Death in Black and White: Death, Ritual and Family Ecology

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Abstract

"Death in Black and White takes a behind-the-scenes look at contemporary funeral practices to discover what similarities and differences exist between African American and European American cultures' experience of dealing with death. The author charts the divergent origins of such rituals of mourning from pre-colonial Africa and Europe to the time in which these cultural traditions came into contact during the period of American slavery, and the degree of fusion and variation that persists up to the present day." Based on a foundation of cultural theory and scholarship, the author explores a variety of issues related to race, culture and death ritual practices by immersing himself in the rich narratives and sources of information gleaned from his in-depth interviews with funeral directors, corporate funeral home representatives, clergy and individuals who have recently lost a loved one. Additionally, he has observed numerous funeral and burial services and cemetery landscapes, and has examined federal and state public policies surrounding burial and disposal, as well as other forms of death-related discourse. Ultimately, the book describes how death rituals both manifest and reinforce different cultural identities, and suggests that perhaps, it is through the experience of death that we might find the most enduring possibilities for promoting greater cultural understanding by maintaining rather than eliminating such differences."--Jacket
This text provides information about contemporary death ritual practices as they are performed among African American and European American cultures in the United States. Midlife mortality amongst US whites has risen from the late 90s; it has fallen for US Hispanics and blacks. This trend seems to be driven in large part by increases in alcohol and drug poisonings, and suicides amongst the white population. Such social cancers will not metastasize in communities with a healthy ritual ecology. As Sarah Perry discusses at Ribbonfarm, cultures can and do routinely evolve safety valves for the channelling and gentle release of humanity’s more chaotic impulses. These safety valves of complex community rituals, however, are rarely robust to rapid cultural churn. The breakdown of traditional family structure, the decline of faith and greater social isolation driven by both meritocracy and diversity all contribute. WHITE DEATH have begun a glorious new epoch: march or die. WEREWOLF RECORDS is a Luciferian metal temple founded in 1998. The wolfish cry from the Carelian battleground, WEREWOLF RECORDS exclusively releases black metal and congruent noize. In this age when black metal’s worth is questionable, idealism and rigor are the exception when they should be the highest law. We uphold the law of the Wolf – the destruction of the weak and the false so that the original vitality of the dark magic art can continue to grow and create the foundations for an empire. Black metal is Will and Power. We deal wit