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## **Thanatopolitics and thanatosociology<sup>2</sup>** – draft of the theoretical and conceptual framework –

### **Abstract**

*The aim of the appendix is to show the directions of sociological research of political use of death. There are two related Social Science discourses on death: (1) thanatos sociological, which deals with social inequalities in mortality, and (2) thanatopolitical, in which center is the political instrumentalization of death. It is shown the historical evolution of these relations to death and are considered different theoretical and methodological starting points that explain the political side of death and its symbolic capital. The vision of death has changed, as well as political use of the death. The most attention was devoted to a class-tier thanatological differences. Classes do not show only economic inequality, but also the symbolic and cultural inequality, and so they also differ in relation to the death. It is presented a draft for the sociological framework for the study of historical class interests that determine the ideological use of death.*

**Key words:** *death, the symbolic capital of death, thanatopolitics, thanatos sociology.*

From the dead do not live only gravediggers, but also power. This does not only apply to the use of legally punishable death penalty, but also on various ideologisations of dying of unconvicted that are regulating the historical diverse normative thanatology. The problem would have been easier if a colorful use of the death is only recognizable part of the hegemonic ideologies which prescribe those socially integrative values with which we should frame the meaning of life

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completion. Things are, however, complicated by the fact that the aforementioned contents are always a part of less intrusive values that underpin the broader moral order. Death, in fact, is not used only by politicians but it has an important place in the general structure of symbolic communication and justification of different authorities. It is therefore important that dead ones are often claimed as integrative symbols of various segments of the system, and their direct and indirect political role should be explored. This is the essence of critical thanatology investigating the social inequalities in mortality and ideological use of the death. Are the cultural patterns of relating to death, and regulating the expression of mourning and piety, supertime rituals that are beyond the justification of inequality of living ones? Not at all. The attitude towards death is politically and ideologically very useful, despite that the ruling are also mortal beings. We are not only unequal in life, but the prescribed norms and coping with the death are also the part of ideology that justifies the inequality of living ones. Hence the justification for criticism of various thanatological ideologies, ie. the research of standardizing the death by the living ruling groups. The aim of this paper is to show the directions of sociological research of the political use of death.

## 1.

Just like any other, no sociologist can speak about the recent death because this fact is not in his experience. And his theme is only an indirect relationship of the living to the dying ones, the dead and the beyond. Sociological and Political inference of this relationship lies in the related approach of separate disciplines of thanatos sociology and thanatopolitics. The names are derived from the Greek word Thanatos which in Hesiod's theogony means the god of death, the cruel son of the night and brother of Hypnos, the god of sleep. There are two related Social Science discourses on death: (1) thanatos sociological, which deals with social inequalities in mortality, and (2) thanatopolitical, in which center is the political instrumentalization of bodies. Both are linked because the political funeral rituals and various ideologisations of death can not be considered outside the real historical conditions of death. In the form of a simple formula we could say that thanatopolitics examines the political uses of death and thanatos sociology the deeper side of the ritualized death. Both efforts are the study of social conditioning the symbols of death. To make this complex and historically variable activity investigated it is needed a wider thanatos sociological framework. This means that in every age we should start from the hegemonic interpretations of death and the vision of a good death in which are directly or indirectly expressed interests of those groups that are capable to

impose them. The dead go to heaven or hell, their soul by the reincarnation moves to another bodily forms, or however, they become an eternal part of the collective memory of a nation or class. Although it draws on the ontological view different historical hegemonic interpretations of death (mythical, religious, secular), in all versions the thanatopolitics is the practice of using death for the sake of political gain. Sociological part of death is the relationship between group interests and the ways of their mobilization through dramatic ritualization of death. The narrower sociological cognitive aspect of the problem concerns the different theoretical and methodological assumptions of explaining the social side of death and its symbolic capital. In other words, how the symbolic power as an instrument of domination imposes the meaning and the purpose of the termination of life?

