

“... man is mortal... The worst of it is that he's sometimes unexpectedly
mortal”

Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*

“... to acknowledge the presence of death is to appreciate the significance
of life”

Roger Grainger (1998: 10).

University of Alberta

**ABNORMAL DEATH MEMORIALS IN UKRAINE: THE
FOLKLORISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

by

Svitlana P. Kukharenko

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Examining Committee

Natalie Kononenko, Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Andriy Nahachewsky, Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Gregory Forth, Department of Anthropology

Peter Rolland, Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Robert Smith, School of Education, Southern Cross University (Lismore, Australia)

To my parents.

To my Teachers.

ABSTRACT

Abnormal death memorials are unofficial cenotaphs and burial places located in public space. They mark the sites of sudden tragic death and, therefore, include roadside memorials – an internationally spread phenomenon that is a relatively new topic in the Folkloristics scholarship. This study is the first to explicitly discuss abnormal death memorials – as both material culture objects and as objects of folk beliefs – in the context of Ukrainian culture. Based on fieldwork done in Ukraine between 2005 and 2009, this thesis identifies the meaning and significance of contemporary memorials in Ukraine through people's attitudes. The results of the study show that positive attitudes towards abnormal death memorials are influenced by Ukrainian folk beliefs about “bad death,” the afterlife, and communication with the dead. Abnormal death memorials in Ukraine appear as metaphors of Ukrainian cosmology and changing folk beliefs about the worlds of the living and dead. The practice of erecting memorials in Ukraine seem to be a modification of a century long folk tradition of marking spots of “bad death.”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADM – Abnormal death memorial

TTU – Tramvaino-troleibusne upravlinnia [Tram & Trolleybus
Department]

Ukravtodor – Ukrains'ka Derzhavna sluzhba avtomobil'nykh dorih [State
Office for Automotive Roads of Ukraine]

WEOL – with experience of loss

INTRODUCTION

Death is an existential phenomenon, a universal biological fact, yet it is much more than that. It is also a cultural event, a “complex mass of beliefs, emotions, and activities that differ from one society to another” (Cátedra 2004: 87). Studying “normal” or natural death and funerary practices related to it of any society without considering abnormal, “bad,” or “triste” death and corresponding funeral customs would be partial and insufficient. “Death... provides a context... where cultural values are clearly expressed” precisely through funeral customs (Westgaard 2006: 152). Funerary practices reveal much more about the living than the dead, since those practices “offer some of the most profound insights into the social and psychological structure of social groups, past and present” (Zelinsky 1976: 172).

Death and its mystery has been preoccupying human minds since time immemorial. The main rites of passage revolve around death – albeit not always physical but symbolical – and rebirth (van Gennep 1960: 189). Physical death has a powerfully mysterious nature for many reasons. One of them is the uncertainty of what happens after death in general, and specifically what happens to the soul after death of a body: a real death of a body is “accompanied in most cultures by a time of mortification and testing for... [the] soul” (Grainger 1998: 14).

While funerals are subjects of rituals and customs, death omens (intersignes) and life beyond death are an area of folk belief. Ellen Badone (2004)

emphasized that intersignes narratives in a form of memorates “provide particularly useful material of the study of folk beliefs” (p.65). Daniel Ingersolle and James Nickell (1987) distinguished between two realities: “material” (anything tangible or measurable) vs. “non-material,” such as “ideas, emotions, and meanings which are generated internally, like demons or ghosts” (pp. 2-3). According to him, the second reality, or “intended symbolism,” often gets overlooked by researches who favor the first, material reality in a culture (ibid.: 3). These are folklorists who help to explore some of those internal variables that are difficult to measure and verify empirically. In my research, I examine the phenomenon of abnormal death memorials and its relation to Ukrainian folk beliefs and practices related to “bad death.”

Abnormal Death Memorials

Abnormal death memorials mark precise places of death that was opposite to normal, prepared, or expected death. They include roadside memorials that identify traffic-related deaths, but are not limited to them. Proper description and documentation is a part of the work necessary to explain the phenomenon of the abnormal death memorials. Description and documentation, however, pose a problem of unified terminology. The terms for the individual spontaneous memorials vary among the scholars: “wayside shrines” (Monger 1997); “roadside death memorials” (Reid and Reid 2001: 341); “*descansos*” and simply crosses (Everett 2002); “spontaneous shrines” (Santino 2004); “micro sacred sites” (Weisser 2004); “spontaneous memorials” (Doss 2006); “roadside memorials”

(Churchill 2007) and many others. Jack Santino (2004) suggested the term “spontaneous shrines” as more useful and accurate than “roadside memorials” or “makeshift memorials,” since the word “spontaneous” reflects their unofficial nature and they indicate not only victims of the road fatalities but any unexpected death (p. 369). Denis Thalson (2006), on the contrary, advocated the name “memorial” rather than “shrine” since the former “privileges the fact that [they] are places of remembrance” (p. 53). For the purpose of this study, I use the term “abnormal death memorials” abbreviated as ADMs. It refers to the cenotaphs that mark sites of any unnatural, untimely, tragic death away from home (such as traffic fatality memorials, murder memorials, suicide memorials, job-related accidents memorials and so forth), as well as burial sites located off a cemetery and next to roads. I consider only memorials which memorialize death of ordinary people (not celebrities), and which were set up by individuals and are looked after by those individuals or local communities.

The onset of the roadside memorials phenomenon is a debatable issue, yet it is recognized that its dynamic growth and international spread occurred toward the end of the 20th century. The spread of the phenomenon was so intense that it began to be perceived as problematic in North America by the mid-1990s (Kennerly 2005: 116). This resulted in adoption of certain, often contradictory, official policies regulating or prohibiting the practice, which was regarded as a public activity in public places in the USA (Weisser 2004: 26-28; Thalson 2006: 121) and Canada (Churchill 2007: 13). The existing regulations define not only

the eligibility of memorials, but their various parameters such as size, shape, color, length of their existence, as well as means of maintenance or destruction.

The phenomenon of ADMs tends to be looked at as modern by many scholars. At the same time, the wide tradition of marking spots of untimely tragic death and commemorating victims of such death seems to have a much longer history in many cultures over the world. Interestingly, in Western countries the landscape markers of tragic death mostly got reduced in the 20th century to those resulting from the traffic accidents. They also became a rather rural phenomenon, i.e. crosses still do occur in large numbers but not on central highways. Instead they persist and even flourish on the “country roads,” according to witnesses (Thornberry 2008). In Slavic lands, especially East and South Slavic ones, the situation seems to be reverse: ADMs are common features of both urban and rural landscapes even now, at the beginning of the 21st century.

Research Objectives

In this dissertation I look at the phenomenon of the ADMs in the context of Ukrainian culture. The Ukrainian landscape is not unusual in a sense that it is intended “to ‘hold’ memories... of the human past” (Harrison 2004: 150), yet it is special in a sense that it is symbolic of death and defilement. For a cultural outsider, Ukrainian landscape with its countless small crosses for the millions of victims of Holodomor of 1932-1933, unknown burials, mass graves to the victims of the Soviet political terror and those left from wars, monuments to the Unknown Soldier of the WWII in almost every city, town and village, and with the post-

Chornobyl disaster's "dead zone" would appear, on a symbolic level, "as a kind of vast burial ground overflowing with remains and mementos of countless dead people" (Harrison 2004: 144). Most of the mass graves are left from Soviet times, some of them continue to be found, excavated, and turned into tangible symbols of the national tragedy and the landscape of national memory. Unlike tombstones or grave-mounds from earlier times, such memorials are still emotionally very powerful and meaningful, because the witnesses of some of those events they embody are still alive, and because the process of collective mourning still continues. In this respect, I research the meaning of the abnormal death memorials as symbols of private/individual tragedy in the background of collective death symbolism.

It seems that in countries where the traditional folk commemorative practices are still alive, ADMs stir little interest or attention on behalf of scholars and general public. In Ukraine, there is no scholarship related to ADMs. Prior to 2009 there were no mass-media publications, web sites, television shows, televised public service announcements or official laws governing the practice of erecting ADMs. What I call the "Group Decision," or the ban on ADMs along roads was introduced only in February 2009 (more on this in Chapters 4 and 5). At the same time, numerous ADMs appear in Ukraine spontaneously not only along the highways, but in the streets of cities and villages. Not only tragic deaths resulting from the road collisions become the reason for memorialization, but any

untimely death, suicide, or murder away from home, on the road, in public space may be memorialized in a tangible way.

I describe and explore Ukrainian folk beliefs, practices, and narratives related to death, yet this research is not just descriptive – it involves interpretation of Ukrainian culture and the meaning of ADMs in this culture. It is not as much a study of Ukrainian necrogeography (or the display of regional values and customs through funerary rites), as about the contemporary ideas and beliefs connected to untimely death in Ukraine, social understanding of the experience, symbols, as well as about attitudes of Ukrainians to the markers of sudden tragic death.

Methodology

Since ADMs are experiential places (cf Meinig 1979: 3) I employed a phenomenological, or experiential perspective for researching them. Phenomenology puts experience before theory. A phenomenological approach helps to get into people's involvement with places, especially those that are deeply and emotionally loaded. ADMs constitute very special, “emotional landscapes” (Kahn 1996: 195): each site is the focal point of intense negative emotions. I provided the opportunity for people – those who set up ADMs and those who encounter them on their daily routes – to describe their experiences with ADMs in their own words. I view the phenomenon of ADMs from the vantage point of those who attribute meaning to it. Also, phenomenological investigation implies a researcher's personal interest in the phenomenon she tries to understand, an almost intimate connection with it (Moustakas 1994: 59). My personal experience and

memories about encounters with a “bad death” and ADMs directed my interest to the phenomenon of ADMs and sustained it throughout the research.

Heidegger's “phenomenology of being” allows us to look at human experience within the context of a historically constituted social world. I review Ukrainian ADMs in a historical perspective relating them not as much to contemporary as to past folk beliefs and practices. The phenomenological approach also allows us to investigate the realm of sacred or transcendental. In my research, I tried to find out if ADMs are associated with the sacred in Ukrainian culture, and how Ukrainians experience that sacred.

My research was grounded in ethnographic fieldwork, and one of its focuses was researching ADMs as physical sites. As objects of material culture, ADMs are subject of visual ethnography, therefore, I quantified and analyzed material facts about ADMs through description of the sites. My methodology was eclectic. It included close observation of individual sites that were selected on the basis of their suitability for such observation. The sites were selected neither randomly, in a statistical sense, nor idiosyncratically. Instead, I used pragmatics of the safety, both mine and people on the road or nearby. Most of the time, I discovered ADMs sites spontaneously during the routine travels in Ukraine or found them through networking. I collected images of abnormal death memorials throughout the whole research period, i.e. during two summers in 2007 and 2009, although I attempted fragmentary scattered documentation in the summer of 2005, too. Some of the sites' images, however, I got from other people as printed photographs or

digital files. Naturally, some of those were accompanied with precise descriptions; some were not. It was not, however, possible to understand the meaning of the memorials and people's attitudes only through analyzing them as physical sites. As Tuan (1979) suggested, only in a mental image do the visual elements of the landscape “suggest, and are interwoven with, relations and values that cannot be seen” (p. 93). Therefore, I looked at the invisible Ukrainian landscape as well, so that the second focus of my research were attitudes towards the phenomenon of ADMs in different regions of Ukraine.

Self-reports are a quick and quite efficient way to gauge people's attitudes, therefore I integrated observations with the survey method conducting the “opinion and attitude” survey (see the attitude questionnaire in Appendix B). Since my research was phenomenological in its nature, there was no need for scientific sampling: the main purpose was to understand the meaning of the abnormal death memorials as expressive behavior in Ukraine. I did not concentrate on a bound group of people; instead I was moving across the country. My choice of survey participants was opportunistic. I surveyed 173 people (68 males and 105 females). The majority of the survey participants were students from different Ukrainian universities, of different ages and major specializations. In 2007, I surveyed 36 students from the Kyiv University of Internal Affairs (27 males and 9 females) and 42 students from the Horlivka State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (37 females and 5 males) whose major was “English Language.” In 2009, I surveyed 39 students from the Donetsk Institute

of Psychology and Management, a group of people getting their second graduate degree (36 females and 3 males) and 48 students from the Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University. Among the latter, there was a group of students of the first year majoring in History and a group of students of the fourth year majoring in Political Studies. In addition, there were 10 people of middle age (4 males and 6 females) who did not want to be interviewed but agreed to complete the survey questionnaire. All the surveyed were asked to fill out written questionnaires about ADMs and their personal attitudes towards them. A small-scale survey on a larger population helped to get a larger amount of information as for the spread of memorials in different areas, their typicality, and general attitudes towards them.

This attitudinal survey was complemented with semi-structured and unstructured interviews with persons belonging to different categories of population across the country such as clergymen and secular citizens, bus/taxi drivers and passersby, young and older people, those with experience of sudden tragic loss and those without, and those who expressed “official” attitudes. Some interviews were brief encounters, while others are in-depth ones; some were pre-arranged, and some were spontaneous. In the case of interviews with functionaries, they were more formal and did not include any questions about the soul or folk beliefs about death in general. I had such formal interviews with a Head of a Road Maintenance Service in Kyiv and a worker of that organization.

There was also a formal interview with a Director of an electronics store near which there was an ADM.

The main purpose of (both formal and informal) interviews was to find out people's beliefs about unnatural tragic death and to collect narratives. The observation from over thirty years ago still stands that “[g]ood ethnography – a narrative that describes a culture or a part of a culture – is usually good phenomenology” (Pelto and Pelto 1978: 15). I was particularly interested in narratives about ADM sites in general and also about specific sites; about death and its causes, about “good” vs. “bad” deaths, about life and right, or wrong, things people should, or should not, do to avoid “bad” death. Those narratives open a way to understanding broader cultural traditions and belief systems, and they were a method of data generation. My intention was not to find a meta-narrative, but rather hear many of them. I was able to collect a total of forty four personal interviews of different length and quality, ranging from casual conversations to formal taped and indexed interviews.

As death-related information is very sensitive for those who have lost a loved one in an accident, I never contacted people whose experience of loss was recent (up to three years after the tragedy). I interviewed two relatives of the deceased about construction of the ADMs. In-depth interviews were conducted mainly with people who responded better to the topic of memorialization of sudden death, i.e. were eager to talk. Sometimes I started with the survey questions and then switched to the in-depth interview if an informant showed

enthusiasm or provided examples of memorials from her/his own experience. My initial survey and interview questionnaires included, among others, the following two questions “Do you know of any laws regarding the ADMs?” and “Do you think that such laws would be necessary?” I had to change those questions in summer 2009 to “Have you heard about the Group Decision [the semi-official regulation banning roadside ADM] of February 2009?” and “How do you feel about it? Do you support it?” Since the questions for both survey and in-depth interview were initially composed in English, I translated them into Ukrainian, and then asked a bilingual third person to translate them back into English to see where questions got distorted the most and where, therefore, they needed to be reformulated. This part of the project was completed at the University of Alberta, before going to Ukraine.

In addition, as a secondary source, I used discussions of the participants of web forums. I collected 31 comments posted as responses under four online publications regarding the problem of ADMs (not all publications, however, provided an option for readers to express their opinions on the Group Decision 2009). I chose only those comments where a clear attitude toward ADMs was demonstrated, and discarded others. My fieldwork also encompassed library and archival research, mostly for the ethnographic data about regular and special funerary rituals and beliefs connected to “bad death” on the territory of Ukraine before the middle of the 20th century.

