



Centre for Death & Society

Newsletter

May 2021

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Director's Note

May 2021

It is with great sadness that I start this month's note with the COVID-related death of former CDAS colleague Dr. Shahid Perwez (aged 44) in India. Shahid was a post-doctoral researcher from 2012-2015 with our colleagues in the University of Bath's Centre for Development Studies but also wanted to work with CDAS given his interests in both maternal and infant mortality rates in India. Everyone who worked with Shahid fondly remembers him, partly because he was always smiling no matter what was happening in the world and also due to his sheer enthusiasm for the research. Indeed, he and I sat down one day to discuss biopolitics in India and I have never before (or since) listened to someone so enthusiastically discuss the politics of life and death. 2012-2015 were also crucial years for CDAS and when Shahid arrived CDAS was under increasing pressure to demonstrate to the University that our research worked across the Department of Social and Policy Sciences. I can say without any hesitation that Shahid filled that request and then some – but I feel bad typing that sentence since I do not think he ever knew how important his commitment to both Development Studies and Death Studies became for CDAS's future. His wife and three children were all devastated by his death so colleagues in Edinburgh where he did his Ph.D. created a Go Fund Me page. Please do donate to it if you can: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/shahid-perwez-memorial-fund>



The CDAS *In Conversation* events are off and running. Enormous thanks to everyone who zoomed in for the talks and to everyone who participated. The first two events with [Lucy Easthope](#) and funeral director [Hasina Zaman](#) are now available on the CDAS website. Click on their names to re-watch the conversations. We've got another event with our colleagues in the Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy on May 28 at 2pm about ageism in the workplace. Then on June 21, NHS Palliative Care nurse Jo Wilson and CDAS Psychology colleague Paula Smith will be in conversation. Stay posted for more *In Conversations* coming up in July and then into the autumn.

Finally, the [June 7-14 CDAS Conference on "Death, Dying, Technology and Human Mortality" is now open for Registration!](#) Ticket prices run £55 for the full rate and £25 for a reduced rate. We kept the conference as affordable as possible, so please do buy a ticket and check it out. This year's conference is entirely online and features over fifty speakers from twenty-one different countries and is spaced out over the week to manage the different time-zones. The opening plenary by Dr. Stacy Pitsillides will be fantastic.

Big thanks to Rachel Willis, Aislin Barraclough and Alice Pressley in the Social and Policy Sciences Research Office for making all these events possible. They went way beyond the call of duty to make CDAS's contributions to May 2021's Dying Matters Awareness Week successful.

CDAS COVID-19 Resources, Events and Updates

Our [Centre for Death and Society \(CDAS\) team members](#) curate a monthly collection of resources relating to the effects of Covid-19 on death and society.

We include guidance relating to Covid-19 for:

- grief and bereavement support;
- funeral practices;
- social policy implications.

These resources are both written work produced by CDAS staff and general information on Covid-19 from other organisations. All the resources will be listed on our website [here](#).

May 2021 Covid-19 Information

Publications

Woodthorpe, K. [How has the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown affected society?](#) Kate Woodthorpe reflects on the effect the last year had on us.

Fang C and Comery A (2021) [Understanding Grief During the First-Wave of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom—A Hypothetical Approach to Challenges and Support](#). *Front. Sociol.* 6:607645. doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2021.607645

Event Information

FutureLearn Free Courses

FutureLearn is offering a number of free online courses in themes related to Covid-19. Visit their [website](#) to find out more.

CDAS NEWS

Recent publications

Aitken, D. (2021) [Investigating prison suicides: The politics of independent oversight.](#) *Punishment & Society*. OnlineFirst.