Thanatopolitical literature is less famous than thanatos sociological. The political death cult and political use of the dead rulers have been long defined within a specific understanding of the relationship of theology and politics, church and state. Therefore, the history of this relationship could not be avoided. Book by Ernst Kantorovich “Two bodies of the King” is in many ways an unprecedented historiographical attempt of interpretation of thanatopolitical connection of church and state in Western Christianity<sup>3</sup>. From authors that are also directly engaged in the political use of the death should be mentioned historical studies of Jean Delumeau, Philip Aries, Jacques Le Goff, Jan Asman, politicological Michael Blaine, Olaf and Peter Rader Berghof, anthropological Louis-Vincent Thomas and Katherine Verdery, sociological study of Klaus Feldmann and sociomedical collection of Dominique Gros.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.

It is no cynicism if at the beginning we warn that the death for the sociologist is not primarily a tragedy of an individual but a factor of social development. In what way? First of all, death is functional from the standpoint of development of society. Social stability requires the change of generations, the disappearance and withdrawal of the older and breakthrough of the younger that not only are not burdened with the past experiences but also have different expectations. With the disappearance of the older and their beliefs are also disappearing, and creating space for a new generational consciousness. Thus, as noted by American sociologist M.Kerl in the U.S., gender and racial equality penetrated only

<sup>3</sup> Ernst H.Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs – Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters*, München: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> The titles of books and publications see in the list of references at the end of this article.

with disappearance of the older. Then, death does not relieve only a space for the emergence of new ideas, but also brings people together and creates new forms of solidarity. Various rituals around the victims and martyrs reinforce the value of the group and strengthen its homogeneity. In a sociological sense, it is also important to note that the social status of those who are more likely to die is always lower. Today, a new-born child can not leave the hospital without a name. And in the 18th century child was not given a name until sixth year since the infant mortality was high. Simply put, they did not count on children for very long, warns Kerl. Thanks to the medical progress early death, child mortality was gradually regulated, and, dying is increasingly narrowing down to the elderly. Changes to the economy and society, plural values and world views have changed standards and tolerance limits, class, ethnic and gender conventions, and thus dealing with the unpleasant and painful. The memory of the dead was changing and the use of the imperatives *memento mori*.

All in all, death was never a physiological cessation of life, but has always had a variety of important functions in the world of the living. Even we can talk about the system of the death. It is a term that was in 1977. introduced by Robert Kastenbaum and defined as “inter-personal, socio-cultural and symbolic network with which society mediates the relationship of the individual towards death”<sup>5</sup>. This complex system provides a more conceptual and institutional channels: hegemonic consciousness (ie, other-worldly images), regulation of the death (the hospital), the burial (funeral rites), determination of the place of burial (cemetery), spatial regulation of the memories of the dead (monuments), a time marking the date of death (Day of the Dead, Easter) and laws (the death penalty). Death systems are not static but historically very variable. For their study it is required a differentiated theoretical and conceptual framework.

Before defining it, it should be noted that at the deepest level, changes in society have always been a framework for the change in mindset about death. In other words, not so much thirst for knowledge encouraged individuals to gradually change death, but it was more contributed by organized interests of new groups that were bothered by monopoly of the previous groups over the interpretation and the use of the death. Christianity was legalized in the slavery era only when it was estimated to be more useful than paganism to the ruling circles, who wanted to centralize the empire using monotheism. In the Middle Ages without the Christian vision of judgment could not be controled the underprivileged. The monopoly of the same church over the political use of death was destroyed only when it disturbed strengthened bourgeoisie and the nation in the capitalism.

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<sup>5</sup> Doka Kenneth, *Death system*, 2012. <http://www.deathreference.com/Da-Em/Death-System.html> (retrieved in September of 2012).