I approached ADMs on various scales: micro- and macro-, or national scale. The smallest unit of analysis was an individual memorial at a certain site. Sites were aggregated into four regions of the country: Eastern, Southern, Central, and Western. Unfortunately, the regional representation of the memorials was not equal, and it might be considered as a weak point of this research. On a national scale, Ukraine as the second largest country in Europe is a large-scale case study. Using this large scale seemed useful, since “[b]y enlarging the scale of the study, one may generalize about larger-scale perspectives and any theorizing (or speculation) beyond the largest scale has an increased validity” (Weir 2002: 8).

There were no research assistants for this project, only guides in certain locales to help me to find the memorials. While looking for the interviewees I used my personal network. All the recorded interviews are stored as digital audio-files on a special external hard-drive. I used a digital camera and digital voice recorder during the research. The copies of the digital files related to the dissertation are deposited to the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore, University of Alberta.

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1, *Abnormal Death Memorials as a Cultural Phenomenon*, is a general overview of the ADMs as a research topic. It includes a summary of the scholarship about the phenomenon and its spread. It talks about “bad death” beliefs and the marking of the places of such death in the historical perspective.

The chapter also touches on ADMs as sacred spaces, and analyses them as sites of commemoration and mourning.

Chapter 2, *Ukrainian Folk Beliefs and Practices Related to Death, Funerals, and Afterlife Until the Beginning of the 20th Century*, presents specifically Ukrainian folk beliefs about death and afterlife as discussed in ethnographic sources, mostly from the 19th – early 20th centuries: death personifications, “good” vs. “bad death,” perils of the soul, regular and special funeral practices, mourning and commemoration, connections between the living and dead, folk vs. clerical beliefs, road symbolism in rituals and beliefs.

Chapter 3, *Contemporary Ukrainian Folk Beliefs and Practices Related to Death, Funerals, and Afterlife*, presents contemporary (i.e. from the 20th and early 21st centuries) Ukrainian beliefs and practices regarding special death based on contemporary ethnographic descriptions. It discusses continuity of and change in death-related folk beliefs, and touches on the written origin of many of them.

Chapter 4, *Contemporary Abnormal Death Memorials*, is an ethnographic description of the existing physical sites of Ukrainian ADMs. It presents various types of ADMs in terms of most popular designs, materials used, personalization of the sites, and language of their inscriptions. Questions of maintenance and commemoration rituals are also discussed.

Chapter 5, *Attitudes Towards ADMs*, identifies the meaning and significance of contemporary ADMs in Ukraine through people's attitudes. Those attitudes

appear as results of personal interviews and surveys. It also investigates the extent to which attitudes towards the memorials are influenced by Ukrainian folk beliefs.

CHAPTER ONE:
ABNORMAL DEATH MEMORIALS
AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

Events in humans' lives are both temporal and spatial, and some events get memorialized in certain tangible ways. Death tends to be thought of mostly in terms of time, not space, yet in this dissertation I regard death as having a distinctive spatial dimension. Various contemporary roadside memorials found near the highways memorialize physical location and event at the same time, i.e. they mark the spot of a sudden tragic death and the event of the loss of life. Such memorials in various cultures are defined as a relatively recent phenomenon directly linked to the era of the automobiles. Most of them are really dedicated to those "perished in vehicular accidents involving a single vehicle, multiple vehicles, or a vehicle and a pedestrian" (Kozak and Lopez 1991: 8). There even exist unofficial memorials to pets and other animals – victims of run over fatalities (Smith 1999: 104; Thalsen 2006: 76; Green 2008: 180, 230 #23). Indeed, the phenomenon of the roadside memorials definitely started growing with the increase of the automobiles on the roads, when cars became one of the main means of transportation all over the world. At the same time, such memorials are not limited to the roadside ones: there are also unofficial memorials to the victims

of terror attacks, homicides, suicides, and other types of unnatural deaths like drownings or deaths resulting from natural disasters (Collins and Rhyne 2003: 226; Thalson 2006).

Memorials along the roads became an internationally spread phenomenon, and researchers underline their global character. Roadside memorials are reported to become progressively popular over the last two decades in countries of North and South Americas (Everett 2002; Doss 2006; Churchill 2007 and many others); Australia (Hartig and Dunn 1998; Clark and Cheshire, 2004; Smith 2003; Clark and Franzmann, 2006), and Europe (Saccopoulos 1986; Rajkovic 1988: 172; Jerry 1997). The practice seems to transcend not only national but religious boundaries as well: for example, the marking of places of the road-related deaths with either crosses or some sorts of shrine reportedly became popular since the early 1990s in the United Arab Emirates and Jordan (Kennerly 2005: 104). A custom of marking road fatalities and placing a picture of a deceased person on it is also known in Iran (Monger 1997: 113). In fact, this phenomenon is so popular that memorials have become usual and even expected responses to a tragic death (Thalson 2006: 187; Green 2008: 174). However this almost global character of modern roadside memorials is explained differently by researches. Many of them acknowledge the “tradition” factor among others. For example, Clark and Cheshire (2003/2004) noted that “roadside memorialization is a response to a variety of factors – motoring trends, ethnic and cultural traditions, historical precedents, post-

modernism, globalization, and individualism – none of which is the prerogative of any one locale or any one culture” (p. 219). Other researchers view ADMs as having little to do with traditions. For example, Maida Owens (2006) attributes the popularity of ADMs to the growing interest in and larger acceptance of spirituality and supernatural beliefs by the general public.

Despite cultural variations in their designs, the forms of the memorials are quite similar across various countries. They stand out in the landscape in the form of plain or decorated crosses, monuments, memorials, shrines, flowers with victims’ pictures, and/or plaques with some inscriptions, names, dates, and sometimes messages of grief. In (the former) Yugoslavia, several forms have been traditionally bound to the phenomenon of sudden death: wreaths, crosses, memorial slabs or plaques, some forms of monuments, and memorial water fountains (Rajkovic 1988: 174). In Greece, roadside monuments are elaborate shrines to which an icon is affixed along with a lamp that represents a soul of the deceased (Monger 1997: 113). Overall, memorials have some key symbolic elements as well as some purely decorative ones. Design and decoration tend to be group- or region specific, yet more and more often there appear “items that symbolically link roadside memorials with the culture of modernity and modernization” (Weir 2002: 209), and even postmodernity with its eclecticism (Kennerly 2005: 252). Such items include vehicle parts, use of logos and symbols

that identify the deceased with certain groups, and their photos (cf Hartig and Dunn 1998).

Roadside memorials can be either makeshift or permanent. Usually, a makeshift memorial is erected right after the tragedy and changed later on to a more permanent one, made of iron, stone or other durable materials. Along with these, there also exist portable memorials: “rolling memorials” in a form of messages on cars (Thalson 2006: 90); T-shirt with pictures of victims and words “R.I.P.” (ibid.: 89); wearing police yellow tape around the ankle or wrist that is popular among teenagers (ibid.: 88); and touring NAMES project, or AIDS Memorials Quilt that present names of people who died of HIV-related illnesses (Hawkins 1993; Borowsky Junge 1999). Although the latter represents a form of a collective memorial, all of the memorials – both makeshift and permanent – are sites of memory that convey messages about meaningfulness of remembering (Borowsky Junge 1999: 201). Overall, despite being relatively stable in form, unofficial memorials leave enough space for variations of individual expression: they are informal, unstructured, and exist in multiple forms. All that enables some researchers to view roadside memorials as “folk art” (Leimer 1998) and “public, belief-centered material culture” (Everett 2002: 1). Indeed, unofficial memorials are indicative of those folk beliefs that surround special, or “bad,” tragic death. Those are beliefs about different types of death, and I argue that abnormal death

memorials indicate primarily not the cause of death – as, for example, Jeannie Thomas (2006: 27) suggested – but the type of death.

Beliefs about Death and Its Types

Contemporary civilization has empowered medicine to significantly prolong a human's life and make it more functional and enjoyable. The end of life is expected to come at certain age and in certain circumstances. In a contemporary context, “good death” is a “well-managed death” (Green 2008: 17). Historically, however, good death has been represented as death at home, when a dying person died of age, was prepared for his or her own death, was surrounded by offspring and relatives to whom s/he gave instructions and blessings, and from whom she asked forgiveness (Ariès 1981: 16). The paramount importance of this type of death is reflected in prayers for a good death.¹ Virtually any other death would be abnormal or “bad.” It seems that the concept of a “bad death,” along with its opposite, or “good death” is common throughout history and to many societies (Awolalu 1976; Ariès 1981; Kozak 1991; Kozak and Lopez 1991; Vinogradova 1999; Cátedra 2004; Parry 2004; Straus 2004; Green 2008). Sudden tragic death, an inadequate burial as its consequence, and beliefs about the perils of the souls of people who had met such death were cases of special attention and fear in a number of, if not all, cultures worldwide for centuries. Classical examples come

¹ See “Merciful Jesus” as an example of prayers for good death on: http://prayers.viarosa.com/AllSouls_PrayersDeathDying.html (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

from literature: Sophocles' *Antigone*; Virgil's *Aeneid*; Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. In those writings ghosts appear as a result of tragic violent death; or a need for proper burial is articulated (cf Grainger 1998: 73-79).

The type of death – “good” or “bad” – has provoked different responses over the course of history, and required different burial types and practices of memorialization. Good death was followed by regular funerals, but special or abnormal death required special rites (Hertz 1960[1907]). In particular, cases of “bad death” required people to mark the place of such death, have a marked funeral, make extra efforts to pacify the souls of persons who died tragically, and to protect the living.

The concern with “bad death” and subsequent funerary rituals might originate from a belief that such death has always been associated with evil, and marked in a particular way. In ancient India, people believed in a malevolent spirit, *Bhûts*, that originated from “a person who has met a violent death, either by accident, suicide, or execution” (Crooke 1968[1896], quoted in Puhvel 1989: 94). Deaths of social outcasts, those who were perceived as “social evil” were also marked in a peculiar way: their bodies “were left to rot unburied with no more than a block of stone laid over them (*imblocati*) to preserve the appearance of the landscape” (Ariès 1981: 43). Philippe Ariès (1981) specified that a belief about “bad death” was indeed ancient, and already in the Middle Ages “bad death” encompassed sudden, absurd, and secret death, i.e. one which happened

...without witness or ceremony: the death of the traveler on the road, or the man who drowns in a river, or the stranger whose body is found at the edge of a field, or even a neighbor who is struck down for no reason. It makes no difference that he was innocent; his sudden death marks him with a malediction (p. 11).

The only two exclusions from the rule of “bad death” would be 1) a violent death of a martyr for his/her particular religious beliefs or faith per se, and 2) that of a soldier. In the latter case, a violent sudden death of a young person is justified by his sacrificial death in the name of his sacred Motherland; it then appears meaningful and purposeful, and thus akin to sacred. As Ariès (1981) put it, “in a society founded on chivalric and military ideals, the stigma attached to sudden death was not extended to the noble victims of war” (p. 12). While writing about the modern Greek roadside memorials, Christos Saccopoulos (1986) concurred that “[t]he presence of a monument at the site where a death has occurred is a practice dating back to antiquity. The ancient Greeks erected monuments for fallen warriors on battlefields” (p. 146).

Abnormal Death Memorials: A Note on Historicity

It seems that the very practice of marking a spot of accidental or violent death somewhere near a road is not at all novel. There is evidence that abnormal death memorials of some kind have been in existence since time immemorial: in many folk traditions heaps of stones or branches would become physical markers

indicating places of wrong, “bad deaths” and simultaneously places of burial. Such heap-like stone structures are still present in contemporary landscapes of unrelated cultures throughout the world under various names.² On the one hand, such abnormal death memorials appeared out of necessity and marked travel-related deaths, since travels to distant places were always accompanied by a possibility of sudden death and urgent funerals:

[i]n its origins, the practice – either as a grave or a site marker – is far older than roadways and nearly as old as travel itself. Prehistoric traders of amber, flint, and freestone often buried their dead beside the shadowy trails of central Europe (Clark and Cheshire 2004: 204).

The initial cause of death could vary, and might include a murder, suicide, or unfortunate accident, or “travelers could have died suddenly, from sickness, or in any unusual way” (Walhouse 1878: 22), yet the way of marking the spot where “bad death” had happened was amazingly similar among representatives of distant cultures and faiths, such as “in Muslims, ancient Jews, in Mongolia, Tibet, India, America, and Europe” (Fischer 1921: 364). It included making a grave for the unfortunate person at the very place of death – and often such a grave was located along a road or at the crossroads – and accumulating piles or heaps of stones, branches, or sticks at those graves (ibid.).

2 Heap-like stone structures are called “cairns” in Ireland and Scotland; “stenenman or Stainmann” in Germany and Dutch; “Ometto” in Italian Alps; “kummeli” in Finnish; “ovoo” in Mongolia; “gromila” in Dalmatia, Herzegovina, and Krajina.

On the other hand, the practice of marking places of “bad deaths” was related to a deeply held folk belief about the malevolent nature of a deceased person who has faced tragic death: “Passers-by added stones to the heap, with the idea of propitiating the angry ghost of the unlucky man, which was believed to haunt the spot” (Walhouse 1878: 22). In this regard, death of a person who has committed suicide was the worst, and such a deceased was believed to be the most dangerous.

When the natural environment could not provide necessary materials for the marking a place of the “bad death” tradition demanded other means to accomplish this: “[A]nd where stones are scarce or have failed, bits of rag are tied to a neighboring thorn-bush, after a custom that appears to prevail from China to Ireland...” (ibid.)

Crosses along the European roads were introduced to the Christian world in the first several centuries of Christianity and became common after its spread (Speranskii 1895: 404). It seems that crosses were used for designating places of “bad death” as much as heap-like structures of stone or branches, and often they would be used together. A person who died of an accident or violently was buried by the roadside, at the spot of death, and such a spot was usually marked by a cross. A documented example of this comes from the 19th century Bretagne, a province in France:

Any time an accident resulting in immediate death happens on the road, one should not forget to put a cross next to this place, otherwise the soul of the dead won't be at peace until a similar accident will happen at the same place. These crosses made of stone or wood are memorious. In Haute-Cornouaille, when one passes in front of these "crosses of misfortune" it is customary to throw a rock at their feet. One finds the same custom in Ireland (Sebillot 1968[1886]: 252-253).

Analogous examples are described in regards to the late 19th century – early 20th century Britain where "if someone dies suddenly while on a road [they] erect a stone or wooden cross on that spot, and passersby toss stones [on that spot]" (Fischer 1921: 363). Although the practice was first described in the 19th century, it was certainly well established before that. The same is true for other lands. Therefore, when Fischer (1921) points out that "[i]n Germany, there still exists tossing of branches and stones on graves of the killed people, just like [it exists] in Austrian lowlands" (p. 362) or that "[s]uch tossing of stones on a grave is observed in Ireland" (p. 363) it is possible to infer that the tradition was already in existence in both countries for many centuries. Marking "bad death" by the heap-like structures extended to the cases of the suicides, so that "[i]n Scotland, suicides are buried outside [a cemetery] and every passerby tosses a stone on his [the person who committed suicide] grave" (Fischer 1921: 360).

In Sweden, such piles or heaps of sticks and/or stones thrown by road travelers were called *offercasts* (from *offer* – "victim, sacrifice" and *kast* – "a

throw”) and they used to be “directly connected to a place where a death occurred on or by the road due to murder, drunkenness, freezing, fights, or driving accidents” (Petersson 2009: 77). That practice was documented in the middle of the 16th century, yet a broader “folk custom of marking the place of unexpected death by erecting a stone or a cross, or by carving a cross and the name of the deceased on a nearby tree trunk, seems to have been existing since as early as the twelfth century” and survived well into the 1930s (ibid.: 77-78).

