion of fresh layers of metadata.

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'Dunghills of Rubbish: The Eighteenth Century Funeral Trade and their Dead Subjects'

In Eighteenth Century England the emergence of the undertaking trade and the accompanying professionalization of death were gradual processes which had significant consequences for the identity of those who interacted with the dead. Involvement in mortuary practices had traditionally aroused suspicion and resulted in marginalisation. The changes of the Eighteenth Century introduced new roles in the management of the dead and prompted new anxieties about the treatment of the corpse. The practices of early undertakers promised convenience but they occurred behind closed doors and the exact nature of the undertakers' work was concealed with unfamiliar words. These were ideal circumstances for the formation of prejudices and concerns which would be vividly illustrated in the burgeoning popular culture of the period. This paper considers how these representations, despite their exaggerations, provide some insight into contemporary prejudices and anxieties about deathworkers and their motives. It will conclude by examining how these works perceived the complex relationships between the numerous trades and engaged in Eighteenth Century deathwork, from undertakers and gravediggers to criminal such as resurrection men.

Dan O'Brien, University of Bristol

"Guaranteeing 'Peace of Mind'?: Legal and Consumer Protection Issues Around Pre-Paid Funeral Contracts"

The rising cost of funerals, alongside a pre-mortem desire to plan for and retain some degree of post-mortem control over one's final arrangements, mean that more people are entering into pre-paid funeral plans in Britain today. Such plans allow individuals to purchase and organise their funeral at current prices (important in an era of high inflation), paying either a lump sum or instalments which is then invested and intended to cover all the main costs of a funeral in advance.

The pre-paid funeral is a financially lucrative and rapidly growing commercial enterprise (some 120,731 were sold across the UK in 2012 alone), and is often marketed as a means of reducing the financial strain for the deceased's loved ones 'when the time comes', as well as preventing them from having to make difficult consumer choices at a fraught and emotionally vulnerable period. However, as contracts between the individual and a funeral services provider, pre-paid funeral plans raise a number of important legal and consumer protection issues which have yet to be fully explored. This paper addresses some of these key issues, in particular: the financial regulation of these plans and protections against hidden consumer costs; liability for breach of contract by either party; and whether pre-paid funeral plans are an effective means for ensuring that the wishes of the deceased will be carried out. Overall, it questions whether pre-paid funeral plans can really deliver the 'peace of mind' that service providers invariably guarantee.

Dr Heather Conway, Senior Lecturer, School of Law, Queen's University, Belfast

FINAL FLING: the one-stop-shop for end of life

Final Fling launched in April 2012, claiming to be the UK's first one-stop-shop for end of life. We use language like 'one-stop-shop' to help people understand this new concept. We also use these phrases:

- Final Fling is the Trip Advisor for your onward journey
- Final Fling aims to be to death what Mumsnet is to birth: the go-to community at a critical lifestage
- Final Fling is the Amazon of death

Wiki tells us that in economic terms, **commodity** means a marketable item produced to satisfy wants or needs. So what are we selling? Clearly not *actually* end of life, death or dying.

We're selling peace of mind

According to Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief and Dying Matters (membership organisations championing forward planning), unnecessary harm is caused when people are not open about death, dying and bereavement. Both campaign for thinking ahead and upstream planning.

Answering a call to action

Final Fling provides the planning tools:

- a Safe Deposit Box for legal and financial documents and all the paperwork next of kin will need
- a Treasure Trove for softer stuff – heirlooms, annotated family photos, home movies, story and messages
- films, forums and information to support talking about death and dying.

3 out of 4 of us will find ourselves on a predictable trajectory leading to death. Despite that, 90% die without a funeral plan and 70% without a Will.

So if planning ahead provides a better death, "GOOD DEATH FOR SALE".

The commodification of post-mortem privacy

The World Economic Forum in its 2011 personal data study referred to personal data as “the new ‘oil’” – a valuable resource of the 21st century”, predicting that “it will emerge as a new asset class touching all aspects of society.”¹ The term “asset” in this and similar narratives is closely related to the notion of “commodification”, originally Karl Marx’s concept, but given different meanings by contemporary economic and legal theory.

This paper aims to explore the legal theory and practice in relation to the *commodification* and *propertisation* of personal data. It will assess the main theoretical features of the property-based data protection regimes. Further, it will attempt to identify some of these features in the EU data protection regulation. It will also draw parallels with the US theory and legal realm.