It was always a new symbolism of death that was active conceptual content of the new revolutionary thought and communication. This happened on various ideological and social milestones, when the magic was replaced by religion as monotheism suppressed paganism, when the monopoly of the church was destroyed and when the official atheism was introduced. Active class-ply factors were permeated with a variety of concrete historical cultural context. Even if at the same time they were in varying degrees active and visible, they were always present. The most visible were certainly at the detecting controller of symbolic capital of death. More immediate were expressed in everyday life. The daily coping with death was different when life was shorter and child mortality higher. In the Middle Ages the death belonged to life, the living was not disappearing, but was passed over to death. Only the sudden death was a terrible death. It was not until the beginning of the new century when death began to be regarded as an interruption of life, as the definitive disappearance and destruction. This change suggested the crisis of the previous controllers of death. In the romance the death was dramatized, and with the progress of medicine it has been transferred from the family to the hospital, which was also a consequence of major social change.

It is not, of course, enough to warn that every epoch is dominated by a certain view of the causes of death and the after-death state, which is more or less organized monitored. It should be added that in the action there is different seeing the meaning or meaninglessness of life interrupted. It is this ability to design the death that makes it the symbolic capital of the living. The mysterious and indefinable state of death will not be simplified and reductionist explained if you presume that the symbolization of death is not timeless, and things will be clearer if we add to this that the valuation of life and death is always more or less culturally conditioned by complex and changing social history. Like other historical, and these changes have proceeded at a different pace. When the Dutch historian J. Huizinga says that medieval division of society into castes deeply permeates theology and politics, because God himself has ordained that every social class has the function of holiness and glory<sup>6</sup>, he thus implicitly explains the fear of this existence of life in the Middle Ages in which the real goal was beyond this world. For the medieval men equality consisted of gender equality in death, not in equality in life<sup>7</sup>, and priority of otherworldly declined in Western Europe in the 18th century, when the fear of life gives way to courage and hope<sup>8</sup>. Cultural norms and symbols that are directly or indirectly linked with death in particular have changed dramatically in the last two centuries. Moder-

<sup>6</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, Novi Sad: Serbian Heritage, 1991. p.74-75.

<sup>7</sup> *The Same*, p.81.

<sup>8</sup> *The Same*, p.46-47.

nization, the dissolution of the patriarchal society, the weakening of religion and medical advances are important incentives to change the attitude towards death. The disappearance of the fear of God's judgment has not changed only the fear of death but also the use of the death. There has been a change in the method of death, and mourning.

There are even more complex class-ply elucidate differences. Classes do not show only economic inequality, but also the symbolic and cultural inequality, so they differ in emotional dimension of social life. The emotional dimension of inequality is also reflected in relation to the death. Simply put, it is a different attitude of classes towards health, and unequal between them is the risk of disease. In addition to living longer and better than the poor, the expectations of life are different in wealthier. Social class differences in the conditioned cultural practice of this kind are crucial and also exist in the face of death. The poor most likely less mourned dead, because of the high mortality rate of children in their ranks. As convincingly demonstrated by Parisian historian J. Delumeau the regret for the deceased children was long mingled with the fear of newborn children being unbaptized. This was sponsored by church because it considered that the baptized child dies free from the original sin and goes to heaven, while unbaptized wander. Saint Augustine wrote that died unbaptized children will be punished with everlasting fire because of the original sin<sup>9</sup>. Because of that, as stated by Delumeau in France in the 14th century appeared temples for the baptism of children who died before baptism. Both Catholics and Protestants later spread the fear of dying without baptism, and catechism of the 17th century especially in the countryside heightened the fear of unbaptized children. These prejudices were easily spread with an ignorant world, and the poor were more closer to death because in the lower classes, the death was more frequent and earlier than in the rich classes. Bloated aristocratic contempt for the people has been long defended by church apology of feudalism by which God created the common people to work, the clergy to take care of religion, and the nobility to care about justice<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the sorrow could long be strongly expressed only in the artistic monument of the upper class. Only in the 19th century scarce monuments and luxurious funerals could become a symbol of popular culture of death. It was at this ceremony and snobbery and hiding the status as in the Victorian culture of death where the middle and working class emulated the aristocracy. But all funerals were cathartic. If the way of life does not define and the death situation the answers to death would be uniformed. But it is not like that. The differences are not only historical but also a political.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Sin and fear - Creating a sense of guilt in the West from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century*, Novi Sad: Literary community, 1986. p.418.