Old Slavic chronicles indicate that it was customary among the ancient Slavs to bury their dead at the crossroads or along roads (Niderle 1924: 133), yet ultimately such places of burial got designated specifically for cases of “bad death.” Roadside crosses as indicators of “bad deaths” are generally believed to appear in the Slavic lands by the times when St. Cyril and Methodius were preaching in the 9th century (Shliapkin 1906: 11). Among the Slavic peoples of Europe marking the places of accidental or violent death was practised widely. For example, a written record dated around 1213 holds that a grave and simultaneously a memorial cross was erected at a place where a soldier of the Duke Danylo Halyts’kyi was killed that year near the city of Volodymyr Volyns’kyi (Shliapkin 1906: 9). In addition, it used to be customary for a murderer to set up a “monument to his victim at the spot where the murder took place, for the salvation of the victim's soul” (Rajkovic 1988: 170).

In accordance with the belief about “bad death,” Belarusians used to “toss branches, soil clods, hay, and straw at a grave of a suicide, and later on burn these things. In Belarus, a drowned person is buried at crossroads. Passing by a grave of a suicide it is necessary to toss branches, stones, or at least a handful of straw” (Fischer 1921: 358).

The same custom is described for Ukrainian lands where tossing tree branches on a grave of a person who hanged himself was seen as a special protective ritual used by the travellers “in order to not have any accident while on the road” (Fischer 1921: 357). At the same time, in different regions, like the Podillia region, the suicides were purposefully distanced from the roads: “... the suicides are buried without customary rites in a field or forest, but away from roads so that they would not... scare passersby” (ibid.: 358).

While describing Polish customs of the 16th -18th centuries, Jan Bystron (1976[1892]) mentioned that:

Graves of the suicides and those who died violently were dug outside of a village, and at the crossroads. Every passerby would put branches on that spot, so that piles of wood were eventually accumulated, which were set on fire by the pilgrims on their way to the holy sites. On the spots of accidents, especially fatal ones, a cross was erected” (p. 117).

The same custom was described by Ulrik Werdum who travelled to Poland in 1670-1672: “Those killed and whom nobody can identify are buried at the place they were found at; [people] bring on [such] a grave a big heap of wood... at the

graves of those killed... every passerby must always toss a branch. This way a considerable heap of wood accumulates that is set on fire by the pilgrims heading to sacred places” (Fischer 1921: 361). This particular custom of burning wood at the roadside graves that marked the places of “bad death” might be connected to a belief in the purifying nature of fire. Maybe for this reason, Fischer noted that using branches for tossing on the graves of those who died badly was used in the Slavic lands more often than tossing of stones (ibid.: 364).

The identical tradition also existed in Russia. Zelenin (1995[1916]) introduced a term “*заложные*” for the “bad” dead, which emphasized a special way of burying them: they must be buried only in a marked way, so their bodies were dug into shallow holes and topped with stones and/or branches (p. 41). Places of such burials were considered dangerous, and people had to toss straw or tree branches on them to “press down” the evil (ibid.: 63). The researcher stressed that the living believed in the malevolent nature of such “bad” dead and feared them.

With the European colonizers the practice of marking the spot of abnormal death – at least marking it with the cross – evidently has migrated to the New World and continued there. Contemporary American roadside memorials are argued to spread from the American Southwest, in particular from Mexico where *descansos* (“resting places” in Spanish) have been known since the 16th century as places where pall-bearers set the coffin down on the ground on their way to a

cemetery (Weir 2002: 1). They were documented in the 18th century in South Western part of the United States (Barrera 1991) and Northern Mexico (Griffith 1992) and included not only *descansos* crosses symbolizing the places where the funerary procession stopped but also crosses commemorating victims of murders. It is documented that, in his letter dated by 1783 a commandant-general of the Interior Provinces of New Spain wrote to Pedro Corbalan, an intendant-governor of Sonora (in contemporary State of Arizona) about the Bishop of Sonora who “was concerned about the custom of erecting crosses where travelers had been killed by Apaches” (Griffith 1992: 101). It is remarkable that in those locales “...most roadside memorials are still fundamentally *descanso*-type memorials, retaining the basic cross-centered form and many of the other memorial components typical of Mexican *descansos*” (Thalson 2006: 46). At the same time, the Tohono O'odhom (Papago) Indians of Southern Arizona are reported to mark places of tragic death with rock-piles prior to their Christianization around 1870 (Kozak and Lopez 1991: 1). Since then they have been known to use both pre-Christian and Christian forms of death-memorials at locations of violent death which could be found in the 20th century (ibid.). In general, researchers argue for the syncretic nature of roadside memorials in Mexico and the South Western part of the USA seeing them as a combination of European Catholic traditions and indigenous Indian customs (Henzel 1989: 95, 104; Kozak and Lopez 1991; Weir 2002: 143; Collins and Rhine 2003; Thalson 2006: 48). In the contemporary

context, the cultural/religious syncretism of ADMs in that region is explained by the migration of people and cultural borrowings (Weir 2002: 31; Thalson 2006: 48-50).

Official Public Memorials and ADMs. Grave Sites and ADMs

Rituals surrounding individual tragic death are no less popular now in the era of mass armed conflicts. ADMs and official memorials dedicated to national heroes, war veterans, or victims of mass conflicts share many common features. For example, both are cenotaphs (from Greek *kenos* – empty and *taphos* – tomb, i.e. a cenotaph is a monument in honor of a person or group of persons whose remains are buried elsewhere). Landscape and memories are important constituents for both ADMs and official memorials, since “[m]onuments and memorials locate the remembered or imagined past in the present landscape” (Lowenthal 1979: 121). They both are pieces of material culture and at the same time they are sites of performative rituals; and they provide survivors with the opportunity to release contradictory emotions. Despite these similarities there are obvious differences between ADMs and official public memorials. One of the main differences is that at the government-sponsored war memorials and tragic death memorials “two competing sensibilities are juxtaposed – the vernacular and the nationalistic” (Green 2008: 155). The scale of the significance and historic meaning is obviously larger for official memorials. What is commemorated on a national level are events “invested with an extraordinary significance and assigned

a qualitatively distinct place in our conception of the past” (Schwartz 1982: 377). The official narrative behind public memorials implies that one has to die as a community/national hero to be commemorated publicly (cf Goldstein and Tye 2006). ADMs, on the contrary, stand for the personal dimension of death: they assert the value of individual lives and testify to the need to memorialize the event and its resultant trauma on a more personal level. ADMs are strongly associated with locale (cf Lowenthal 1979: 123), the immediate place of tragic death, while official historical memorials may be situated in multiple locales, often far away from the actual places of death. Besides, ADMs appear most of the time promptly after the tragic accident, while “[m]emorials are no more tied to date than place; few monuments are of the same vintage as the event or person they commemorate” (Lowenthal 1979: 121).

Both public monuments and ADMs tend to be perceived as sacred. Yet the sacredness of public monuments is defined within the civic religion and shared past paradigm (cf. Azaryahu 1996; Guss 2000: 83-84; Luckins 2004; Inglis 2005: 463). For example, Green (2008) called the Vietnam Memorial in DC a “national shrine” (p. 154). A powerful symbolism also is associated with the tombs of the Unknown Soldiers. Such tombs symbolize death recognized as “sacrifice to the nation, like the sacrifice of Christ” (Ingersolle and Nickell 1987: 213). The biological death of the veterans to whom official memorials are dedicated is perceived as willful; it results in social continuity and is rewarded by

remembrance (Ingersolle and Nickell 1987: 218). Moreover, disrespect towards national memorials is labelled as desecration and is criminally prosecuted.³

Despite the obvious discrepancy between the Christian tradition of having designated consecrated places for human remains, or legal cemeteries, and erecting roadside memorials, there are also some similarities between ADMs and graveside shrines in those cemeteries. According to Thomas (2006), both “mark the loss of a private citizen” (p. 27). Also, as Clark and Franzmann (2002) stressed, roadside memorials often contain “messages characteristic of a tombstone or/and list of the loved [ones] left behind.” Lowenthal (1979) highlighted the difference in meanings of the cemeteries as places of rest vs. the places of actual death:

Many [memorials in the cemeteries] initially served to mark the graves beneath them, but the marking function is no longer consequential once bodies have molded into dust or have been removed to make way for others. In any case, cemeteries mark no significant event in most people’s lives; we seldom die in them, but are simply put for memorial convenience. Cemeteries matter less as repositories for the dead than as fields of remembrance for the living; the unmarked grave goes unseen (p. 123; cf Zelinsky 1975).

3 A known case of desecration of the National War Memorial happened in Ottawa in 2006. A photograph of the three Canada Day revellers urinating on the memorial sparked national outrage. They might be charged under the Criminal Code of Canada if they would not offer their public apologies. More on this case on: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=16119704-3246-4b29-95b8-90f931da50a0&p=1> (last consulted on August 24, 2010).

Similar to grave sites, ADMs are sites for strong emotions and memories. An ADM as a place of a sudden and tragic loss becomes very special for the survivors. It can be as important to them as the actual grave of the victim (Green 2008: 173), yet it is often more meaningful for the mourners than the burial place (Kozak and López 1991: 8; Clark and Franzmann 2002). One of the possible reasons for that is the soul issue. Following Ariès's (1981) idea, ADMs represent the “tombs of the soul” in contrast to graves as “tombs of the body” (p. 286). Besides, the objects left on the roadside memorials, as described in some sources, reflect certain folk beliefs about the soul and afterlife rather than the ecclesiastic teachings: a cigar left for a friend, a beer bottle, a favorite T-shirt, baseball hoops, etc (Haney et al. 1997; Clark and Franzmann 2002).

Overview of the Scholarly Approaches to ADMs

The polyvocal phenomenon of abnormal death memorials, including roadside memorials, have been examined from the perspective of various disciplines including, but not restricted to, death studies, studies in grief and mourning, history, studies in religion, psychology, sociology, anthropology, folkloristics, cultural geography, road safety, popular culture, and studies in memorial culture. Naturally, the start of a tradition to memorialize victims of accidental or violent death and the start of scholarship on abnormal death memorials do not coincide. In North America, spontaneous memorialization arguably started in the beginning of the 1980s (Monger 1997; Thalson 2006),

while North American scholarship about roadside memorials started around 1990.

At the same time, it is argued that:

the widespread 'roadside' phenomenon of sensitive marking of sudden violent death” emerged in the Western world after 1945 when “through the power of film and television... the world became aware of the atrocities committed in the death camps of the fascist powers during World War II, and of obscene disposal of bodies in those places (Ryan 2004: 52-53).

In Europe, the phenomenon of precisely-located memorialization of traffic accidents in its modern form seems to start in the 1960s (Saccopoulos 1986; Rajkovic 1988), and the scholarship appeared much later and is sparse. At the same time, European roadside memorials seem to have cultural continuity with the earlier folk customs of marking places of “bad death” (Pettersson 2009).

Researchers of ADMs might investigate their existence not only by examining physical monuments or written records – especially since an ethnographic record is not always a direct key to the past (Ingersoll 1987: 10). Among other, indirect sources of information on marking places of tragic death are legends about various fatal accidents which mention memorials for the victims of those tragic accidents like those about “the murder of a feudal lord, about the '*svatovska groblja*' (places where all the participants in a wedding-feast perished in a conflict with another group), legends of fratricide and others” (Rajkovic 1988: 171).

Hermann Bausinger (1968) emphasized a link between landscape objects and folk legends about those objects saying that such objects do not make up a legend but rather evoke its interpretation: “[c]rosses and memorials of unknown origin located in unusual spots provoke their interpretation, so there is talk of death and crime where events of this kind cannot, in fact, be proven” (quoted in Rajkovic 1988: 171). Both the sites that acquired their names after people who were killed at those sites and toponyms from the legends about someone's death would be examples of memorials – albeit of a different, non-material nature – and memorialization of the places of sudden death. Yet Rajkovic (1988) warned that such legends as a source of information on the practice of marking places of “bad death” should be treated with caution (p. 171).

The situation with researching contemporary memorials – including those along the roads – that mark the tragic death of individuals varies from country to country. Existing studies of roadside memorials are regionally specific, and offer detailed outlook on memorials on limited geographical areas. Those few scholars who considered memorials in comparative contexts (Smith 2003; Clark and Cheshire 2003/2004; Clark and Franzmann 2006) argue that roadside memorialization is grounded in common attitudes and beliefs, while similarity of memorials over the world suggests “that common forces are at work that produce desire to preserve the memory of lost life, and that these forces are directly related to the nature of modern society” (Clark and Cheshire 2003/2004: 216).

Although there are studies from Australia (Hartig and Dunn 1998; Smith 1999), Canada (Churchill 2007; Belshaw and Purvey 2009), England (Ryan 2004), Mexico (Barrera 1991; Weir 2002), Sweden (Petersson 2009), (the former) Yugoslavia (Rajkovic 1988), and some other countries, yet most of the scholarship is centered in the USA: Barrera 1991 (Texas); Griffith 1992; Haney, Leimer, et al. 1997; Monger 1997; Everett 2002 (Austin city area, Texas); Reid and Reid 2001 (Texas and Oklahoma); Villareal 2002 (Colorado); Kennerly 2005 (South-East parts of Michigan, Louisiana, and Georgia); Owens 2005 (Louisiana); Thalsen 2006 (Bay Area in California); Wagner 2008 (South Texas) and many others.

Approaches to researching memorials also differ. For example, Haney et al. (1997) approached memorials from a sociological perspective, namely they viewed violent death as a social threat that gained expression via a unique response – memorials.

Hartig and Dunn (1998) utilized a cultural geography approach for analyzing roadside memorials such as those serving for “glorification of problematic hyper-masculinity” (p. 19) which seemed to be dominant and thus problematic in the economically and culturally devastated area. Only after a change of that attitude, the authors stated, could memorials serve as warning sites for careless drivers.

Zorica Rajkovic (1988) was the first to look at the roadside memorials within the discourse of symbolic communication that occurs on two levels: one of

inherited symbols (like a Christian cross, wreath, picture of a deceased, or tree branch) and another of poetic metaphorical symbols (like a picture of a broken branch symbolizing interrupted youth (p. 174).

In his research which is similar to Rajkovic's, Daniel Weir (2002) concentrated on the poetics or expressive attributes of roadside memorials as sacred places in Mexico. He combined the geographic survey and ethnographic methods, and utilized cultural geography and the symbolic approach. Unlike Rajkovic, who interpreted interactions between memorials and individual passersby, Weir attempted at intra-cultural dialogue, interpreting poetics of place in a cultural context (p. 9). In Mexico, he argues, roadside memorials are sacred places like religious shrines, and they reflect a hybrid culture (a mixture of modern, medieval, and mestizo cultures).

Sandra Villareal (2002) and Deborah Wagner (2008) approached roadside memorials from an anthropological perspective. Villareal looked at the visits to places people set up for mourning and memorializing (like roadside memorials, grave sites, etc.) as pilgrimage rituals performed by mourners. She suggested that roadside memorials perform the function of a narrative communicating to passersby the dangers of careless or drunk driving. Wagner studied representational aspects of roadside memorials (death, space, and memory construction) in a community of people who viewed roadside memorials.

Charles O. Collins and Charles D. Rhine (2003) applied the phenomenological approach, trying to find out the meaning of the memorials for people who set them up. They concluded that those people neither intended to communicate private grief in public nor wanted to warn other drivers. Authors viewed the controversial nature of roadside memorials as originating from their “placement, their 'religious' nature, and their messages of mortality” (p. 236).

Denis Thalson (2006) looked at emotional and practical functions of memorials from the humanistic geography and ritual studies perspectives. He was the first to address an evolving type of memorials in the USA, murder memorials, which differed from roadside memorials, not only in their form, address, and function, but also in their different cultural contexts. He emphasized the dependence of roadside memorials on the death place, since “these memorials function specifically through the place of the fatal trauma” (p. 128); as well interdependence between place and ritual. According to Thalson, memorials allow the survivors to stay connected to the dead through the memorial place.