The phenomenon of *commodification* of personal data and privacy will be looked at from a post-mortem perspective. Therefore, the paper will question whether the *propertisation* is favourable for protection of post-mortem privacy, i.e. protection of the deceased’s personal data. In an attempt to identify the most suitable solution for protecting deceased’s personal data, this paper will discuss and compare some traditional legal concepts, such as property, contracts, torts and succession.

¹ World Economic Forum “Personal Data: The Emergence of a New Asset Class” 2011 available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_ITTC_PersonalDataNewAsset_Report_2011.pdf (accessed 10 Jan 2013) at 5, 7.

Necropolis; a post mortem social class war

The human desire to demonstrate "respect for the dead", is manifested through funeral rituals and human burial practices. While cultures vary in their mode of respect, they do follow the pattern of two basic reasons: high regard for the physical remains and a feeling of closure for the deceased's family and friends.

In many cultures graves will be grouped, so the monuments make up a necropolis, a "city of the dead" paralleling the community of the living. As such, Royalty and high nobility often have one or more "traditional" sites of monumental burial, often in a palatial chapel/cathedral; In North America, private family cemeteries were common among wealthy landowners during the 18th and 19th centuries; in poorer or disadvantaged populations' communities in countries such as South Africa, where the population was simply too poor to afford headstones, anonymous burials were performed just marking out the dimensions of the grave site itself. In parts of eastern Germany, up to 43% of burials are anonymous. The practice relates more to the exorbitant cost of grave markers. The tension and antagonism as often existed in society due to competing socioeconomic interests and often described as "class, warfare", appears to be repeated as a struggle for immortality and inheritance of goods in the afterlife. Durable markers or monuments offer tributes to deceased and a symbol of their social status when living. Sociologically and through a psychological study we can describe and rationalize the significance of one-as it seems- perpetual social class war.

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Cream teas at Crem and Pork at the Parlor – Commodification of Funeral Food in the Modern Context in the UK and America

Food, as both an embodied practice and a cultural model, is most often associated with life and the living, and is seldom associated with death and the dead. However, food is an important part of the grief process in both the traditional American and English funeral context. This paper will explore the meaning-making process and potential embedded in the expression of American and English funeral food. I will undertake this exploration by examining the ability of funeral food to index identity creation and the continuation of familial bonds between the bereaved, the recent, and the long deceased. After establishing the importance of funeral food in the process of identity creation, I will then discuss the recent trend of Funeral Parlors in America and Crematoriums in England to move into the commodification of funeral food and the implications on the social context in which the ritual of funeral food is performed.

The Hotel California Effect: The commodification of death within the borders of Facebookistan?

*We are programmed to receive.
You can check-out any time you like,
But you can never leave!* -- The Eagles, Hotel California (1977)

*It's the price we pay for such free services, the Faustian pact into which we have entered in order to survive in an age of constant connectivity where the tentacles of Facebook — with its ambition to be the "identity platform" — are extending to every corner of the internet.
Which raises the question - if Facebook and Google place a value on your identity then why shouldn't you?* --Julian Lee (October 10, 2011)

We all have to leave Earth. We do not have to leave Facebook. How many other companies offer life after death? --Al Lewis (February 5, 2012)

When Rupert [Murdoch] invades your privacy ... it's against the law. When Mark [Zuckerberg] does, it's the future. --Bill Keller (June 10, 2012)

The iconic 1970s Eagles song, Hotel California, was extremely prophetic in identifying a major aspect of the yet (at that time) unknown and undeveloped form of communicating and identity sharing that today is known as social media. "...We increasingly live in a world in which opting out of technological systems is more and more difficult and yet participation within those systems pushes us to accept structures we might oppose" (Taylor, 2006: 135). Hence, what I have identified as the Hotel California Effect is at work, where the lines between in-person and digitally-mediated sociality are blurred, and social media once entered, is difficult to leave (or avoid), even in death!

With the rapid rise and evolution of social media as a representation of the everyday life of over a billion 'friends', Facebookistan (MacKinnon, 2010) represents the lives (and future deaths) of 15% of the world's population. As we track the lives of our 'friends' in cyber-society, their successes and sorrows, and their undulating circle of 'friends', we are bonded to them. But what happens when a 'friend' dies? How functional or satisfying are the existing memorialization practices in meeting either the needs of this community's specific cultural mourning traditions as viewed within the transnational structure of social media? How does the underlying overt and subliminal commodification of this 'free' service impact the meaning and salience of mortality (Becker, 1973) in our effort to control and tame the 'social corpse'? This paper will examine the manner and issues related to how death, property issues, and privacy are handled within the increasingly commoditized nature of social media.