<sup>10</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, Novi Sad: Serbian Heritage, 1991. p.75

Physiologically individual lives are extinguished due to similar causes of action, but the group variously constructs and evaluates the death of “innocent victims”, “hero” or “villain”. It is a different symbolization of violent from natural death, so its action potential (revenge) is also different.

### 3.

After the French Revolution as a key world-historical turning point in the new century arrived several new waves of change that changed the attitude towards death. Thus, in the second half of the 19th century in England began to decline the impact of the doctrine of heaven and the Last Judgment and the weakening of the Christian vision of the good death. Changes were happening by atheists whose number has increased in England not long after the appearance of Darwin theory of evolution. Secularization followed by the growth and aging of the population has slightly changed the meaning and significance of death. The average length of life, nature and scope of the deadly disease affected the use of death. Here are some historical data. According to the records of the Roman jurists Ulpian from the 3rd century in Rome only half of the births experienced 5 years, only 40% had experienced 20 years, and only 4% of generation was over 70 years old<sup>11</sup>. This demographic “normal state” was true with regional characteristics and social differences until the late Middle Ages. Child mortality was high until the advent of antibiotics, and because the Catholic Church allowed only believers to be buried with the faithful, the peasants even in the 19th century rushed to baptize their children because they were afraid that if the children die they will wander without rest<sup>12</sup>. Death of children and young people was more trivial than it is today. Between the 15th and 18th century the strong bias towards the child dominated, and the Renaissance only slightly changed it. There was a different collective sensibility. In an age devoid of pity were hardening the hearts for the children, and it was said, “For a small child, a little regret”<sup>13</sup>. Apart from the impotence of medicine, the high mortality was encouraged by disease, hunger and war. Striking are the differences between the 19th and 20th century. The population of Great Britain from 20 million in 1841 increased to 54 million in 1971 thanks to the progress of medicine. The widespread use of the more accessible penicillin has in the 20th century opened

<sup>11</sup> Héctor Wittwer, Daniel Schäfer i Andreas Frewer, *Sterben und Tod*, 2010. <https://www.metzler-verlag.de/buecher/.../978-3-476-02230-1.pdf> (retrieved in October 2012). p.2.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Sin and fear - Creating a sense of guilt in the West from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century*, Novi Sad: Literary community, 1986. p.415.

<sup>13</sup> *The Same*. p. 403.

a new era of life extension. The reputation of the physician increased, which further weakened the faith in the miracle of religion and the church. The improved Penicillin was the first antibiotic drug which was produced in sufficient quantities to save millions of lives. It significantly reduced the percentage of premature death, and thus changed the culture of mourning. At the same time the advances in medicine slowly moved death from home to hospital. In Germany, in 2005 the 47.3% died in the hospital, in institutions for fostering 20-30%, and in their own homes or with relatives 20-30%<sup>14</sup>. Death was in the generational view slowly and irrevocably becoming more and more a problem of the older people. The average life expectancy in the developed countries of the EU at the beginning of the 21st century is between 75 and 80 years, and a century ago it was only about 45 years. Thus, in 2005 in Germany from a total of 830 000 deaths the 47.6% were those of 80 years and older. The infant death was 0.39%. The enormous rise of the average expectation of life in the 21st century is the result of circumstances that in the developed world people do not die from infection, but from a degenerative processes<sup>15</sup>. That death indirectly influences policy are saying the following information. In the 20th century in the United States the proportion of elderly population has increased dramatically. In 1900 only 4.1% of the population had 65 years and over, in 1940 already 6.8%, in 1960 9.2%, in 2000 already 12.3%, for 2010 was overlooked 13.2%, for 2025 is calculated to be 18.2% and for the year 2050 is expected to be probably about 20.3%. With an aging of population mortality rates are also rising, so the industry related to death is more and more profitable<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, the need for care of elderly is rising, voters are getting older, and the elections are decided by those who expect less from life, the elderly, not the young. Therefore, it becomes even more important, and even a political issue - how to regulate death? Everyday language registers the increasing expansion of words centered around death: cancer, oncology, metastasis, clinical death, memorials, remembering the dead, AIDS, virtual cemeteries, death industries. There are more and more TV series about hospitals, and in economic terms, in addition to funeral practices, rituals, there is a funeral industry, funeral expenses and profits of burial. All in all, a natural death of the aging is more normal than dying young, and hence the relationship to death is today different than for the example in the 14th century, when a deadly plague epidemic was untamable and was massively taking young people's lives. However, a period of elderly suffering from dementia and weak-