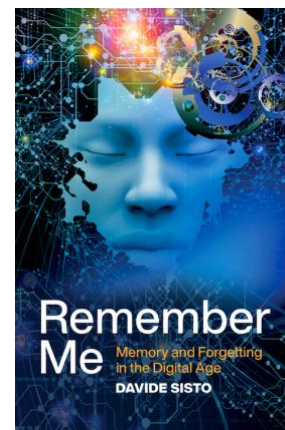
New Book: [Remember Me: Memory and Forgetting in the Digital Age](#) by Davide Sisto.

This book explores how our use of social media platforms is changing the way we store and retrieve memories.

For more information about the book click [here](#)

20% discount on the paperback edition* Go to politybooks.com and use code POL21

promo code is valid until 31/12/2021



CDAS Community News

Understanding Etiquette in Death and Bereavement Contexts: Participants wanted for research interviews

Colleagues at Manchester Metropolitan University are conducting a small study investigating 'etiquette' in death and bereavement contexts.

'I want to ask you about your experiences of death, the 'rules', 'shoulds' and 'musts' you may have experienced.'

For more information or to take part contact Jennie on j.dayes@mmu.ac.uk

Before I Go Solutions® Accr edited Intensive Training in End of Life Plan Facilitation

Applications from every country are invited for the next intake of this online course to become a licensed facilitator, beginning 7th June.

As a result of Covid-19, this accredited course has been re-organised and is now available in an Intensive format, over 4 months. Divided into 3 parts, you begin with creating your own end of life plan. Part 2 covers the practicals of doing death differently, and part 3, the practicing of facilitating others in both an offline and online setting.

It will be primarily of interest to health professionals, counsellors, coaches, educators, celebrants or others interested in helping people to prepare well for a good end of life, no matter how it happens, and to take this planning beyond the conversation stage to getting decisions taken and written down.

By the end of the course, licensed graduates will be able to successfully support others in creating their own plans, both using the Before I Go Method® online course, and in-person, to groups and individuals.

Ongoing mentoring and support resources are then available.

For more information, see <https://beforeigosolutions.com/big-training-intensive/>

Annual Review of Death and Society

Volume 1 will be published by in print and as an Open Access publication in 2022.

The *Annual Review of Death and Society* gives space to publications that deal with the phenomena of dying, death and bereavement from a sociological perspective or from the perspective of related disciplines. In addition to empirical contributions, theoretical discussions are also welcome. The aim of the *Annual Review* is to further develop the current thanato(socio)logical level of knowledge and to achieve national and international networking on a high scientific level.

The *Annual Review* is the result of a collaboration between the *Arbeitskreis Thanatologie* (Thanatology Working Group), which has organized several conferences and workshops since 2018 and presented various thanatological publications as well. Published at the University of Passau with editorial members at the Universities of Bonn, Hildesheim, Osnabrück, Weimar and Zurich, the *Annual Review* is supported by the following Scientific Advisory Board: *Clemens Albrecht* (Bonn), *Ronald Hitzler* (Dortmund), *Hubert Knoblauch* (Berlin), *Thomas Klie* (Rostock), *Gesa Lindemann* (Oldenburg), *Werner Schneider* (Augsburg), *Ursula Streckeisen* (Bern) und *Tony Walter* (Bath).

The contents comprise scientific articles in German or English. Manuscripts are double-blind reviewed. There will also be book reviews, conference reports, statements and presentations of classical standard works. In the long term, interviews with well-known actors from the field of thanatological research as well as a ›forum‹ are planned in which current articles, related counter-positions and replicas of these positions will be compiled.

Contributions in the field of tension between dying, death and bereavement are welcome, both theoretically and empirically. Interested authors submit an abstract with 2 pages (max. 3 pages). Based on the abstracts, the editors decide within four weeks if the proposal is suitable for the *Annual Review of Death and Society* and will let the authors know about their decision. A stylesheet is then submitted. The peer reviewed manuscripts should contain approximately 45.000 characters.