In the venue of policy making and road safety studies, Anthony Churchill (2007) conducted the first ever distraction study. In his experimental research Churchill used a mock-up memorial to find out if such memorials really pose a safety hazard by their mere presence on roads – as many policy-makers state – or if they serve as a safety countermeasure – as many drivers and the general public claim. Although Churchill's experiment showed that memorials neither reduced

the overall road safety nor were they effective as safe driving behavior modifiers (pp. 93-95) the author supported the use of roadside memorials for therapeutical reasons.

The folkloristic perspective was employed by George Monger (1997), Robert James Smith (1999), and Holly Everett (2002). Monger (1997) argued that the practice of setting up roadside memorials became ever more popular due to its two functions. The primary function is the one that allows survivors to express their love and attachment through caring about the site of tragedy. The secondary function is that roadside memorials are ritualized public expressions of death that serve as warnings for others on the roads.

Smith (1999) referred to roadside memorials as “increasingly important folk custom” (p. 103). He stressed that such sites were sacred places imbued with significance and reverential behavior. He argued for careful “reading” of every memorial site, as well as for regionally-based analysis of the phenomenon, since reasons prompting commemoration might be different.

Everett (2002) investigated roadside crosses as objects of cultural landscape and “adaptation of one of the oldest forms of memorial culture” (p. 1). She discussed the aesthetics of the crosses, their historical significance, and the functions that they perform – both psychological and social.

Jeffrey Caillouet (2005) employed psychological and sociological approaches, and researched how the public ritual of setting up roadside memorials

affected mourners and the communities on whose land they were placed. He stated that roadside memorials were beneficial not only for the mourners but often produced positive external, societal changes.

Rebecca Kennerly (2005) utilized a performance paradigm in her study. For her, the discourses of roadside memorials were competing and they operated at textual, intertextual, and conceptual spheres of contestation. According to her, roadside memorials inspired performances of various kinds: those by songwriters, movie makers, choreographers, dancers, photographers, and by people in the Academy. Most importantly, “[b]uilding and maintaining roadside shrines... often function as a public performance of melancholic mourning” in survivors (p. 251).

Erica Doss (2006) explored spontaneous memorials as items of material and visual culture, and argued for their kinesthetic materiality. The material culture of grief, according to Doss, is seen in the ephemeral objects left at memorials. Those things, on the one hand, convey belief in the emotional power of material culture and, on the other hand, are products of mass culture. Yet they mediate “the social release of grief” (p. 299), and are meant for the memorials be not just seen but also felt.

Using the cultural-historical approach, Anna Petersson (2009) argued that modern roadside memorials became progressively popular in Sweden over the last fifteen years. They were not a novel phenomenon, but might have cultural

continuity with the earlier customs. Moreover, they also might produce “new stories, new meanings and new experiences of remembering” (p. 76).

It is argued that memorials perform multiple functions: they warn drivers about dangers of careless driving (Monger 1997: 114; Smith 1999: 103); emphasize the value of life (Monger 1997; Villareal 2002); keep memory of the deceased alive (Collins and Rhine 2003: 234; Thalson 2006: 108); call for acknowledging of injustice in public (Callouet 2005: 107). Yet another function of the roadside memorials is discussed within the protest and resistance discourse. Memorials embody protests against tragic events, and help to reestablish a “sense of personal control over a set of uncontrollable circumstances not covered by funeral and cemetery” (Clark and Franzmann 2002). ADMs stand up as protests against the laws prohibiting their very existence and sudden death itself (Kennerly 2005: 138). Leimer (1998) provides a shorter definition – “death-ownership” – for the survivors’ desire to do something for the deceased that they were unable to do at the moment of death. Through the ADMs survivors as if protest against institutionalized death practices (Haney et al. 1997) or rather against “depersonalization of funerary traditions” (Goldstein and Tye 2006: 240); against “the mass industrialization of death and the alienation of contemporary society” (Santino 2004: 370). Roadside memorials are “expressions of protest, calling attention to the underlying conditions that led to the random death(s) being commemorated” (Senie 2006: 45), and more specifically against the road

conditions and road (un)safety (Smith 2003: 103; Wagner 2008: 6). Above all, ADMs are symbols of protest “against a *normality* [italicized by the author] that ignores or would forget such tragic loss” (Smith 2003: 173).

But above all fatality memorials fulfill a therapeutic function and symbolize the bereaved state of the survivors. They become, as Leimer (1998) put it, a “healing balm” providing the opportunity to release contradictory emotions like grief, mourning, shame, guilt, as well as rage against the people who caused the tragedy, and the helplessness of survivors (Leimer 1998; Reid and Reid 2001). Expression of such intense negative feelings overtly is not always permitted or approved by society.

Most of the researchers describe the designs of the roadside memorials, and attitudes towards them, and they attempt to interpret their meanings. The interpreting is especially important, since people who set up the memorials often cannot explain the meaning of their own actions (Collins and Rhine 2003: 232). Obviously, the meaning of memorials is different for those who lost a loved person to a sudden violent death and those who did not. The “disapproving” people may disapprove of memorials per se, of their particular locations, or their form. It is generally recognized by the researchers that a roadside memorial in a form of a cross “has become a symbol of amorphous spirituality easily detached from any particular institution” (Clark and Franzmann 2006: 591) and “a generic, non-denominational, even non-Christian, indicator of death” (Belshaw and Purvey

2009: 110). Yet a cross as a marker of death along the roads is, nevertheless, often perceived as a proselytizing symbol by certain groups of onlookers. Jewish groups protested against crosses in Florida (Collins and Rhine 2003: 222). There was also organized opposition to roadside crosses from such organizations as the Freedom From Religion Foundation and American Civil Liberties Union (Collins and Rhine 2003: 240). It seems that both those who set up ADMs and those who protest against them invest them with special meaning.

Cultural Landscape and Sacred Geography

ADMs are elements of a cultural, or man-made landscape. Such landscape became the area of study of humanistic geography that was impacted by perspectives from phenomenology in the 1970s and 1980s. The meaning of places can be revealed through history, functions, and wider social contexts, since “the culture of any nation is unintentionally reflected in its ordinary vernacular landscape” (Lewis 1979: 15). ADMs as a product of culture can, therefore, reflect on or provide clues “*to* [italicized by author] the values and pathos of a folk” (Tuan 1979: 93). Collins and Rhine (2003) noted that “most roadside memorials are not the product of a fad but someone’s abiding involvement with a place” (p. 236). Places define people's perception of certain events, and they evoke memories and feelings about particular times. At the same time, people's perception defines places as well. Sense of a place is how people feel about the place, how they are attached to that place. The place of a sudden and tragic loss

becomes very special for the survivors: they use it to make sense of their loss, link stories to such a place (cf. Luckins 2004), and claim the place through ritualization (Westgaard 2006: 161). Survivors are attached to the place of tragic death in a special way, since such a place

[H]olds a stronger spiritual connection with the individual than any place of final rest of the body. There remains something intrinsically more important about the place where life ceased or, more accurately, where a life-changing event occurred (Clark and Franzmann 2002).

Places of tragic death become special not only for survivors but for others as well. What used to be a regular roadside space became a place of a new, special sort after an ADM has appeared at that place. Thus, the place of sudden and/or violent death as if acquires its psychological history, becomes imbued with some magical, albeit negative, power:

The place where yesterday a cruel murder was committed would have today a strange look for most of us, even if no visible trace of the crime were left; many would feel uneasy in such a locality, and few would choose it as their living place (Köhler 1937: 281).

The importance of personal involvement with, and special attachment of survivors to, places of tragic death is reflected in their attitudes towards the officially erected signs to the traffic fatalities: “[o]fficial memorials are uniform in style, size and purpose, and secular in orientation. They are regulated, static and intentionally lacking in any form of individuality” (Clark and Franzmann 2006:

585). Perception of the official memorials as being insufficient (Collins and Rhine 2003: 240) leads sometimes to the double memorialization: “[e]ven when mourners apply for and erect state-sanctioned markers, they [survivors] often also erect non-sanctioned shrines nearby” (Kennerly 2005: 136).

The special status of ADMs comes from their liminal nature. Victor Turner (1982) elaborated on liminality and stated that it was often linked to death on a symbolical level (p. 95). ADMs are liminal in many ways: they signify experience that is out of the normal order of life (abnormal, untimely death); they are symbolically located on the border of life and death, since places of tragedy are places of separation of soul from body and transition from one state of being to another state. They stand on the border of the private and public: even though they are displayed publicly, memorials usually serve as an expression of private feelings, and have the power to turn public spaces into private spaces of mourning. Also, ADMs symbolize the crossroads of material culture and spiritual beliefs, as well as religious and secular realms. They are physically present, yet the symbolism of ADMs reflects their apartness from the rest of the everyday landscape. Such a liminal nature of ADMs also positions them in between sacred and profane spaces.

Using Mircea Eliade's (1959) dichotomy in regards the “sacred” and “profane” ADMs are secular in their essence, yet are perceived as holy, sacred places (Hartig and Dunn 1998: 10). According to Yi Fu Tuan (1978), the notion

“sacred” does not necessarily apply only to religious objects or phenomena: “at the level of experience, sacred phenomena are those that stand out from the commonplace and interrupt routine” (p. 84). He put an emphasis on qualities such as apartness, otherworldliness, orderliness and wholeness in defining what is sacred. Following Tuan's idea, ADMs as sites of memory represent a secular version of the sacred since they belong to the realm of the extraordinary in a profane everyday landscape.

Sacred space is socially constructed through various means and so is the sacred context of ADMs: “Sanctification involves the creation of what geographers term a 'sacred' place – a site set apart from its surrounding and dedicated to the memory of an event, person, or group” (Foote 1997: 8). One of the means is the use of the powerful Christian symbol of a cross that gives sacred value to the place: roadside memorials shaped as crosses mark the spot of death and simultaneously consecrate that spot (Barrera 1991: 278; Weir 2002: 201). Also, the place of bloodshed as such is viewed as sacred (Collins and Rhine 2003: 227). Specific behavior, or rather a cultic activity of sorts of survivors in regards to ADMs also reflect the memorials' imbued sacredness. For example, people might invite a priest to bless such a site (Villarreal 2002: 93-94). The roadside memorial represents a special kind of attachment to place that turns roadside memorials into sites of pilgrimage, akin to pilgrimage to sacred places (ibid.: 78-80; cf Lowenthal 1979: 123). Another means of construction of the sacred is

language. ADMs as places can speak a special language. Both Weir (2002) and Rajkovic (1988) paid special attention to the language of roadside memorials. The inscriptions on the memorials often help to convey their function as special places filled with the out-of-ordinary symbolism. Their language is poetic, and among rhetorical devices used for the inscriptions are rhyming, metonymy, metaphors, personification (usually that of death), simile etc. As Weir (2002) put it, “[t]he use of rhyming words indicates awareness, on some level of consciousness, that this is an occasion to attempt a reach beyond one's ordinary, or everyday, use of language” (p. 41). What is written about is usually the “personal qualities of the deceased, religious beliefs, and/or grief of the survivors” (ibid.: 204). Rajkovic (1988) adds that the language of the inscriptions consists of three interweaving layers:

[t]he first is the folklore language of death, taken from old epitaphs and mourning verses. The second is part of the more recent language of death such as is found in newspaper death notices. The third layer is based on literary, or more precisely poetic language which was always the preferred language for speaking of death (p. 177).

Ryan (2004) argues that public sacralization of places where sudden deaths have occurred have “numerous but largely unconscious folkloristic/ folk-religious antecedents” (p. 52) in the form of symbols of remembrance, resurrection, and immortality like a cross, flowers, garlands that have being used for centuries. ADMs are seen as sacred because they are about spiritual matters: they are

invested with the spirits of the dead. Similar to the ground around the gates from which soldiers departed to the battlefields during the WWI, ADMs are consecrated by “the memories and tears of the bereaved” (Luckins 2004:181). Using Luckins's word, ADMs are “fetishised” objects of landscape because they focus memory on the last moments when the deceased were still alive (ibid).

ADMs as a Means of Memorialization and Commemoration

Memories are tied to places, since, similar to death, memory is not just a temporal phenomenon: “...our memory... is... place-specific: it is bound to place as to its own basis” (Casey 1987: 182). ADMs are meaningful to the survivors because they have a powerful mnemonic significance: people want their landscape to remember, and so they leave tangible reminders of those they loved on the land in the form of little memorials. Survivors treat the landscape “as an independent store for memories, a medium external to their own minds, on which events might be enduringly inscribed or monumentalised in a publicly accessible way” (Harrison 2004: 149). For survivors, to set up an ADM is a way of active remembering through material artifacts (ibid.). In a secular world, physical “remembrance replaces eternity” (Ingersolle and Nickell 1987: 219), and for Western society remembrance is the only antidote to the loss of continuity of Self. It is the only way to compensate for “drives, needs, consciousness, memories, a life history, occupation, roles, statuses, and a name” in a secular sacrifice (ibid.: 218). Memorialization through monuments “strives to affect lastingness” (of

memories) (Casey 1987: 228), but similar to everything in the landscape, ADMs undergo continuous erosion. Following Miriam Kahn's (1996) idea about the correlation between the quality of materials and memories, permanent materials encourage a permanence to memory about the deceased (p.192). That is why so many ADMs are made of such permanent materials as stone, granite, or metal.

Commemorating, or what Casey (1987) calls an "intensified remembering" (p. 257) is a mnemonic process that is reflected not only in material objects of the landscape but also in narratives. To understand this mnemonic process one needs to place it in the context of a particular culture, since remembering is a culture-loaded process, and whom we remember and commemorate is as important as how we do it (cf Connerton 1989; Harrison 2004). In a number of non-Western cultures, commemoration is closely related to the "cult of the dead" and preoccupation with the soul of the deceased.

Commemoration of those who died tragically usually happens through physical objects like the memorial itself and things left at the site. Along with homemade roadside memorials there emerged a market for manufactured ones: those who want to set up a memorial can buy a ready-made one or a kit for making memorials from various websites like RoadsideMarkers.com or Artislife.com.

To set up a physical memorial is not the only way to commemorate a victim of a tragic death nowadays. Another form of memorialization would be through

digital technologies, in particular through various virtual cemeteries and grieving web sites like griefnet.org; webhealing.com; myspace.com; or alwaysrememberyou.com. Cyberspace becomes a “space” that is as real and at the same time utopian as Heaven (Green 2008: 181). Virtual memorialization is viewed as a new participatory culture (Hebert 2008) and new postmodern death ritual (de Vries and Rutherford 2004). According to de Vries and Rutherford (2004), though “extremely varied in content, purpose, and sentiment” online memorials are not radically different from traditional ones: while borrowing extensively both from “conventional” memorials and from traditional rituals, online memorials allow the survivors to maintain a connection with the deceased and express their grief in public space (p. 24). As Sara Hebert (2008) states, this digital public space, however, is not totally democratic due to the presence of moderators; besides, private and public spaces get confused in online memorials:

[d]igital memorialization complicates personal expressions of mourning because expressions will reach a wide audience and may influence the perception of the tragedy or the organizational structures around it (p. 12).

Scholars argue that numerous new memorialization modes available in Western countries might reflect problems and changing values within the respective cultures. At the same time, commemoration of tragic death on the road is not a new phenomenon. As Rajkovic (1988) rightly pointed out, contemporary attitudes towards death largely continue from the past:

In terms of the commemoration of traffic accident victims... the need from earlier times to mark the place of death imposed itself profoundly at the moment that a new type of tragic, sudden death was on the ascent (p. 173).

And the online memorialization, despite its modern form, is just “another way to manage traditional hopes of reconciliation and safety – salvation of the old, reliable kind” (Green 2008: 184).