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**Designer Babies, Designer Births:
Maternal-Infant Mortality and the Rebranding of Birth in the 20th Century**

Maternal and infant mortality (MIM) was drastically reduced during the 20th century; it is often claimed that obstetrics has saved more lives than any other branch of medicine. Deaths are now so rare in developed countries that a healthy mother and baby are the status quo-consequently, the few infant and maternal deaths that do occur are subject to intense medical, legal, and media scrutiny. This paper argues that the decrease in MIM has had a profound impact on the economics of reproduction. In the early 20th century, when MIM remained high, many western governments introduced pronatalist legislation as a means of state consolidation and expansion. These efforts were generally unsuccessful. In later decades, however, as MIM was greatly reduced, pronatalist discourses were extensively utilized in marketing, effectively transforming childbearing into a key area of consumption and economic growth. This paper argues that the decrease in MIM enabled mainstream attention to shift away from risk of death towards 'optimizing' the status quo by producing ideal infants and ideal birth experiences. Part One examines these 'Designer Babies' as commodities optimized and produced via the luxury markets of ultrasound and genetic screening, selective abortion, and so on. Part Two analyses the recent trend in 'Designer Births' as a commodification of 'optimal' childbirth experiences, identifying associated luxury markets in various analgesics, elective surgery, professional birth coaching, and so on. The paper concludes with an analysis of recent discourses which rebrand these commodities as 'natural', as necessary for individual wellbeing, and/or as human rights.

Anija Dokter
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Dealing with Digital Remains: Is Recognising Digital Assets as Probate Property the Solution?

The new phenomenon of the digital legacy raises many novel legal questions, such as, what rights, if any, do surviving family members or heirs have with respect to the online accounts of their loved ones? Can one bequeath social media, e-mail or other online accounts? In an attempt to address some of these issues the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), in the United States, has begun work on recognising digital remains as probate property and are drafting legislation that will vest fiduciaries with the authority to manage and distribute a decedent's digital assets.

This paper questions whether the proposed solution of recognising digital remains as probate property provides an adequate response. Firstly, it is argued that seeking to transpose real world succession rules and norms to digital remains fails to properly conceptualise what a decedent leaves behind in digital media and why these remains are important. Secondly, the current proposals from the Uniform Law Commission raise further legal issues which require deeper analysis. For example, the proposals do not resolve issues with respect to situations where a service provider's terms of service, which a decedent agreed to while alive, conflict with the proposed legislation.

Finally, it is argued that even with such legislation many online service providers cannot be legally compelled to disclose the contents of accounts due to other statutory protections. Therefore, a more workable solution is to create a regulatory framework or environment that encourages service provider cooperation in order to permit a user, should they wish, to designate to whom their online life passes to following death.

Damien McCallig

Funeral Poverty and Meaning

The Down to Earth project in East London seeks to mentor people on low incomes to access affordable, meaningful funerals. This article examines the dilemmas the project's mentors face in addressing the stigma of funeral poverty; the specific impairment of consumer capacities during grief; and the unfamiliarity of commissioning funerals.

Complex spiritual and social events, funerals come at a financial cost to the person buying them. They are the classic 'distress purchase' bought when decision making is impaired and consumer ability is reduced. For the consumer on a low income this vulnerability is magnified. With austerity measures, rising prices and a Social Fund payment that does not match the cost of even a simple cremation, funeral poverty continues to be a problem in the UK.

Down to Earth mentors face dilemmas. For example how to de-stigmatise lower cost funerals whilst respecting the pain of a bereaved consumer not being able to afford what she or he dearly wants. Similarly, mentors need to consider the ethics of encouraging individuals to challenge their own belief system in arranging a funeral.

The Down to Earth project claims that everyone can afford a meaningful funeral. This article explores that meaning and how it can be discovered in a respectful mentoring dynamic. It considers the limits of creativity and personalisation, the negotiation of the relationship between meaning and affordability.