For abstracts and correspondence please contact: tod-gesellschaft@uni-passau.de

Arbeitskreis Thanatologie / Thanatology Working Group:

Thorsten Benkel • Ekkehard Coenen • Ursula Engelfried-Rave • Matthias Meitzler • Melanie Pierburg • Miriam Sitter • Michaela Thönnies

Events

Can We Talk About Grief? With George Gumisiriza and Amanda Blainey – Fevered Sleep

Monday 14th June 6:30-7:45pm

CDAS Postgraduate George Gumisiriza is taking part in an event included in a series of conversations that make visible the vital work and different viewpoints of 10 diverse individuals 'working with grief.'

For more information and to register click [here](#)

The Association for Study of Death and Society Seminars

May 20: The Culture of Grief

Grief exists between the existential universal and the culturally specific. Questions related to how we best deal with grief in a contemporary clinical setting are not independent from its existential and transhistorical status.

Register for free here: [The Culture of Grief Tickets, Thu 20 May 2021 at 12:00 | Eventbrite](#)

June 2: The Dance of Death

An analysis of the imagery in the Wellcome Collection London's 'Wellcome Dance of Death' painting.

Register for free here: [The Wellcome Dance of Death painting's conjugal iconography Tickets, Wed 2 Jun 2021 at 14:00 | Eventbrite](#)

When Grief Goes Viral: Psychological Assessment and Intervention in the COVID Crisis

Date: Thursday 1st July
Time: 17:00-18:30 BST

This event provides carefully validated screening tools for both coronavirus anxiety as the contagion spreads and the complicated bereavement it will leave in its wake and suggests evidence informed interventions for dealing with these disturbances constructively.

Speakers: Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD, Sherman A. Lee, PhD

More information [here](#)

Suicide Bereavement UK's FACE TO FACE international conference

Title of conference: *Suicide Bereavement: Thinking Out of the Box!*

When: 23rd September 2021

Where: Mercure Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, UK

Cost: £140 + VAT

Time: 9am – 4.30pm

The conference will:

- Combine science, lived-experience, practice-based experience and the Arts throughout the day.
- Discuss issues around suicide bereavement across the lifespan.
- Challenge and equally motivate you.
- Provide an opportunity to meet with like-minded people and experts in the field.
- Inform you of findings from research, that will be presented for the first time.
- Ultimately encourage you to consider thinking out of the box, when engaging with this hard to reach and difficult to engage population.

For more information and to register click here

: <https://suicidebereavementuk.com/suicide-bereavement-conference/>

Call for Papers

Call for Papers: *Religions*

Special Issue: Birth and Death: Studying Ritual, Embodied Practices and Spirituality at the Start and End of Life

Submission deadline: 01 October 2021

Special Issue Editors:

Dr. Joanna Wojtkowiak, University of Humanistic Studies, J.Wojtkowiak@UvH.nl

Dr. Brenda Mathijssen, University of Groningen, brenda.mathijssen@rug.nl

Details:

Birth and death are fundamental human experiences. Both life-transitions are meaningful and profound but can also lead to ambiguous feelings, negotiated in embodied, cultural, spiritual and symbolic practices (Hallam et al., 1999; Kaufman and Morgan, 2005; Mathijssen, 2018; Wojtkowiak, 2020). The study of birth and death as existential transitions, comparing and contrasting these two life-events from a ritual and embodied perspective, can reveal novel insights into spirituality and religiosity. In this Special Issue of *Religions*, we want to unravel these questions and explore new theoretical and empirical research on birth and death from multidisciplinary perspectives, such as cultural anthropology, religious studies, chaplaincy studies, medical and cultural psychology and psychology of religion and related disciplines.

