

VICENT SALVADOR, ADÉLA KOT'ÁTKOVÁ & IGNASI CLEMENTE,
editors

Discourses on the edges of life

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As the best preserved secret of this world, death has always been a good choice for (re) thinking and writing (both for the sake of education and self-maturing). The problem of trying to shape one's own ideas about death in a comprehensive way, is that one has to take over quite a risk of ending in producing nothing particularly helpful.

The latest book edited by Vicent Salvador (an expert in contemporary Catalan literature from University of Valencia and University of California at Santa Barbara), Adéla Kot'átková (a Catalan philologist originating from Charles' University in Prague and the Jaume I University, Spain) and Ignasi Clemente (Department of Anthropology, Hunter College, New York), has offered balanced approach to the subject of death, discourse analysis in health settings, and death in literary texts.

Already in the initial Presentation, some crucial confrontations have been stressed: death vs. its Freudian antidote – love, and death as a permanent omnicultural taboo.

Josep L. Barona (Universitat de València; “Death: from myth to the laboratory”) discusses the cultural, social and medical constructions of death and eternal life, exploring funeral rites and parish registers.

Fernando Lolas Stepke (The Institute for International Studies, Universidad de Chile; “Moral orthothenasia and the right to die: A multinarrative approach”) elaborates on the ethical quandaries associated with the process of dying from three different narrative perspectives: first, second, and third person, concluding that “dying is in harmony with personal expectations and desires, the needs of relevant others and the regulations implicit or explicit in society”.

Beatriz Gil-Juliá and Rafael Ballester-Arnal (Universitat Jaume I; “In the wake of loss: Grief, mourning and bereavement”) consider the loss of a loved one as one of the major life-event stressors, analysing the psychological and clinical aspects of it.

Antonio M. Bañón Hernández (Universidad de Almería; “The gift of continuing to live in the body of someone else: The discourse on organ transplants in Spanish press”) searches for the presence of the concept of death in the discursive types used in talking about organ transplants published in the *El País* newspaper in 1976-1986 and 2006-2016, respectively.

Martí Domínguez and Lucía Sapiña (Universitat de València; “Giving meaning to illness and death: End-of-life approaches in online stories by adolescents and young adults with cancer”) analyses 128 patients' stories with respect to their approach to the subject of death.

Ignasi Clemente (Louis Dundas Centre for Children's Palliative Care, Institute of Child Health, University College London and Hunter College, City University of New York; “Religion, collusion, and ‘fighting’: Pediatric cancer end-of-life discourses in Catalonia, Spain”) studies ethnographically com-

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munication practices of pediatric patients using religious imagery, co-creating the optimistic and hopeful collusion, or using the “let us keep fighting” approach.

Adéla Kot'átková (Universitat Jaume I; “Rhetoric of death in clinical case reports and clinical tales”) reviews the place of death in professional clinical case reports, exposing the euphemisms and technical lexicon used.

David Pujante (Universidad de Valladolid; “‘Letters to Lucilius’ and death: A self-help book written by Seneca”) uncovers an ancient work resembling modern self-help treatises aiming to attain moral freedom and inner independence and removing the fear of death.

John Skelton (Institute of Clinical Sciences, University of Birmingham; “Montaigne, the essay and the end of life”) praises Montaigne as the inventor of the essay form, ideal to explore end of life questions as concepts and to consider through them how to die (and how to live).

Montserrat Lunati i Maruny (Cardiff University / University of St Andrews; “Memory, mothers and post-Freudian melancholia in Mercè Rodoreda’s ‘Night and Fog’”) offers a psychoanalytical analysis of the twentieth-century Catalan literature works.

Vicent Salvador and Irene Mira (Universitat Jaume I / Universitat D’Alacant; “The scenography of death in contemporary poetry: The case of Vicent Andrés Estellés”) reveal the scenes of death depicted by the Catalan poet Vicent Andrés Estellés, 1924-1993.

Sara Molpeceres (Universidad de Valladolid; “Beyond the limits of death: Consciousness without bodies and simulacra of human beings in Science Fiction”) discusses two ways of extending human life span used in Science Fiction – uploading human mind onto a computer and the creation of clones/ simulacra emulating living beings.

Even if promoting very different approaches and authors, the *Discourses on the Edges of Life* have not committed the usual mistake of entering the debate on death too broadly and thus too bluntly: carefully staying within the limits of their philological, linguistic or ethical analyses, the authors have added small but important and well-grounded pieces into the mosaic of our vague shaky hunch of death and dying that probably will never be fully uncovered.