Contemporary Mourning

Although grief, bereavement, and mourning are often used interchangeably, they are not the same: grief and bereavement are viewed within the emotional domain, as internal states or rather processes. Bereavement is defined as the “objective state of having lost someone” and grief as the response to loss, the “emotions that accompany bereavement” (Walter 1999: xv). Mourning belongs to a social domain that implies manifestations of mourning, some “formal rituals for the expression of grief” (Small 2001: 20). Grief and mourning have no straightforward correlation, and, as scholars state, it is virtually impossible to conclude about bereaved people's feelings on the basis of their ritual behavior (Huntington and Metcalf 1979; Rosaldo 1989). On a cultural level, however, there seems to exist a positive correlation between discouraging the public expression of grief and discouraging death rituals or making them rather formal like, for example, in Australia, England, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Scotland, and Switzerland (Charmaz et al. 1997: 128). Grief is recognized to be affected by the

type of death, so that “[m]urder and suicide pose special hardships, as does preventable death, prolonged dying or an untimely death” (ibid.: 231; cf Moller 1996: 114-115).

Views of death and attitudes towards public mourning have been changing in Western cultures over the centuries. The most extreme changes occurred in the 20th century when at some point death and public grief became almost forbidden in public expression and discussion:

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the completion of the psychological mechanism that removed death from society, eliminated its character of public ceremony, and made it a private act... The second great milestone in the contemporary history of death is the rejection and elimination of mourning (Ariès 1981: 575; cf Gorer 1965; Senie 2006).

Death became progressively deritualized and hidden, or “culturally invisible” (Moller's term) in Western cultures (Ariès 1981; Sloane 1991; Moller 1996: 112). This state of affairs was accompanied by the growing dissatisfaction with traditional religious institutions and their services, and was indicative of the loss of meaning of grieving rituals in Western culture (Haney et al. 1997). And yet the end of the 20th century was characterized by the “revival of death” (Walter 1994). In particular, ADMs became “a material expression of mourning” (Haskins and De Rose 2003: 378) and a form of spontaneous public commemoration. In contemporary North America, for example, roadside memorials are considered to be the dominant mode of mourning (Doss 2006: 296; Santino 2006: 5). ADMs

became “one more element in a trend towards a spiritual marketplace that... appeals outside of the offerings of the established religion” (Clark and Franzmann 2006: 583). They seem to serve to compensate for abandoned mourning practices, have an alternative to the survivors' grief expression, and help them to get involved in death-related activities for their loved ones (Haney et al. 1997; Collins and Rhine 2003; Clark and Franzmann 2006; Doss 2006; Santino 2006: 13). Even virtual memorials “rather than serving as a poor substitute for traditional bereavement activities... [are] a valued addition, allowing the bereaved to enhance their relationship with the dead and to increase and deepen their connections with others who have suffered a loss” (Roberts 2004: 57; cf. Hebert 2008). At the same time, some researchers consider grief as being qualitatively different in contemporary North America due to the different sociocultural context: “Grief is replaced by tourism, which is a central ritual in consumer culture” (Thomas 2006: 36). Hence, ADMs of various kinds become popular places to visit.

The development of mourning theories started in the West after the First World War when society had to deal with a number of survivors whose loved ones met sudden and violent death. The first, psychoanalytical theory of grief by Sigmund Freud (1917) postulated that a grieving person must do “grief work” and separate oneself from the dead, to free one's own memory from them, get rid of the attachment to the deceased (Small 2001: 24-25). John Bowlby developed his

attachment theory of grief in 1961. It was an elaboration on the Freudian theory and distinguished four stages of grieving (ibid.: 26-28). Starting from the 1970s there were many stage theories of bereavement (ibid.: 29-33). For quite a long time Western psychoanalysts and counselors were preoccupied with a defined number of stages of grieving as well as “healthy” and “pathological” grieving. The number of grief and bereavement theories was constantly growing, yet for the most of the 20th century they emphasized the breaking of bonds with the deceased, while “awareness of continuing bonds has increased markedly since the 1980s” (Water 1999: 106). Klass et al. (1996) and Walter (1996) presented a new, qualitatively different model of grief, called “continued bonds.” The new theory holds that neither grief nor mourning are universal, there are cultural differences to them, and that some people never cut bonds with the dead but keep an ongoing bond with them.

Walter (1999) underlined that “[a]ll societies police grief, but the goals, methods and approaches of this control varied considerably” (p. 120). The white Western culture of peacetime mourning in the 20th century seemed to differ from other “traditional” cultures where the dead were integrated into society. One of the possible explanations could be that:

A society in love with youth, progress and the future will turn its back on its ancestors, lose touch with its past, and abandon traditional rituals of mourning... it is modern, forward looking countries that have the most

difficulty integrating the dead, unless they be the famous dead (ibid.: 20-21).

Another reasons, closely related to the first, is that Western models of bereavement and grief are based on the modernist understanding of time as linear and sequential (Small 2001: 40), while in “traditional” cultures mourning is based on different understanding of time. For example, Green (2008) juxtaposed mourning practices of a contemporary American woman and of females from a Greek village:

Her [American] mourning was rumination and inward looking: mental rehearsals and re- rehearsals... perplexed questions... sensations of vulnerability and isolation; searching for anchor points in poetry, novels, medical texts, religion. In her telling, grief is privatized, even claustrophobic (p. 226, Note #6).

For the Greek women, on the contrary, mourning was obligatory and public, related to the concerns about the souls of the deceased. As Green (2008) noted, Greek villagers “formalize grieving and memory making, performed in the public sphere through exhumation but also in a dramatic tradition of communal laments” (ibid.).

Researches in clinical psychology shows that the intensity of the emotional response of survivors of “the 'routine' car crash[es]” is similar to that of “veterans of ...wars, survivors of torture, or survivors of large-scale disaster” (de L. Horne

1997: 189-190). Therefore, setting up memorials and site-related mourning becomes a necessary part of the PTSD treatment of the survivors of those who died suddenly or violently (ibid.).

Scholars generally agree that the building of shrines is a ritual response to grief and loss, yet the question of whether setting up memorials is a “ritual behavior” detached from any belief system, one that bears no religious or magical connotation, as Westgaard (2006) suggested, can be answered in regard to a particular culture after careful examination of available evidences of this phenomenon.

Conclusion:

The practice of setting up ADMs is well known all over the world, and despite existing official prohibitions and protests against ADMs, memorial building remains a popular form of response to a tragic death in a contemporary society. This practice is called almost invariably a recent cultural phenomenon, yet marking places of “bad death” has been an old and extremely widespread (if not universal) folk tradition. The belief complex surrounding the phenomenon of “bad death” was given considerable attention in folklore of the peoples all over Europe and on other continents. It seems that the ancient pre-Christian tradition of raising up heaps of stones, branches, or soil – that might possibly have Indo-European roots – was not overturned by Christianity, but rather became incorporated in it and both have coexisted ever since.

Despite their almost global character and similar forms, ADMs seem to have different reasons for their recent popularity in different cultures. It can be argued that in Western countries, one of the reasons behind them can be drastic changes in public attitudes towards death and death-related practices that happened over the 20th century. Therefore, ADMs appeared more as symbols of protest against those changes, as well as some other societal issues. In Western cultures, creating cyber memorials became as popular a means of memorialization as setting up physical ADMs. It is possible that in non-Western cultures where ADMs are not that well researched and where death was not artificially estranged from the social context they would appear as a continuing tradition of marking places of “bad death.”

CHAPTER TWO:
UKRAINIAN FOLK BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ABOUT DEATH,
FUNERALS, AND AFTERLIFE UNTIL THE BEGINNING
OF THE 20th CENTURY⁴

Death and Its Personifications

Death was not a taboo topic in Ukrainian culture; on the contrary, it was viewed as a natural and integral part of human life. A riddle, *Од Бога менше, а од царя старше* [(Whose authority is) lower than God's but higher than Tsar's?], implied “death” as an answer (Manzhura 1890: 174) and pointed to the “democratic” nature of death in the people's eyes: it did not differentiate between the poor and rich, the noble and peasants. Numerous proverbs and sayings about death presented it as a natural event one could not escape, but had to prepare oneself for: “Смерть – неминущая дорога [Death is an unescapable path]; Сеї

4 The beginning of systematic study of various Ukrainian folk beliefs and practices goes back to the 19th century when Ukrainian intellectuals influenced by European Romanticism developed an interest in ethnography. In fact, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries was a period of the most intense fieldwork for collecting materials on the Russian Empire, of which Ukraine was a part. In the foreword to his monograph, which was one of the biggest collections of traditional folk prose, Volodymyr Hnatiuk (1904) underlined the importance of collecting folk beliefs about death, soul, afterlife, and various spirits by saying: “[T]his sort of data are of special importance for us, not only because they are scarce but also because they contain lots of elements that are specific for our folk and, unlike, for example, tales they are not borrowed from any common human source of folklore” (p. i). Yet folklorists did not begin studying funerary rituals at the beginning of the 19th century. Those became a research subject only in the 1850s (Kuzelia 1912: 134). Several scholars - Bin'kovskii, Chubyn's'kyi, Danilov, Hnatiuk, Ivanyts'kyi, Malynka, and Sreznev's'kyi, to name just few - collected folk beliefs about life, death, and afterlife in different regions of Ukraine. Their publications remain important references on this topic. However, most ethnographic data are about Ukrainian villages. There is not enough sufficient information about urban attitudes toward death and the funeral.

світ позичений [This world is a borrowed one]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 158);⁵ “Крути-не верти, а не втечеш від смерті [*Either this way or that, you cannot escape death*];” “Коли не вмирати – треба день теряти [*Whenever you die, you lose a day*]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236); “Думки за горами, а смерть за плечами [*One's*] thoughts are over the mountains, but [*one's*] death is behind the shoulders];” “І в ніч замуруйся, а смерть найде [*Even if you wall yourself in a stove, death will (still) find (you)*]” (Hnatiuk 1912a: xxxviii). That it was shameful to be scared of things related to death and funerals was reflected in a saying “Боятися, урватися мерця – гріх [*To be scared of or avoid a dead person (in a funeral) is a sin*]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 247).

Nevertheless, there were numerous euphemisms to avoid mention of death and funerals: “Не захотів більше хліба їсти [*(The person) did not want to eat bread any longer (i.e., the person died)*]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238); “Пішов у далеку путь [*(The person) has set on a long journey (i.e., the person died)*]” (Brailovskii 1885: 81; Kotliarevs'kii 1891: 219); “Там би він і коржі поїв [*There was where he would eat wafers (i.e., he has died)*]” (Manzhura 1890: 171); “Посадити калину [*To plant a viburnum tree (for someone) (i.e., to bury that person)*]” (Kotliarevskii 1891: 250); “Чоловік часує [*The man is getting closer to his time (i.e., he is dying)*]” (Miloradovich 1897: 18); “Дуба дав [*He has given an oak tree (i.e., he is dead)*]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 159); “З'їхав з села [*He has*

5 In Nomys's collection, a section “Death” contains over 100 proverbs and sayings. See pp. 158-160.

moved out of village]” (ibid.: 265). When they invited neighbors to make a coffin, villagers would say, “*Прийдіть, будь ласка, до нас та допоможіть построїть моєму батькові (чи там матері) нову хату. не схотів у старій жити* [*Please, come and help me to build a new house for my father (or mother). He (she) does not want to live in the old one]*” (Moshkov 1902: 16); “*Відійшов* [*(He) has departed]*” (Nechui-viter 1862: 45).

The same tendency was true for some curses by which people would covertly wish death while avoiding the words “death,” “funeral,” or “grave”: “*Бодай ти з душою розділився* [*May your body separate from your soul]*” (Manzhura 1890: 171); “*Щоб ти туди не дійшов і назад не вернувся* [*May you neither reach your destination nor return]*” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 72); “*Щоб тебе положили на лаву!* [*May (they) lay you on a bench* (a place where a family traditionally would place a deceased member)]” (ibid.: 74); “*Нехай тебе на мари положать* [*May (they) put you on the mary* (a wooden stretcher on which a coffin was carried to the cemetery)]” (Lenchevskii 1899: 76); “*Щоб тобі дубовий хрест* [*May you get an oak cross*]; i.e., may you die and get a wooden cross on your grave (Nomys 1985[1864]: 74); “*Бодай тебе очеретом зміряно* [*May your height be measured by a stem of reed]*” (Lenchevskii 1899: 75);⁶ “*Нехай до нього ніх із кадилом приїде* [*May a priest with a censer come to*

⁶ Until the beginning of the 20th century, Ukrainian villagers used a stem of reed to measure a coffin size, and then put that stem into the coffin.

him]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 233);⁷ “Щоб на тебе ворони кракали [*May ravens caw over you*]” (ibid.: 217; Sumtsov 1896: 196);⁸ “Щоб тобі віку як у кози хвіст [*May your life be as long as a goat's tail*, i.e., may your life be very short; may you die soon] (Nomys 1985[1864]: 267); “Щоб над тобою сонце праведне не сходило [*May the righteous sun never shine upon you*, i.e., may you be buried] (ibid.: 73).

Generally, curses by which someone was wished death were considered very powerful and, therefore, extremely dangerous. For some people, they specified the way they would like another person to die: “Щоб його перша куля не минула [*May he not escape the first bullet*]” (ibid.: 73), “Бодай ти повісився на сухій осиці [*May you hang yourself on a dried aspen tree*]” (Bin'kovskii 1898: 7), and many others.

According to traditional Ukrainian folk beliefs, life did not end at death, but continued, with death just another form of existence. Death was often perceived as a long sleep, so people compared one to the other. “[The person] sleeps like the dead” meant that a person slept so deeply, nothing could awake her/him. “[The person] has fallen an eternal sleep” meant a person had died. This perception of death as a form of rest was also widely reflected in the writing on gravestones, such as “Тут спочиває... [*Here rests...*]” Generally, images of death, soul, and

7 A priest with a censer would come to a house only for a funeral.

8 Ravens were believed either to predict a sinner's death by cawing or to caw loudly while devouring dead flesh of unburied sinners.

afterlife were partly connected to church teachings and reflected in the iconography. Some of that imagery was indirectly presented in lore as proverbs, saying, omens, personal narratives, legends, curses, and even children's games in which death was a central element or character and in which folk understanding of a soul and its destiny was expressed. Furthermore, Ukrainians believed in a parallel existence of another world and always wished good life in that world to their dead. For example, at a big feast, people would remember their dead by toasting them: *“Дай нам, Боже, здоров'я, а померлим царство небесне [Grant us, Lord, health and a Heavenly Kingdom to our dead]”* (Bin'kovskii 1896: 260). During Christmas caroling, singers of *koliadky* (sacred songs) would sing to every member of household, including the dead, wishing a Heavenly Kingdom to the deceased. *Koliadky* also expressed a belief in close communication between the living and dead and their mutual obligation to care for each other spiritually. One ends with these words:

*Dead souls beg the Lord,
[They] beg the Lord, [and] ask the Lord
For these [survivors] who do not forget about them,
[Who] request church masses [to commemorate the dead]* (Hnatiuk 1914: 278).⁹

9 “Померші душки Господа моле
Господа моле, Бога благают
За цих, що за них ни забувають,
Служби до церкви вни посилают” (syntax as in the text).

It appears from ethnographic descriptions of the 19th – early 20th centuries that an animistic concept of death prevailed in Ukrainian beliefs, probably because “in the folk view, animism predominates in the realm of enigmatic” (Ivanov 1909: 245). People imagined death to be an anthropomorphic being. They often described it as an ugly, crooked old woman in white or black baggy clothes (Manzhura 1890: 63; Hnatiuk 1904: 114-115) or a human skeleton with a scythe visiting a house where a death was about to occur (Afanas'ev 1868: 336, 361; Generozov 1883: 17; Batiushkov 1891b: 328; Egorov 1903: 168), standing by the deathbed and visible only to the person about to die (Bulgakovskii 1890: 190; Liatskii 1892: 40). Death as an animated being was not believed to take people's lives randomly, by her own choice; instead, she was to go first to God for instructions (ibid.: 41). Death was thought to be able to speak, so it was possible to negotiate with her. Although it was possible to dupe her and spare the living at least several additional years, as in the legend about Death and the Soldier (Manzhura 1890: 61-63), Death could not be bribed if a human's appointed time to die had come.