<sup>14</sup> Gerd Gockenjahn, "Sterben in unserer Gesellschaft - Ideale und Wirklichkeiten", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 4*, 2008. p. 10

<sup>15</sup> The Same. p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Clifton Bryant, "The Sociology of Death and Dying", *21st Century Sociology*, Bryant, C / Peck, D, 2007. p. 163-164



nesses in advanced age is prolonged. The fear of being old began to compete with the fear of death.

The public mourning culture was also changing. From the late 18th century civil mourning culture began to be expressed in newspaper obituaries, first as a means of business leaders to announce changes after the death of the entrepreneur. In the early 19th century, the first private funeral homes were appearing and burials were taken from the families. Since the late 19th century labor movement began to use the funerals of their leader for political events, such as social democracy during Bismarck. In parallel with this comes the death technicalisation with the construction of crematoriums which culminated in the bureaucratic destruction of the people in Nazi concentration camps.

Active elucidate factors were the world wars of the 20th century. Mass killings on the front have brought the new changes in coping with death. In parallel with the development of medicine has increased the number of young people (soldiers) who died. In wars, the children died before their parents. They were the waves of the new unnatural terminations of life-like plague of the Middle Ages. Mass deaths in war have spurred development of a new culture of public mourning of fallen soldiers and opened a new space for state use of death. Death of the killed ones in the world wars overshadowed the death of the deceased in mass epidemics (such was the Spanish flu from 1918 to 1919).

All in all in the action were contradictory processes of the unsynchronized suppression and actualization of death. Despite the strength of indicated general trends of development, these processes of long rhythm were unevenly expressed in developed and developing countries and among different classes and generations. There were the colorful cultures of the death use. Not only the same classes, but also the same generations in different countries had different attitudes towards death. In this vast multitude is important to note that the winners on one side and the losers in war on the other side developed a different cultures of mourning and remembrance of the dead. That is not only proved by silence about their own victims in Germany after the fall of fascism and mass politicization of the killed ones at anti-fascist winners during the Cold War. Asymmetric situation happened after the collapse of the Cold War in the Balkans. Croatia and Kosovo gained independence in the civil war, in contrast to Serbia, which lost part of its territory, so here the memory of those killed in the liberation euphoria was different than at the depressed losers. Suppressed regret and celebration of martyrdom was uneven, and the politicization of death also. Death is always a politically symbolic capital of the winners, but not of the losers.

Mentioned social changes should always be kept in mind because otherwise the approach to explore the political use of the death would be devoid of historicity and remained static and sterile. This may be because the discourse on