The importance of studying birth and death from an embodied, ritualized and symbolic perspective relates to several observations. First of all, all humans are related to their own birth and death and often involved in the birth and death of others (Hennessey, 2019; Schües, 2008). However, entering the world, as well as saying farewell to loved ones, is not a linear transition. Liminal and ambiguous meanings accompany pregnancy and birth, as well as death and dying. Cultural, spiritual and ritual practices accompany this transition and accommodate possible ambiguous states. Secondly, both life transitions are related to spiritual and existential questioning, revealing what matters to us (Wojtkowiak and Crowther, 2018). Thirdly, rituals and embodied practices—varying from quotidian storytelling, performances, meditation and beautification practices to initiation rites and funerals—are grounded in the body, the senses and material culture. Gaining insights into the significance of embodiment, the physical and material dimension of spirituality has been underdeveloped in the literature (McGuire 2006). Fourthly, because of changing religious and cultural contexts, such as secularization,

medicalization, migration and globalization, the way we frame and give meaning to birth and death are changing and leading to pluralistic and possibly conflicting meaning frames. Rituals at the start and end of life have also been changing (Grimes, 2002). What kind of challenges do we face in changing birth and death contexts? What can we learn about meaning making and spirituality by studying birth and death rituals? How is embodied spirituality negotiated in birth and death rituals and practices?

We invite scholars to submit papers on the following topics:

- Rituals and ritualization of birth and/or death (such as pregnancy and birth, dying, death and mourning, commemoration, memorials, private, individual ritualizing);
- Embodied spirituality at birth and/or death from theoretical and empirical perspectives (such as midwifery, chaplaincy or personal practices);
- Social and cultural meanings and ambiguity surrounding personhood at birth or death from an embodied, ritualized perspective (when do we become a person/social being? And how is this manifested in embodied practices? See, for instance, Kaufman and Morgan, 2005);
- Philosophical perspectives on ritual at birth and death (e.g., phenomenological approaches to ritualizing pregnancy, birth, death and dying).

Manuscript Submission Information

Manuscripts should be submitted online at www.mdpi.com by [registering](#) and [logging in to this website](#). Once you are registered, [click here to go to the submission form](#). Manuscripts can be submitted until the deadline. All papers will be peer-reviewed. Accepted papers will be published continuously in the journal (as soon as accepted) and will be listed together on the special issue website.

Submitted manuscripts should not have been published previously, nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere (except conference proceedings papers). All manuscripts are thoroughly refereed through a double-blind peer-review process. A guide for authors and other relevant information for submission of manuscripts is available on the [Instructions for Authors](#) page. *Religions* is an international peer-reviewed open access monthly journal published by MDPI.

Please visit the [Instructions for Authors](#) page before submitting a manuscript. The [Article Processing Charge \(APC\)](#) for publication in this [open access](#) journal is 1200 CHF (Swiss Francs). Submitted papers should be well formatted and use good English. Authors may use MDPI's [English editing service](#) prior to publication or during author revisions.

CALL FOR PAPERS for a topical issue of *Open Theology*

"Death and Religion"

Edited by: Khyati Tripathi, (UPES, India), Jennifer Moran Stritch (Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland) and Peter G.A.Versteeg (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

"Open Theology" (<https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/OPTH/html>) invites submissions for the topical issue "Death and Religion".

Flyer:https://www.degruyter.com/publication/journal_key/OPTH/downloadAsset/OPTH_CFP%20Death%20and%20Religion.pdf

Death and religion share an interdependent relation. Where death is an event or state that threatens to disintegrate worlds and meaning, religion can be seen as a practice that categorizes, consoles and makes sense of this kind of disintegration. According to Oxford dictionary, death is defined as "end of life", but behind this simple definition, there is a web of complex ideas that could be understood from not just biological but also religious or cultural perspectives. Death has been conceptualized differently in different religious traditions as their texts and practices demonstrate. According to Lifton, religion is 'life power' and dominates death. Similarly, Davies put forth rituals as culture's 'words against death'.

The relationship between death and religion should be seen as a broad scholarly query, which includes philosophical and theological questions, as well as more applied perspectives such as social work. Although death is a clinical process of organs that cease to function, dying and death are events that are surrounded by various sense-making practices, ranging from intricate traditional ceremonies as part of established religious repertoires, to more personal, individualized rituals. Social-cultural context, therefore, is of utmost importance to understand how we interact with dying persons and dead bodies, and why we do it in that particular way.