Death, however, was also associated with *dolia*, or a person's destiny. Some legends portrayed Death not as a taker of life, but as a helper in life. In one, Death appeared as a poor, young girl asking for Easter bread to break her Lenten fast. When a poor man shared his Easter bread with her while refusing Judah and Apostle Peter, Death became his sworn sister and assisted him in daily living

(I[vanov] 1894: 154). In another, a young man shared his meal with Death, who became so grateful that she helped him become wealthy (Hrinchenko 1897: 89-91).

Death was frequently seen as an unclean spirit, sometimes equated with the devil. People would say, “*Прийде чорт до його душі [A devil will come to take his soul]*” (Liatskii 1892: 41). This saying is based on the belief from Christian teaching that angels took righteous souls while little demons took sinners' souls (Bessaraba 1904: 42). Death was imagined as living in the underworld, more certainly in hell and her presence near a dying person was felt as the cold of the grave (Afanas'ev 1868: 336; Brailovskii 1885: 76). As an agent of the underworld, Death was thought to manifest herself through certain birds – usually black or nocturnal ones with unpleasant calls, such as a raven (Sumtsov 1890: 75). The house of a dying or newly dead sinner was believed to attract many kinds of birds associated with evil and “bad death.” Ravens, crows, owls, and magpies would circle overhead, shriek, and perch on the roof or nearby (Afanas'ev 1868: 355; Bessaraba 1904: 42).

Ukrainian culture surrounded human death with a complex of beliefs and omens – special warnings foretelling upcoming death, both one's own and someone else's. It was important to alert a person in time to let him prepare for death and was customary to prepare for one's own death, not only in a spiritual sense but also a physical one. Villagers would make coffins for themselves well in

advance (Chubinskii 1867: 707; Markevich 1883: 394; Miloradovich 1897: 168). For many, death was a comforting, long-awaited event, since they expected to reunite with late relatives immediately after death. Therefore, knowing the right time was important. People would pay special attention to the warning signs, such as a knock on the window at night or birdcalls (Hnatiuk 1904: 115-116), a dog howling with its face down (Afanas'ev 1868: 356; Lenchevskii 1899: 72; Iakovlev 1905: 155), a chicken crowing in a rooster's voice (Chubynskii 1867: 698; Demidovich 1896: 137; Iakovlev 1905: 155), an icon falling off the wall (Miloradovich 1897: 7) or a mirror breaking (Iakovlev 1905: 155). Other omens were a house spirit (*domovyk*) snoring, knocking loudly, or screaming at night – or simply shutting up and moving away (Ivanov 1893: 53). Even the birth of twins or triplets, because of their relative rarity, was thought to foretell the death of one of the parents, depending on the sex of the newborns (Manzhura 1890: 154).

Certain dreams were believed to predict death, requiring specialists to interpret their meaning. Dreams were considered omens if they involved taking something from dead relatives (Liatskii 1892: 39), walking in a cemetery, or seeing a church procession (Miloradovich 1897: 7). So, too, were dreams of bees, a monk, a loaf of bread, smoke, teeth falling out, blood (Manzhura 1890: 161), drowning in muddy water, a falling ceiling in one's home, an oven falling apart (Bin'kovskii 1896: 230), and so forth.

Beliefs about Different Types of Death

The death of a fellow villager was an event of significance upon which the welfare of the entire community depended. Therefore, it was paramount to interpret properly not only the death omens, but also the death itself, and, accordingly, follow the rules of burial that would protect the rest of the villagers from possible danger. That was especially important because people distinguished between two types of death: a good one and a “bad,” sudden, or unnatural one. Good death was an ideal to strive for: “Only that death can be called 'human-/' 'Christian-'like when a man peacefully died in his bed, while beforehand having prepared himself through confession and communion, and having said goodbye to all his relatives” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236). In addition, “the death must be 'one's own' (i.e., natural, easy, not violent); it must happen at 'one's own' time (i.e., at an appropriate age), in 'one's own' place and among 'one's' relatives, and then all the customs accepted in 'one's own' society should be observed during the burial” (Vinogradova 1999: 46). Such natural death was viewed as the most precious. People would normally say about the lucky person, “*Бог гарну смерть послав*” [*God has sent a good death*]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236).

“Bad death” meant the opposite and could be subdivided into *liuta* (furious) and *nahla* (sudden). *Liuta* meant either violent or prolonged, agonizing death (Batiushkov 1891: 174). Examples would be death by execution, wild animals, or fire (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238). Prolonged and agonizing death was a sign that the

person was associated with evil powers and, therefore, a grave sinner and certainly a witch, wizard, or vampire. Witches and wizards were believed to die only at a very old age, but not naturally and peacefully – especially learned ones. Their death had to be prolonged and agonizing, and would come only after transferring their witchcraft knowledge to somebody else. People also believed that making a hole in the ceiling above the deathbed of such people would hasten their passing. The hole would not be blessed with the sign of the cross as were all other openings like doors, windows, and chimneys to protect against evil entering. This custom was to encourage the escape of the sinner's soul, or rather the sinner's evil spirit, which was reluctant to depart because it saw formidable demonic creatures crowded around waiting to grab and torment it (Ivanov 1909: 249).

Nahla, or sudden unnatural death, included a wide range of events, such as death from a lightning strike, drowning, falling from a tree, suicide (Fischer 1921: 354), difficult childbirth (ibid.: 364), contagious disease, (Ian-s'kii 1898), freezing along a road, and drunkenness (Bin'kovskii 1902: 158; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 39-40; Bilyi 1926: 82). Babies who were stillborn, murdered by their mothers, or unbaptized at death also belonged in the “bad death” category, as were people of any age who had been doomed to hell by parental (Kravchenko 1889: 774; Miloradovich 1897: 171) or ecclesiastical (Olel'kovych 1861) curse. Their passing was believed the result of punishment by God and interference from evil spirits. Folk beliefs, however, were inconsistent and controversial. For example, lightning

and thunder were believed caused by Saints Elijah and Gabriel as they hunted demons. If someone was struck by lightning or affected by thunder, two explanations were typically offered: (1) the person was associated with unclean forces and doomed to the hell (Hnatiuk 1904: 3), or (2) the individual was an accidental victim, for a demon tried to hide inside him. Therefore, he died like a martyr and his soul would ascend to the Heaven (Kotliarevskii 1891: 248-249; Miloradovich 1897: 171).

Good dead were buried after a regular church service and assumed to hold a neutral or positive attitude toward the living. They ultimately became “ancestors” whose souls left for some distant place, supposedly the land of ancestors or Heaven. They never disturbed the living; on the contrary, they guarded and helped their living relatives. Good death did not preclude contact with the living. It happened in dreams or by invitation from the living, but only during special occasions. Such visits were welcomed and viewed as prophetic.

Contrary to the good dead, those who died an unnatural death were assumed to be angry or envious. Such dead became unquiet or unclean revenants who lived close to the living and could harm them. One of their characteristics was the inability of their souls to proceed to the next world because death occurred before the appointed term allotted to every human by God (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 40). Unable to join the rest of their ancestors, the unquiet dead had to rattle about the earth without rest until their worldly time was up. Even then, however, their lot

was miserable, since people believed that “God does not summon such dead; there is no place for them neither in heaven nor in hell” (Bilyi 1926: 83). To die a “bad death” meant to have neither forgiveness for one’s soul nor rest for one’s remains in the other world. To wish somebody such death was the worst curse, usually meaning that the curser (Wex’s term 2005) reached the point of hatred beyond which neither the laws of human tolerance nor Christian compassion worked any longer: “Щоб твоя кість непростена була [*May your bones be not forgiven*]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 286); “Щоб ти нагло згиб і зітлів непохований, як падло [*May you die suddenly and rot unburied like a dead animal*]” (ibid.: 288); “Щоб його земля не прийняла! [*May earth not accept his body*]” (ibid.: 74); “Щоб тебе поховали на ростаннях [*May you be buried at the crossroads (like the one who hanged himself)*]” (ibid.); “Щоб тебе ніп не ховав [*May a priest not bury you*]” (ibid.: 72); “Щоб ти на Страшний суд не встав [*May you not arise on Judgment Day*]” (ibid.: 73); and so on.

Pious people feared “bad death” saying, “Нехай Бог боронить і сохраниць від такої смерті всякого [*May God save and prevent everyone from such death*]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238) or “Дай, Боже, з який час лежати, а не нагло помирати [*Grant, Lord, to lie (while dying) for some time instead of dying suddenly*]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 159). They prayed for themselves and close relatives to avoid “bad death” and did whatever they could to ensure a good one. For example, people believed that fasting on the twelve special Fridays of the year

would help ensure they escape both *nahla* and *liuta* deaths (Ivanov 1907: 16-17). Blind minstrels performed a religious song called “Twelve Fridays” in which they described in detail the benefits of fasting and praying on each of those days (Borzhkovskii 1889: 696-698).

Funeral Practices for Regular and Special Death

Upon someone’s good death, the person's family would call relatives and neighbors to help. Generally, a funeral was an all-village event at which neighbors or friends never refused to assist. Otherwise, people believed, the dead would not share anything with them in the next world when their time came. Moreover, it was considered indecent and sinful to charge for such services as coffin making (Apollosov 1861: 220; Chubinskii 1877: 706; Miloradovich 1897: 168; Malinka 1898: 101; Lenchevskii 1899: 75; Moshkov 1902: 16).

An even number of necessarily old women washed the corpse and dressed it in clean clothing, usually as fine as people could afford (Bulgakovskii 1890: 185; Moshkov 1902: 16, 20). Red clothes were avoided for fear that all the relatives would die young. Indeed, nothing red was allowed in the coffin except for a flower for unmarried youth (Manzhura 1890: 159; Miloradovich 1897: 167; Lenchevskii 1899: 74). Generally, red was associated with Kozak funerals, widely mentioned in songs about Kozaks's death, but not commonly used by civilians (Danilov 1909).

A dressed body was put on a bench, with head toward the icons and legs toward the exit. The legs, hands, and often jaw of the deceased were fastened with *puty*, ropes to prevent involuntary movements during rigor mortis. People put a wax cross in a cadaver's left hand since, according to the folk belief, his right hand would be busy making a sign of the cross when he appeared before God (Apollosov 1861: 219; Chubynskii 1877: 698). People would also give coins to a corpse to pay for the transfer over the river of the dead or to “buy off” a place at the cemetery (Lepkyi 1883: 14; V.K. 1890: 323; Bin'kovskii 1896: 254; Miloradovich 1897: 166). A body was to spend several nights at home guarded by the same old women who prepared it. Ethnographic materials show that there once were *забави при мерці* [games in the vicinity of the deceased] in the 19th century in western parts of Ukraine (at that time a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire) (Hnatiuk 1912: 311), where they persisted into the early 20th century, mostly in remote places (Fischer 1921: 210).

On the day of the funeral, the body would be placed in a coffin filled with dried grass (Bin'kovskii 1896: 245; Miloradovich 1897: 168) and some favorites of the deceased like tobacco, alcohol (Lepkyi 1883: 14; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Bin'kovskii 1896: 255), doughnuts (*баранки*), and apples (Abramov 1907: 29). To the coffin of a midwife, or *новомыха*, people would put poppy seeds so that she would have gifts for all the children she helped to deliver when met them in the next world (Ivanov 1909: 249). A priest would come to the house of the deceased

and read Psalter and a special prayer of permission (*разрешительная*). The text of the prayer was put into the corpse's hands. In essence, it was a “parchment certificate of good conduct attesting that the Church was in peace with a deceased” that signaled to the survivors they were free to pray for the dead person's soul (Dolotskii 1845: 397).

After that, close relatives bid the deceased farewell and he was taken outside. At the threshold, pallbearers would lower the coffin and knock on it three times, allowing the deceased to say good-bye to his house (Morachevich 1853: 306; Chubinskii 1867: 708; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Lenchevskii 1899: 76; Kaminskii 1912: 133-134).

At the cemetery, family members would remove the *puty* from the deceased, fearing that failure to do so would impair his quality of life in the other world; he would not be able to stand up and walk to it when the horn summoned him on Judgment Day (Ivanov 1909: 250).

After the coffin was lowered into the grave, a priest would “seal” the grave, i.e., make a sign of a cross over the four sides the grave with a shovel (Moshkov 1902: 22). Folk beliefs held that death stopped all of a dead person's earthly activities only if the grave was sealed; otherwise, he was able to exit and wander around (Ivanov 1909: 248). Church and secular authorities initially opposed this practice, but eventually incorporated it into the ritual since many considered sealing the essence of a funeral (Moshkov 1902: 22). After that, each person

tossed three handfuls of dirt into the grave, the grave was closed, a cross was put on it, and people returned from the cemetery for a special commemorative dinner in the house of the deceased. The master of the house would say to those present: “Поминайте” [*Commemorate (the deceased)*] and people would reply, “*Hexaiъ Господь помяне душу покійника [May God commemorate the soul of the deceased]*” (Morachevich 1853: 307).

Funerals of those who died in a bad way differed dramatically from those of the good dead: their bodies were treated differently, the ritual had unusual steps or was absent altogether, the burial had a special form, and the burial place was marked in a distinctive way. Most of these funerals were of small, especially unbaptized, children; unmarried youth; people who committed suicide; witches; and those who died on a road. Because of the nature of their death, “bad” dead had no time, opportunity, or desire to receive the ministration of the Church while still alive. Therefore, they could not be buried in the usual way at a usual place. Both church and cemetery were considered clean or blessed places, and neither tolerated a body of such dead, who were considered unclean (*нечисти*).

Absence of a proper funeral was bad, as only a proper funeral insured salvation of the soul. When a body was missing, a proper funeral could not be performed, since:

If a person dies in such a way that his body cannot be buried in the ground – for example, wolves devour [him], he perishes in fire [or] drowns and no

body is found – it means that person was a sinner, and such death itself is viewed as God's punishment for terrible sins (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238).

Ukrainians, however, sometimes tried to find a compromise in such cases. For example, in 1784, a Church Court accused a priest and a deacon of trying to have a funeral service for two local villagers who died far away from a contagious disease. Both clergy representatives held a mass over an empty *mary* and people kissed a fabric placed on it that supposedly represented the absent bodies (Ian-s'kii 1898: 2). Generally, depriving someone of the right to a funeral was the worst penalty: his soul was believed to agonize eternally and never find peace. The paramount importance of adequate funerals and commemoration for salvation of one's soul in the other world, God's protection, and dissociation from the evil powers was reflected in the belief in a special candle that magically helped thieves avoid arrest. The candle could be made only of fat of a "sinless child who was not mourned by human tears and whose body was not buried into the blessed soil after all proper funeral rites" (Lytvyniv 1900: 142-144).