Shaun Powell & Lawrence Kilshaw
Quaker Social Action/Down to Earth

Material Remains: The Production of Memory

After the shootings in Newtown, CT that killed eighteen school children, mourning townspeople filled public and commercial spaces with informal memorials of flowers, stuffed animals, and plywood signs. By the end of the second week after the shooting, however, the town council decided to remove the shrines. Their concern was that the offerings were unsightly, unsanitary, and obstructed traffic—and that as they deteriorated, they would upset grieving families even more. Families of the deceased selected keepsakes, then the rest of what remained would be compressed into bricks to be used in an eventual permanent monument to the victims.

The factors in play in the disposal of the shrines brilliantly illustrate the unique quandary the *material* poses for grief in late capitalism. While city council members spoke in terms of public interest and healing, their concerns ultimately articulate to the potentially subversive nature of grief as a material expression in neoliberal late capitalism. While mourning traditionally meant a turning away from the world to reflect and remember, today grief increasingly requires the production of revenue. This paper illustrates how the informal memorials posed a threat to the production of memory as capitalist value. This value is here materialized as the official monument, where death and mourning are safely separated from the economic activities of the town. The decision to actually transform these objects into bricks for the permanent monument points to the ways in which, as capitalism seeks to monetize every moment of the life cycle, grief itself only becomes legible as a commodity.

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Commodification of the fallen: Battlefield/Graveyard Tourism

Warfare has been an utmost influence on human productivity. Even after it is over, war continues to offer more thorny fruits to pick: the battlefield, the graveyard for tortured souls serve for further exploitation of grief and curiosity. This paper is going to explore how *the space of the battlefield* produced through war and how the very production of this space, albeit in another form, continues to serve the capitalistic system as a commodity of bereavement. Today, the bunkers, the war memorials, and even the open spaces which were once soaked in blood, in other words, the death of myriads of human beings are commodified through tourism. One cannot simply walk through the once-battlefield in silent contemplation of the dead. One has to pay, enter and follow a guideline - almost a theme park of the dead, with a subtle yet powerful difference: it's indiscreet to laugh.

Spaces of war, in varying contexts and forms, were almost always remembered; however it took the capitalistic system to settle in with its ever-reaching tentacles for battlefields to be exploited: designated areas with ticket booths to enter. The paper discusses the implications of creating a tourist route out of a place that was called into being by the deaths of others through questioning the controversial reuse and appropriation of battlefields.

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Exemplars of good death: biopolitics and governmentality between commodification and social movement

In the UK and beyond, the prevalent model of good death is upbeat and positive. This is represented through an imagery of agency involving independence, control and choice. As health and welfare systems of neo-liberal societies withdraw responsibility for care, the good death is advanced by what Foucault has identified as biopolitics (2009), which, in its current form, inculcates life and death with an ethics of self-management and individualization of responsibility. On the one hand, dying people are urged to comply with narratives of active good death as a logical conclusion to a good life as ethical consumers, and as a way of continuing to engage in 'experiences for growth' that require subjectivity and behaviours commensurate with norms of enterprise and autonomy. In contrast, they are problematized as vulnerable and risky, and a threat to social order. Thus good death may be considered as a contradictory exemplar of neo-liberal governmentality. This paper raises several questions about the biopolitics of mortality in relation to commodification and resistance by examining two cases: first, the commodification of good death is examined by reference to the image of the prevalent model of good death and related developments; second, a collectivized and social image of death and loss, and care as reflected in Kellehear's Compassionate Cities approach (2005) is explored. The conclusion reflects on the limits of commodification and the possible potential of more collective forms of action.

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Newspaper reporting of celebrity death: popularising death, mourning and “sending off”.

Until a few years ago, death was considered to be “publically absent” (Walter et al, 2000 p. 15). Since around the time of Princess Diana’s death, a fascination with detail about celebrity death and an apparent need for national mourning and sense making has become evident.

Newspapers from before and after the deaths and funerals of seven international celebrities across fifteen years have been analysed (e.g. Michael Jackson, Jade, Pope John Paul, George Best). Newsworthiness will be assessed in terms of the volume of space and number of words used, the creative use of images and unique phrases, the number of days the events are reported, how long the events occupy the front page and what subject dislodges the death from the front page.

Questions this paper will seek to explore include:

- What are the features of the life or manner of death that make it newsworthy?
- What aspects of death and after death events are emphasised or sensationalised in relation to specific celebrities?
- What inconsistencies are there in the various papers in the way that both the story and the newsworthiness are used?
- Can trends or changes be identified in the newsworthiness of death across 15 years?
- If the extensive coverage of death in newspapers is an accurate reflection of public desire to read such details what can be said about public appetite for “death in the news”?

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