In theology we see how faith traditions historically account for the reality of death, reflecting upon its existential meaning and thus trying to understand how to deal with the event of death. As such, a theology of death raises both practical (e.g. in spiritual care) and systematical (e.g. in ethics) questions regarding death and dying.

In psychology death anxiety or fear of death invited a great deal of interest starting in the late 1950s with Fiefel's work on death anxiety and religion. Different studies pointed at different relationships between death anxiety and religiousness; some studies found a positive relationship between the two while others found an inverse relationship. Some research argued for a curvilinear relationship between death anxiety and religiousness, explaining that moderately religious participants have more death anxiety than those who are extremely religious or not religious at all. The relationship between religion and death anxiety has been an inconclusive

one because of the multidimensional nature of both religion and death anxiety. There is, however, a lack of scholarship on death anxiety and religion in non-western cultures.

In cultural anthropology, death studies have developed into a substantial research niche. There has been ample attention for practices pertaining to e.g. the process of dying, death as transition, as well as to the interaction with the dead body. Important here, too, is the global perspective on death, also in the sense of engaging with ontologies of life and death outside of the established scientific-medical spectrum.

This special issue encourages scholars from different disciplines, not just restricted to the ones we mentioned, to contribute to this debate. Of special interest are situations in which religion becomes overbearing and a burden to carry forward in times of death, or if religious practices are obstructed, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. How do these crisis situations affect the relationship between religion and death? This special issue aims at invoking curiosity, enquiry and interest in looking at the different facets of this topic.

The special issue on 'Death and Religion' invites empirical (qualitative and quantitative), review/conceptual and analytical papers focusing on the different facets of this relationship from scholars in different disciplines such as: Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Theology, Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Thanatology, Health Humanities, Social Care and Social Work. Among others, topics or areas of focus might include:

- Death anxiety and religiosity in non-western cultures
- The different perspectives to 'Extrinsic Religiosity'
- Is 'Intrinsic Religiosity' really the reliever of anxiety?
- Psychological/sociological/psychosocial significance of death rituals
- The changing nature of death rituals
- Personal religious beliefs and ideas about death
- Belief in afterlife and death anxiety
- The changing relationship between death and religion due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The non-religious traditions and death
- Autoethnographic accounts of performing/witnessing death rituals
- Death as latent and religion as evident in Freudian texts
- Religious Literacy and the end of life care
- Extinction as ultimate death and other morbid anxieties of the Anthropocene

Authors publishing their articles in the topical issue will benefit from:

- transparent, comprehensive and efficient peer review,
- free language assistance for authors from non-English speaking regions.

Because "Open Theology" is published in Open Access, as a rule, **publication costs** should be covered by so called Article Publishing Charges (APC), paid by authors, their affiliated institutions, funders or sponsors.

Authors without access to publishing funds are encouraged to discuss potential discounts or waivers with Managing Editor of the journal Katarzyna Tempczyk (katarzyna.tempczyk@degruyter.com) before submitting their manuscripts.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submissions will be collected from September 1 to October 31, 2021, via the on-line submission system at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/openth/>

Choose as article type: "Death and Religion"

Before submission the authors should carefully read over the Instruction for Authors, available

at: https://www.degruyter.com/publication/journal_key/OPTH/downloadAsset/OPTH_Instruction%20for%20Authors.pdf

All contributions will undergo critical peer-review before being accepted for publication.

Further questions about this thematic issue can be addressed to Khyati Tripathi at khyatitripathi27@gmail.com. In case of technical or financial questions, please contact journal Managing Editor Katarzyna Tempczyk at katarzyna.tempczyk@degruyter.com

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Visit the [CDAS website](#) to view a full calendar of events

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