death, coping strategies, and finally death instrumentalization make a dynamic conceptual, ideological and organizational unity that historically has been improving and so it was usually adjusted to the needs of the ruling circles. Not only that in different historical encounters with death are dominated various forms of social consciousness (magic, religion, atheism), but the proportion of these consciousness is different in the very rituals. French anthropologist Louis Vincent Thomas noted that the tomb shows the presence of the myth, the funeral demonstrates the power of magic, and only burial is a purely human process<sup>17</sup>. When dealing with death homo sapiens has used mythical, magical, religious and secular content and rituals. Belief in the afterlife is just one of the ways of repression and overcoming death. Relationship to the corpse (burial, embalming, burning, flooding) and various liturgical forms of glorification of the deceased (religious and secular) are testimony to a variety of more general view on the relationship of natural and the beyond. What should be immediately noted is Weber's sociology warning that the kind of rebirth after death, that was pursued as the highest good in a religion, was different and always depended on the character of the class which was a key holder of the concerned religiosity<sup>18</sup>. Consistent with this and thanatos sociology is a branch of sociology that deals with the social conditionality of organization of culture of death, understanding the act of death and the state after death. This huge task refers to cooperation with other scientific disciplines, hence the use of the death investigation has necessary interprofessional character. With death are dealing ethnology, anthropology, social history and the history of mentalities. Although still in the early antiquity of the use of death testify archaeological research, thanatos sociology and thanatopolitics are relatively young disciplines. And since the dead always satisfied the various needs of the living, different research approaches are required. In the politics, the use of death is particularly striking in two ideological forms: (1) Organized killing is usually justified as returned violence. Blood is a symbol of revenge, and Lex talionis (debt in blood) is a common figure in justifying wars and various revolutions. Formally, a dramatization through the symbols of death is the dynamics of each thanatopolitics which while justifying violent rearrangement of social organization provides victims in compensation various versions of salvation; (2) The ritual use of corpses in funeral of rulers gives particular meaning and continuity of power, gives the identity to the underprivileged and justifies the authorities of successor. Biological and cultural capital of the dead ruler is in the ritual converted into a political and economical, and the usurpation of the dead ruler as authentic precursors opens up a fight

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Louis-Vincent, *Anthropology of Death I*, Belgrade, 1980. p.349.

<sup>18</sup> Max Weber, *Collected writings on the sociology of religion, Volume I, Volume III*. Novi Sad: Publishing Bookstore Z. Stojanović, 1997. p. 205.

about his symbolic capital (authority, prestige, fame and charisma). Of course there is always the attribution of meaning or construction and board of continuity between the ruler and heir, and then the creation of collective memory and the invention of tradition. Because of all of this said, in a variety of disciplinary approaches to death the critique of ideology is always more or less necessary.

#### 4.

This approach is necessary because the minds of society have long been engaged in various schools of political usefulness of death and its place in the symbolic structure of political communication. It should first be noted the French symbolist sociology, social anthropology and symbolic interactionism developed mostly in the United States. “Studies of death” exist in the U.S. as an academic discipline in universities since the 1960s, and is presented by the psychologists, sociologists and gerontologists<sup>19</sup>. Sociological classics were also involved in social integration role of death. The beyond salvation is in the center of Weber’s sociology of religion, while Durkheim by denying the Taylor’s thesis that the cult of death is the basis of religion, was trying to separate the death of religion, and to connect it with social solidarity. Bearing in mind the above mentioned conceptual heritage and dispersion of modern research of death in the thought about society, Hamburg thanatos sociologists Klaus Feldman noted that thanatos sociology is interprofessional nomadic science visited by different specialists, but they quickly leave it. This discipline is not institutionalized or professionalized. Much less is it thanatopolitics where also are not clearly defined subject, approach or method. Both disciplines are still being treated as an inter-study of the usage of death (death studies). Probably from having to deal with a wide range of issues: withdrawal of social boundaries between life and death, the bond of death, life and power, rituals and institutions that regulate the attitude towards death and dying, moralizing, rationalizing, individualizing and naturalizing death, death connectivity, social structures and economics of death.

In a variety of different social scientific research of death can be identified three broad areas: 1. with description and interpretation of integrative and symbolic roles of funeral rituals and practices are dealing anthropology, ethnology and historiography by more or less developing symbolist, functionalist and constructivist approach, 2. with the integrative role of the transcendent vision of the use of death are dealing philosophy and sociology, 3. With the political

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<sup>19</sup> Clifton Bryant, “The Sociology of Death and Dying”, *21st Century Sociology*, Bryant, C./Peck, D, 2007. p.159.

use of death are also dealing several scientific disciplines (from historiography to the social psychology), which for sociology are the most interesting ones that the use of death connect with the interests of the ruling groups. In the colorful modern Social Science Research of death dominate the first two approaches. Most described are the rituals and interprets, their integrative and symbolic role. At the heart of a variety of historical, ethnological, and sociological research is the role of death and dying in the integration of society and the symbolization of death. In the minority are studies that do not stop in front of the symbols, but they interpret them as parts of the ideological system that justifies the interests of certain classes and strata. This does not remain on the formal level of explanation.