Corpses of suicides were the most hated and denied proper interment, for if they were buried, God's punishment was believed to strike the community (Zabylin 1880: 564). Once God gave a person his/her fate, one had to endure it no matter how hard it was. As people would say, "*нести свій хрест [to carry one's own [Golgotha] cross; to endure one's fate]*" (Manzhura 1894: 161). Those who committed suicide went against God as a result of the devil's seduction and

therefore were sinners who could not be buried as Christians in a cemetery, for their presence would desecrate the soil and anger other, “clean” dead who were ancestors (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 92). Priests refused to bury such deceased and did not say a prayer of permission upon them. In the 13th century, they were not buried at all, but left to rot on the surface (Bilyi 1926: 83) “without either a prayer or cross, like dead animals” (Levitskii 1891: 358). Later, they were usually buried along roads or at crossroads, (Chubinskii 1877: 712; Kotliarevskii 1891: 33-34; Bin'kovskii 1896: 258), right at the spot of their deaths (Manzhura 1894: 167; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 89), or in swamps (Bin'kovskii 1896: 258). Tradition prescribed tossing “a bit of straw, a tree branch, or a handful of earth” while passing by the graves of those who died badly and were buried outside of a cemetery (Rudchenko 1874: 71; Chubinskii 1877: 712; Demidovich 1896: 136). This was believed to bring luck to travellers, or as Chumaky (Ukrainian travelling merchants) said, “*Дорога буде щаслива [The road will be fortunate]*” (Rudchenko 1874: 71; cf Fischer 1921: 357). With time, the accumulated debris was burnt at an “unclean” grave and the fire seen as a “pacifying old sacrifice to [the suicides'] orphaned and homeless souls” (Kotliarevskii 1891: 34). Moving their bodies to another place was a taboo because that would be additional desecration of the ground. If absolutely necessary, their bodies could be transferred only over a crossroad, but even then the suicides were believed to return to the old spot of their death over the next seven years (Manzhura 1894:

167). People believed that the sites of death and burial of unclean, unquiet dead were places where evil forces concentrated and that those dead were the means of devilish power. Ukrainians viewed the spirits of suicides as dangerous, since they turned into vampires and the tragic end of their earthly lives caused their souls to hate the living (Sumtsov 1889: 271; Levitskii 1891: 359; Fischer 1921: 361). Those who hanged themselves were buried on the borders of fields with a metal nail from a harrow in their mouths and an aspen branch driven through their chests (Levitskii 1891: 359). The funerals of such suicides took place late in the evening and they were placed in coffins with their faces down (Lepkyi 1883: 14). Those who drowned – whether purposefully or accidentally – were interred on the banks of the rivers (Demidovich 1896: 137). It was believed that the unclean forces guarded their drowning sites and their spirits might appear to ask travellers to move boats from them (Manzhura 1890: 132).

Marriage and procreation were so important for Ukrainians that those who died too early to be married were expected to do so in the other world. People used to say that “there is no place in the other world for a man who died unmarried” (Svidnyts'kyi 1861: 52) and “One did not live if one did not have a wedding” (Nechui-viter 1862: 42). Generally, Ukrainians believed that in the other world, as in this world, people would live in couples. Those who died young and unmarried were buried after a special ritual called *весільний похорон* [*the wedding of the dead*] (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 6, 45). Those two words do not seem

oxymoronic if we remember that both events – funerals and weddings – are connected to death and rebirth (Petrov 1989: 89). In Ukrainian epic songs, or *dumy*, funerals and weddings were equated when a dying hero asked that his family be told he had married a foreign girl instead of saying he died (cf Kononenko 1998: 172). Weddings songs and funeral laments had common features. The former presented a woman as making a journey; she moved to another house and left her kin to join another family. Similarly, the latter, avoiding the word “death,” presented the deceased as leaving his kin to join the ancestral realm; he was on a journey to another house, a coffin. This mediation between two kinship groups became the “point of contact between funeral and wedding laments” (Petrov 1989: 89).

A young girl’s or boy’s funeral typically resembled a marriage ceremony, although wedding songs were not sung (Lenchevskii 1899: 75; Moshkov 1902: 23). If a girl died, her friends were called to perform a role similar to bridesmaids. They unbraided her hair, split it in half, and encircled her head with a wreath. The girl attendants wore kerchiefs or ribbons on their right arms as they carried their dead friend to the cemetery in a coffin (Apollonov 1861: 223). The mother gave the girlfriends the dowry the daughter had prepared for her wedding. For both a girl and a boy who died young, relatives baked wedding bread, *korovai*, and shared it at the cemetery. People put a wedding band on the ring finger of a dead child, who would leave behind a symbolic spouse considered a widow/widower

and an in-law to the family of the deceased (Svidnitskii 1861: 52-53; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Kotliarevskii 1891: 237; Ivanov 1909: 254).

Kozaky warriors who died young and violently once had special markers on their graves in addition to a cross: a white flag above their graves so that “a cemetery would turn white from the banners, which testified to an untimely death of a young Kozak” (Tereshchenko 1999[1848]: 301). In addition, a viburnum tree was planted at a grave of a Kozak who died far away from his land (ibid.).

Unbaptized or stillborn babies were most often buried under the house threshold so that people entering and leaving would make a sort of cross sign by stepping over their graves to help free the infants' souls (Vasil'ev 1890: 319; Kotliarevskii 1891: 33; Ivanov 1909: 247). Sometimes these children were buried in family gardens (Vasil'ev 1890: 319) under a fruit or willow tree (Miloradovich 1897: 171). Occasionally they were buried at a crossroads (Chubinskii 1877: 713). In contrast, baptized toddlers were usually buried in a cemetery. No matter where the burial, a small child's funeral generally was a much less elaborate ritual than an adult's (Lepkyi 1883: 13). A deceased child would be dressed in a long white linen shirt with an obligatory fabric belt around its waist, a periwinkle wreath on its forehead, and a cross on its chest (Lepkyi 1883: 13). Parents put candy and gingerbread (*пряники*) in the coffin (Abramov 1907: 29). Mother and other relatives were not to cry or lament the death, especially if the baby died unbaptized. If it was the first-born, mothers did not even go to the cemetery to

bury it for fear that her subsequent children might also die (Apollosov 1861: 223; Lepkyi 1883: 13; Bulgakovskii 1890: 188; Hrinchenko 1897: 23).

The “bad” dead had two major reasons for becoming revenants: they lacked proper/complete burials/funerals and did not live their allotted lifespan. In his 1988 monograph, Paul Barber listed various *apotropaics*, or methods various cultures used against revenants to turn evil away. Those included “mutilation of the corpse, physical restraints, various funerary rites, and even deception intended to trick the spirit world.” (p. 46) Ukrainians used numerous apotropaics, with mutilation of the corpse being the most common. The aspen is probably the only tree not glorified in Ukrainian folk songs for it was considered a cursed species on which Judah hanged himself (Bessaraba 1904: 44). Since people connected aspen with devilish creatures like witches and the unquiet dead in general, it was used as a talisman to protect against them (Bin'kovskii 1989: 7). People would drive an aspen stake through hearts or heads of such dead to prevent them from coming back. In some regions, people would cut off the head of a suspected witch/wizard and put it in the coffin between the cadaver's legs (Hnatiuk 1904: 165; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 89). To prevent unquiet dead from returning and harming the living, people would sow poppy seeds in a circle around their graves or along the way from the house to the graves; for some mysterious reason, these dead were thought to count tiny poppy seeds compulsively to keep them busy all night (Chubinskii 1877: 712; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Kolessa 1902: 248; Kaminskii 1906: 10;

Zelenin 1995[1916]: 53). Ethnographic descriptions show that although burying suicides and other “bad” dead in regular cemeteries became more widespread by the late 19th – early 20th centuries, their graves could be sealed only after seven years (Manzhura 1894: 162). At times of cataclysms like droughts or epidemics, people would still open them and treat the remains cruelly (Levitskii 1891: 359; Bin'kovskii 1898: 8).

Numerous taboos and fears surrounded even the proper funerals of the good dead, as they did weddings and other major rites of passage. When a body fell into the category of unclean, contaminated, and thus dangerous, many taboos involved the corpse and objects in contact with it. For example, people disposed of “dead water” (water in which a dead body was washed in preparation for the funeral) at a place where no one walked. Crossing the path of the funeral procession was a taboo, for people believed that it would cause inflammation and wounds over the body (Manzhura 1894: 168). When the coffin was in the street, survivors shut the yard gates, believing that it prevented the deceased from returning to his house from the cemetery (Apollosov 1861: 221). To defend the survivors and ensure their long life, Ukrainians sprinkled rye inside the house after the deceased was taken outside (ibid.: 221; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Bin'kovskii 1896: 255; Miloradovich 1897: 169; Malynka 1898: 102). The root of the Ukrainian word *жумо* [rye] is the same as the root of the word *життя* [life]. People believed in the purifying function of this grain and its ability to revitalize anything contaminated by death

(Kotliarevskii 1891: 221). People believed that the dead had magical power and that physical contact with the body, or coffin, or the mere presence at the place of death, would kill developing life, like a fetus or vegetation. Therefore, pregnant women were not to attend funerals, while all seeds and plants were removed from the house where a body lay (Chubinskii 1877: 706). At the same time, however, a corpse was believed to have healing power over so-called “dead bones” – hygromas, bone outgrowths, etc. (Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Fischer 1921: 220). Therefore, materials in contact with a dead body were able to “deaden” pain, feelings, relations, and life itself, according to the law of imitative magic. For example, washing the mouth with “dead water” supposedly killed a toothache, just as transferring *puty* – the ropes used for tying of the limbs and a jaw of a deceased person – to the limbs of a sick person would mitigate a toothache or rheumatic pain (Ivanov 1909: 250). Similarly, it was believed that a kerchief which had closed the jaws of the deceased could stop fights or physical altercations if secretly squeezed inside a pocket of someone who obtained one from a funeral (Bin'kovskii 1896: 244). A rope on which a person committed suicide or a criminal was hanged was highly valued as a means to luck or profit and was considered worth stealing and trading (Sumtsov 1889: 256-257). Lamp oil or a candle made from the fat of a murdered person was a treasure among criminals because it magically made them invisible (ibid.: 258-259; Lytvyniv 1900: 142; Fischer 1921: 218).

A corpse was believed to be a reliable instrument of prediction: if it was soft when transferred to a coffin, there would be another death in the family soon (Apollosov 1861: 221; Hrinchenko 1897: 24; Iakovlev 1905: 155). People covered a dead person's eyes with coins to prevent him from looking at the living; his stare would cause another death in the family (Chubinskii 1877: 699; Demidovich 1896: 137; Lenchevskii 1899: 76; Moshkov 1902: 15).

Mourning and Commemoration: Their Forms and Functions

Much of the post-funerary activities were directed towards avoiding things that would make a soul unhappy and doing things that would make it happy. Just as funeral rituals differed depending on the type of death, there were different ways of memorializing and commemorating. Souls of those who died a good death were prayed for as often as possible. There were twelve special Saturdays throughout the year called alternatively *поминальні, батьківські, or задушні* *суботу* [commemorative, parental, or Saturdays designated for praying for the souls of the dead], and prayers for dead relatives were believed especially effective on those days. Prayers of blind minstrels were considered even more beneficial for the souls of the deceased; they were especially powerful if pronounced for those who died a “bad death,” since the minstrels were seen as good mediators between the world of the living and dead (Kononenko 1998: 189-190). Prayers for such dead often listed various ways of dying badly:

“Dear Lord! We are praying to you for [the sake of] the souls of all the dead...[who were] ministrated without Christ, who were killed in wars, drowned in waters, burnt in fires, [whose] heads were cut off by swords, devoured by wild animals, [whose] blood was sucked by serpents, [who were] killed by [falling] trees, tossing dirt, struck by thunders, killed by bullets, [those who] died in hospitals, or because of freezing, [who] died suddenly, without confession or the sacrament. Lord! Accept and commemorate all [of them]....” (Hnatiuk 1896: 74); “Commemorate, Lord... Small unbaptized children!/ And those knowing and not knowing/ Who drown in waters,/ Who burn in fires,/ Whom [wild] animals devour,/ Who are killed by thunder,/ Who is covered by blessed soil,/ Who dies a sudden death.” (L.M. 1903: 6-7)¹⁰

Ukrainians mourned during the funeral with laments,¹¹ free improvisations used by professional wailers, but most often by the closest relatives to express their grief and pain of loss (Danyliv 1905: 30). Ilarion Svetsits'kyi (1912) felt that laments were once the central element of the funeral until “the circumstances of life singled them out from the funeral into a merely tolerated remnant” (p. 7).

10 “Господи Боже! Молим ся Тобі за всіх душ померших... без Христа субирани, котрі в войнах погибали, на водах потопали, на огнях погорали, мечами глави стинали, кулі побивали, люта звір пожирала, гад кров просисала, древо превертало, земля присипляла, громи забивали, кулі побивали, по шпиталях поумирали, по морозах погибали, наглою смертю повмирали і без сповіді і без сакраменту повмирали. Господи! Прийми і помяни всіх” (Hnatiuk 1896: 74); “Помяни, Господи... Діточки маленьки блазеньці!/І за знающих, і за незнающих,/Котрі на водах потопують,/Котрі в огнях погарають,/Которих звір поїдає,/Которих грім побиває,/Которого свята земля покриває,/Которий з наглої смерті помирає” (L.M. 1903: 6-7).

11 Starting with Metlinsky (1854), 19th century ethnographers like Kaminskii, Brailovski, Sreznevskii, Svetsits'kyi and many others turned their attention to laments and collected them. The earliest recorded Ukrainian laments date from the 16th century and are found in Latin in Polish sources: 1) A letter dated 1551 by a Polish priest, Ioann Menetius, contained “De Sacrificiis et ydolatRIA ueterum Borussorum, Livonum aliarumque vicinarum gentium” (Kaminskii 1912: 109-110; Kotliarevskii 1891: 149-150); 2) A poem “Roxolania” by Polish poet Klinovich (Klinovych-Acernus, Sebastian-Fabian) published in Cracow in 1582 (Danilov 1904: 148-151; Kotliarevskii 1891: 154-156).

Laments articulated whatever was performed during funeral rituals. They were dialogues with the dead when survivors asked questions and often provided answers on behalf of the dead (ibid.). Lamenters addressed a deceased person as if she/he were alive. The deceased were asked to open their eyes, look at the people present, and get up from the coffin. The coffin was compared to a house, though dark with no windows – yet another indication of a belief that death was a passing to a new life (Brailovskii 1885: 80). Lamenters never mentioned the faults of the deceased during funerals. On the contrary, they invariably elaborated on only the good deeds and best qualities. The aim of laments was to elevate the value of the deceased through praise (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 18). In this sense, laments were suggestive of epic songs, for those, too, provided a positive portrait of the deceased (cf Kononenko 1998: 175-178).

In the lament texts, the soul was depicted in a material way, just like in folk beliefs. Laments often described a journey of a soul to the other world. Villagers believed that laments could facilitate the transfer of a soul to that world. In them, the living expressed their puzzlement over why someone decided to leave this world where she/he had a good life. They showed concern that the deceased – especially children – may suffer from the lack of something. The deceased were asked to visit, asked when they would return, and so on. Thus, laments testify to the folk belief that the dead return for visitations:

“Where will I look out for you, from which road [should I] meet you?” (Chubinskii 1877: 702). “Tell me now when you will come to visit me? When should I serve tables and when should I wait for you? When will you, my husband, arrive for a visit? Whether on Christmas or on Easter, or on the Green Week [before Pentecost]?” (Brailovskii 1884: 183). “I will go to the road and will look out and listen carefully [to see] if my dear mother is coming to visit me” (ibid.: 184). “Do not forget me in difficult times – come and help [me]” (Kaminskii 1906: 9). “Which way should I look out for you from? From which side? Come to visit us on Easter, to break the Lenten fast together.” (Kaminskii 1912: 117)¹²

The living asked the deceased to take them to their land, apologized for not having pleased them and wished them happy life in the other world (Kaminskii 1912: 123-124). As noted previously, laments make clear a belief that death was not accepted as the ultimate end of life, but as the beginning of a different reality analogous to earthly life. They also testify to the belief about uninterrupted contacts between the living and the dead, and the cult of the dead as the protectors of the living. Laments were one of several ways Ukrainians communicated with their dead, all grounded in magic (cf Petrov 1989: 88). A deceased person was perceived as a mediator between the worlds of the living and the dead.