In order to retreat slightly clearer difference between these approaches we should shortly stop in front of the distinction between form and content. In formal terms for politicizing death is important to note the ways of the conceptual framing of continuity between the dead and the living, different accent of the pattern death / rebirth and the degree of systemic sacralization of death. There are in the centre of the research of the symbols of death that should always emphasize the immortality of order of living. In this sense, Durkheim anthropologist R. Hertz noted that every society seeks eternity because it would not survive if it wasn't emphasizing their own immortality over individuals. To do so we use funeral rituals that symbolically connect the living and the dead, again reintegrate the living, equip them for continuity after the disappearance of members, thus linking the past and the future<sup>20</sup>. Hence, within the social integration is the dialectic of mortality and immortality. Death is the end of life of a member of company and the new start of society without it. Each political processing of death rests on the symbolic tension between death and rebirth. Symbols express feelings of the members of society, but also create and channel the same feelings. But one can not at the understanding the human ritual stop at the hermeneutics of tears. For the interpretation is not sufficient only the description of planning emotionalization and moralization of the dead. It will not help a lot the awareness that symbols create us in the same extent as we create symbols<sup>21</sup>. It should be noted further material factors of planned regret. Hermeneutics of sadness and a description of its symbolism remain at the psychological and formal level unless they penetrate deeper and seize various historical class and layer of the elements that determine the attitude towards death. Only apparently is similar the symbolism of the various connecting the living and the dead, and death and birth. Behind the seemingly similar symbolism and rituals (the death of the king

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted Hertz according to, Michael Blain, *The Politics of Death - A Sociological Analysis of Revolutionary Communication*, Dissertation Com. USA books: 2001. p. 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Blain, *The Politics of Death - A Sociological Analysis of Revolutionary Communication*, Dissertation Com. USA books: 2001. p. 69

and the coronation of the prince, the death of the Pope and the enthronement of the new Pope, the death of the class leader and the choice of his successor) are concealed the interests of various groups.

Therefore with explanations at the beginning we should closely define company through the asymmetric dominance of certain classes or elites, and only then explore the specific motives of political use of death. Each thanatopolitics is the political economy of death: from ancient slave trade to the exploitation of dental gold murdered in Auschwitz. In the stricter sense the term thanatopolitics is ambiguous. M. Foucault and G. Agamben under it understand the politics of unpunished killing<sup>22</sup>. This paper is more, however, about the politics that justifies itself through death. It is, therefore, not about the exclusion and the suppression of another life which is not considered worthwhile, but a broader justification of the privilege of living over the dead. It is a critique of justifying the inequality through natural or the violent death that is the subject of thanatopolitics as a scientific discipline. The condition of criticism is, of course, the quite convincing explanation of the use of death. We should not be confused by the three mentioned meanings of the term thanatopolitics (killing with impunity, justifying the inequality through death and criticism of the ideologisation of death) are not identical. It is a phrase that indicates the practice of killing, ideologization of death and critical explanation of those activities. The meanings of the term are related, and can be seen as two sides of the same phenomenon: the use of the death on the one and critique of the use of death on the other side. So, thanatopolitics is an ideology, but it is also a discipline. There is no doubt that the sphere of the thanatopolitics is everywhere where it is allowed to kill, and not to commit a crime. In this sense, according to the Vienna Cultural Studies Eva Horn, the essence of modern politics and all ideologies of war is death, and not life<sup>23</sup>. However, it is not about the ordinary use of death, but the complex political economy of death. In what sense?

To say that the use of death should be viewed in the broader context of the use of fear of death, we think about the fear of death recognized controllers. The fear of death is, however, fluid and always an important part of the awareness of being, and we will not exaggerate if we say *Timeo ergo sum*. In this study, however, is not so much about the use of fear of the disease, but the use of the fear of the church hell and of the state punishable death (in Agamben's and Marcuse's sense of the state as the lord of death). Thanatopolitics is an institutional threat to an individual by punishment for his sin and heresy, and casuistry of these threats

<sup>22</sup> Agamben, Giorgio, *Sovereign power and bare life*, Zagreb Multimedia Institute 2006. p. 12-13; Horn, Eva, "Sterbt, aber lernt - Thanatopolitik in Brechts Stücken", Hebekus Uwe hg. *Die Souveränität der Literatur*. 2008. p. 313.

<sup>23</sup> Eva Horn, "Sterbt, aber lernt - Thanatopolitik in Brechts Stücken", Hebekus Uwe hg. *Die Souveränität der Literatur*. 2008. p. 314.

were varied according to whether God was more just or good. The reigning were directly or indirectly connected with God, and the possibility of redemption of sin opened the leeway of the ecclesiastical politics. The same threat was later used for the outcasts of immortal nations, states, or parties. In what way?

First of all, thanatos economy does not exist without thanatos ideology, religious or secular. Authority does not rely on ad hoc death threats, but on developed ideologisation of death. Of course the connection between the economics of death and a developed justification of death is not always direct but is more mediated and often blurred by multiple facilities of hegemonic epochal consciousness. The problem of every theodicy was how to connect the fictitious divine providence and salvation after death with the mundane real social injustice. Not all attempts of this kind were equally compelling. When confronted with the horrors of the plague in mid-14th century infirm priests in Europe at the end wondered if mass death is consequence of the ancestors sin, few people believed them? Not only the enlightening critics of religions wondered, but also Max Weber, why socially privileged classes of some people develop a religion of salvation<sup>24</sup>? Roughly speaking, when the government frames the death then this is not about costuming common group interest but a close-class business. Funerals of British kings with the pompously organized grief and impressive ceremonious integrate residents of Empire in pain, and solemnly hide interests of its narrow ruling circles. Or another example of class symbolism. At the funerals of the kings of France from the 14th century, all present were in black clothes appeal except for four presidents of the parliament of Paris, who were in red. The message of this costume was that the judges do not express sorrow because the death of the king does not stop justice<sup>25</sup>. Judges do not mourn for their dead king, and this is the eternal justice. Medieval canon law did not with this symbolic only protect continuity of the monarchy of disarray, but the anxiety of clutter was motivated by class fear of losing the common privileges of the clergy, the nobility and the king.

Even if we leave aside the question of whether the medieval and the modern societies in terms of class are uniquely definable conditions, to explore their funerary symbolism is certainly necessary an inclusive framework capable of integrating the cognitive fertile sides of symbolism, social constructivism (sociologism) and the critique of ideology. It is not enough to say that in research of social effects of symbols we should never forget the various class - ply interests. It should be borne in mind that the classes use rituals of death to delimit themselves symbolicaly. Communists pushed the priest from the grave, and post soci-

<sup>24</sup> Max Weber, *Collected writings on the sociology of religion, Volume I.* Novi Sad: Publishing Bookstore Z. Stojanović., 1997. p.424-427.

<sup>25</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs – Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters*, München: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990. p.413-414

alist elite wanted him back again. Therefore, the contemporary clerical funerals are not only naked religious rituals but also means of running from socialism.

Thus, the symbolization of social differences can be traced through the symbolization of death and it is an important side of its politicization. It goes without saying that social integration is impossible without symbolic framework that is part of the ideology of the ruling. Each power is symbolised and authority directly justifies itself through the symbols (the crown, the cross, the hammer and sickle). The continuity of key symbols is important to society, but powerful changes require discontinuity of symbols, including those related to death. Thus, for example, through new symbols associated with death (religious funerals and prayers) today are sharply delimited linguistically and culturally related ethnic groups. Funeral rites were suddenly separated by the structure of the ceremony and the transcendent vision of the Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim, although in the recent past they were far more even in the secular socialist state. Because nowadays these rituals provide an identity, but not by inventing them, but only by coming to life, we can talk about thanatopolitical restoration, and not a revolution.

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