12 “Де ж я тебе буду виглядати, з якої дороги зустрічати?” (Chubinskii 1877: 702); “Скажи ж мені тепер, коли ж ти до мене в гості прийдеш? Коли ж мені столи застеляти, да коли ж мені тебе ждати? Коли ж ти, моя вірная дружина, в гостоньки прибудеш? Чи на Різдво, чи на Великдень, а чи на зелену неділю?” (Brailovskii 1884: 183); “Да я ж вийду на шлях, да все буду визирати да прислухатись, чи не іде моя матінко до мене в гості”(ibid.: 184); “Не забувай же мене в лиху годину; прихोдь поможи” (Kaminskii 1906: 9); “Звідки вас я буду виглядати? З якого боку? Прийди до нас у гостенойку на Великдень, щоб разом розговітись” (Kaminskii 1912: 117).

Lamenting was a moral obligation of the deceased's relatives. Loudly doing so was also a sign of a “good funeral” (Apollosov 1861: 219; Bin'kovskii 1896: 251). People believed that a well lamented soul was happier (Lenchevskii 1899: 77). If a family failed to lament as expected, it could be accused by the community of lack of proper respect and empathy towards the deceased (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 24, 29). “[V]illagers totally disapproved of those who could not lament” (Lenchevskii 1899: 77). Although both genders performed the practice (Hnatiuk 1912: 357; Kaminskii 1912: 112-113), it was women who were blamed if it was insufficient or absent (Kaminskii 1912: 112). While laments provided the opportunity for voluble grief, the community and the closest relatives of the deceased banned extreme expressions of bereavement, since funerary rituals sought the most comfortable surrounding for the deceased's soul. It was believed that such displays would be very unpleasant for that soul, since it would not be able to rest, possibly bringing unwanted reactions from it (Bin'kovskii 1902: 108). Extreme grief also created discomfort for the body of a deceased; people believed that too much crying over it would cause her/him to lie in water (Hrinchenko 1897: 92; Sventsits'kyi 1912: 27).

If conventional display of mourning for the good dead included loud cries and laments, “bad death” was surrounded with silence because it was considered shameful. Nobody wanted to talk about the “bad” dead, so neither psalms nor laments were performed during the funeral. The death and funeral of a small child

was also devoid of cries and laments, although the passing was neither terrible nor shameful (Apollosov 1861: 223). A child's death was, in fact, a reason to rejoice: the youngster was relieved from this world's sufferings and parents happily expected to join their children in the other world (No author 1825: 74). People believed that small babies and toddlers became angels upon their deaths. It was considered a sin to cry or lament their passing; they were believed to be taken straight to Heaven by their Heavenly Father (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 27). That, of course, was considered a good death.

As a sign of mourning, women and girls did not wear earrings, sing songs, or participate in merriment for at least forty days after death (Apollosov 1861: 223). Daughters also mourned their dead mothers by avoiding the color red; they did not wear red ribbons or belts, and the wedding wreath of an orphan girl had to be blue or green (Miloradovich 1897: 171). The closest relatives wore black or dark clothes for one year, with the boys and men not donning hats, even in winter (No author 1989: 72; Moshkov 1902: 23; Hnatiuk 1912: 218).

Church officials commemorated a deceased person after the passage of specific amounts of time, providing sacrifice for the person's sins. This occurred on the third, ninth, and fortieth days and one year after death. On the third day, the appearance of the corpse was believed to change; on the ninth, his body disintegrated and only the heart remained; on the fortieth, the heart finally disintegrated; after a year, the church prayed for the sake of commemoration

(Dolotskii 1845: 411). A sacrificial meal on the commemoration days was seen as necessary for a soul. If the deceased kept returning at night, he was to be asked what his soul needed. He might complain that his soul was hungry. That was expected if relatives did not bring commemorative bread to the church for the sake of the soul or if some living being owed the deceased something (Kolessa 1902: 250).

After the first year of commemoration, the deceased person attained the status of ancestor. Ancestors were de-individualized spirits commemorated collectively in a cult of the dead. This was akin to the Christian cult of the saints who were worshipped and whose protection was sought. Addressing them as “*diǔ* [*grandparents*]” and “*батьки* [*parents*],” Ukrainians brought them food, made sacrifices for the sake of their souls (mostly in the form of alms to the poor), asked about help or advice, and called them out of their graves with prayers and laments (Kotliarevskii 1891: 254). Generally, commemorating and doing good things for the sake of all the dead, not just one's own, was beneficial for the living. Thus, whoever set a cross aright on any grave on Easter, for example, would have his gravest sin pardoned (Ivanov 1907: 99).

In Greece, commemoration of the “regular” dead and those who died from either violent or unnatural deaths took place on three special Fridays: the Friday before Lent, Good Friday, and the Friday before the Pentecost (Summers 1968: 242). Ukrainian Christianity adopted the Greek custom, but with differences. The souls of unbaptized children, stillborn babies, and those who drowned or died

accidentally another way were commemorated only once a year on Pentecost (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 234). There were three Saturdays, *Дмитрова*, *Кузьмина*, *Михайлова*, throughout October and November designated for remembering the dead (Manzhura 1894: 171). The Sunday after Easter, *проводу* (hence the etymology – *проводжати* [*to see somebody off*]), or St. Thomas's Sunday (Kalyns'kyi 1877: 465; Cherniavs'ka 1893: 95), was the biggest memorial event, but only for those who died a good death (Ivanov 1907:107-108). In some regions of Ukraine, the Thursday before Easter was called *мавський/навський Великдень* [*Easter for the deceased*] (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 204, 235). People commemorated female water nymphs, or *rusalky* [unquiet spirits of drowned females, those who died during *Rusalii*, the week preceding Pentecost], by leaving bread for them in rye fields. They also hung wreaths and long pieces of white fabric on trees so that *rusalky* could use them as clothes.

After the Easter church service, close relatives visited their dead at the cemetery, offered holiday greetings, and buried *крашанки*, or dyed eggs. The next day, they came to check the eggs: if all were intact, it meant the soul of the deceased pleased God; if dogs took any, the soul displeased God and nobody knew how to help it (Ivanov 1907: 96). People believed that the dead were resurrected on Easter and came invisibly to the church service at midnight and to the homes of their relatives (Hnatiuk 1904: 124). They were thought to remain in this world until they were commemorated on the Sunday after Easter.

People also believed that souls of those who committed suicide and witches were lost forever, with no way to be saved. After the 6th Ecumenical Council in 691 A.D., a new canonical rule condemned suicide and opposed prayer for it (Levitskii 1891: 352). Again, silence greeted those who killed themselves; even inserting their names in a prayer for the deceased was a sin (Ivanov 1907: 107-108; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 41). The Church forbade relatives to commemorate the suicides for seven years (Fischer 1921: 358), which coincided with the period banning the sealing of the grave (Manzhura 1894: 162). If commemoration was a way to remember a person and pass those memories on, those who died in a bad way were denied the privilege; their memories had to fade as soon as possible. Family ties and pity, however, were often stronger than strict ecclesiastical prohibitions and families of the suicides would prepare a “secret Easter” (Miloradovich 1897: 171) to recall their unfortunate relatives.

The Afterlife: Perils and the Power of the Soul

Fustel-de-Coulanges (1895) suggested that in the view of ancient people, not burying a body made a soul unhappy. Therefore, “funeral customs were mainly executed not to express grief but to pacify a deceased and make him happy” (quoted in Kaminskii 1912: 106). This seems true for the Ukrainian culture, too. The concerns and fears Ukrainians had while dealing with a death were directed toward what would happen to the soul of the deceased and how to please that soul so it would not take revenge on the living, because failure to

follow the required funeral formalities could lead to negative consequences for both the living and the dead. Furthermore, folk beliefs about soul comprised a whole worldview that influenced many other beliefs and often regulated people's daily behavior. Ukrainian funerary rituals served to protect the lives of the survivors and souls of persons passed away.

Folk views of the soul were contradictory, probably because it was perceived both as an intangible and as a material entity. Ukrainians imagined the soul as something invisible and light like air and wind. People believed that at the moment of death, the soul left the body with the final exhalation through the mouth and flew away (Generezov 1883: 6). At that moment, the soul of a righteous person would take the form of pale smoke (Hrinchenko 1897: 66). Someone's unnatural death, in contrast, was believed to cause such atmospheric disturbances as a strong wind or storm, since the soul of a person who died suddenly or violently had to rush to the other world (Generozov 1883: 6; Fisher 1921: 355).

The soul was also imagined as zoomorphic – in the shape of a butterfly, fly, or bee (Generozov 1883: 10; Moshkov 1902: 15). It was believed that God gave a soul to every baby when it first moved in the womb and an angel delivered that soul, which looked like the winged creatures, but lost its wings upon entering the fetus' body (Ivanov 1909: 245-246). Naturally, then, people believed that upon death, the soul reacquired its original form and flew into the house as a fly, bee, or

butterfly. This vision of the soul was probably the basis for the custom of leaving something sweet like *syta*, or *kanun* (honey dissolved in water) for the soul/fly to drink to fortify itself for the long journey to the other world. On the night after the funerals, old women guarded the soul of the deceased. If it appeared as a fly or butterfly and drank *kanun*, it meant that a soul was pleased by the funerals and had nothing against the living. A fly in the house on Christmas Eve was believed to represent a soul of a deceased relative who came invited for the holy supper, and Ukrainians usually left *kutia* (a ritual sweet dish) and a spoon on the table for such expected visitors (Kolessa 1902: 250).

In Slavic areas, people imagined that the soul was also able to transform into plants and other animals (Generozov 1883: 14) – usually a bird, most often a dove, eagle, or cuckoo (ibid.: 11; Lepkyi 1883: 13). Laments often refer to the deceased as “ясний сокіл,” “голуб/голубонька,” or “либідь.” “Fly to me my dear brother as a smokey dove or as a bright eagle, or as a white swan” (Generozov 1883: 11); “Mother, my...dear swallow, my meadow cuckoo bird” (Danilov 1907: 230).¹³

At the same time, people sometimes viewed the soul as an anthropomorphic, supernatural entity – a spiritual duplicate of a once living person that was able to live its own benevolent or malevolent life. Thus, the soul was believed to survive

¹³ “Прилети ж ти до мене, братіку, хоч сизим голубом, хоч ясным соколом, хоч білим лебедем” (Generozov 1883: 11); “Мамочко, моя... ластівочко, ...Зозулечко моя луговая” (Danilov 1907: 230).

in the other world with its old earthly habits, needs, mood (attitudes), and human appearance (Generozov 1883: 12). It needed food and drink, felt cold and heat, suffered, and indulged in pleasures; i.e., it lived in a close relation to the human's body. For that reason, people put various personal belongings and food into a coffin, believing that a soul will use them in the other world (Lepkyi 1883: 14).

At the moment of death, body and soul separated, finding its expression in phrases like *відійшла душа* [*the soul has departed*]; *розлучилася душа з тілом* [*the soul separated from (its) body*], or *віддав душу* [*gave (his) soul away*]. It was thought that a physical body died, but a soul continued its existence. People believed not as much in the eternity of a soul, but that the soul outlived the body. After soul and body parted, the former was believed to roam around the latter, as if looking for it (Batiushkov 1891: 163; Batiushkov 1891a: 340). No matter how bitter that separation, it was important to liberate a soul for good. This was the aim of a series of actions with the unquiet dead – exhumation, driving an aspen stick or sharp metal object through the body, or burning it. Bandits, witches, and other terrible sinners supposedly no longer possessed a soul, but only a spirit – more precisely, the evil spirit (Ivanov 1909: 247). Their souls were considered lost forever, while the presence of an evil spirit in them (as the opposite of a soul) enabled them to leave their graves and wander (Ivanov 1891: 217). Rich people were also equated with evil, for they had signed a pact with the devil during their lifetime (Hrinchenko 1897: 65). Whether they acquired their demonic power

accidentally or through conscious collaboration with evil forces, the unquiet dead were believed to have the desire and ability to harm the living. They were thought to cause disease, poor harvests, bad weather, and many other misfortunes.

The soul stayed in a house until the body was buried, and the moral obligation of the inhabitants was to put out a glass of water for drinking and/or bathing and bread for feeding a soul for that length of time (Kaminskii 1912: 101). Then, during the forty days of *mytarstva* (aerial toll houses, or spiritual trials), a soul was believed to visit home daily, where it ate honey to lessen the bitterness of its suffering and rested on a special embroidered towel, *rushnyk* (Ivanov 1909: 252). The spiritual trials were to determine if the soul was sinful or righteous:

“At the first spiritual trial the soul is asked about homicides, at the second – about debauchery, at the third – about sins against father and mother [of the deceased]; at the fourth – about stealing, and so on [till the end] about all other kinds of sins.” (Novitskii 1912: 169, 170 cited by Chabanenko 1990: 21)¹⁴

The living were to protect, help, and please a soul of a dying person. Tolling the church bells was believed both helpful and pleasing to it (Chubinskii 1877: 699). People supposed that a soul could be stolen by evil forces right before funerals (Fischer 1921: 210). To prevent this, relatives or neighbors guarded the

¹⁴ “На однім митарстві питають про душогубство, на другім – про блуд, на третім – за гріхи проти батька-неньки, на четвертім – про злодійство, а далі – про всякі інші гріхи.”

body during the nights before burial and prayed. They watched so that a cat or dog would not jump over the dead body, for in that case, the soul would enter the animal's body and not leave the house, making the deceased person an unquiet dead (Bin'kovskii 1896: 246). People believed those animals associated with the devil. In Ukrainian folklore, there are many legends about witches turning into either cats or dogs (Hnatiuk 1912: 109; 131; Ivanov 1891: 218, 220).¹⁵

While the deceased was still in the house before burial (and forty days after the funeral), the living were to make sure not to upset the soul. Household tasks like cleaning, washing, whitewashing the walls, or sweeping the floor were taboos, for one could accidentally run into the soul and smear it or cover with dust. That would be offensive, make the soul feel unwelcome and cause it to leave the house in anger (Bin'kovskii 1896: 246; Miloradovich 1897: 166; Ivanov 1909: 252).

A human soul after death was usually more magically powerful than a living person could ever be, even if the death was "bad." It overcame time and space restrictions, could move about, was able to do various things, acquired different appearances, or took revenge on behalf of a body that was no longer able to stand for itself. Even those who disregarded Christian amendments were scared of the supernatural powers of the soul or its associates. A court record from the 1880s

¹⁵ This Ukrainian folk belief was used by Mykola Hohol' (Nikolai Gogol) in his novels "Майська ніч, або утоплена" and "Вечір проти Івана Купала" both of which were first published in 1830.

showed that murderers who killed and skinned a child for the sake of black magic did not touch the boy's right shoulder and arm because they feared that the child's guardian angel (one is believed to live on each person's right shoulder) would wreak vengeance on them (Lytvyniv 1900: 142).

Souls of those who died in a bad way were also believed to assist humans with evil intentions. When a sorcerer wanted to cast a mighty curse, he would go to an aspen tree in the forest and "ask 'those killed, who had fallen from trees, gone astray, died unbaptized, without names' to get up and harm a person" while facing west (Mansikka 1909: 9).

Beliefs about the place a soul inhabited were also contradictory. On the one hand, people thought that it stayed in the coffin in the grave. On the other hand, they also believed it flew away to the other world (Generozov 1883: 20). Contradictory interpretations of a soul's fate conveyed an archaic view about the multiplicity of souls: one returned to where it originated; another went to the grave with the body; and yet another stayed on earth to protect the living (Ivanov 1909: 248). Dolotskii (1845) speculated that the unknown fate of the soul was the reason pre-Christian people mourned the deaths of their own, but the Church's optimism about the future of the soul brought hope and made funerals almost uplifting events (pp. 418-419).

Christian teachings certainly emphasized the idea of a sinful soul, God's punishment for sins, and rewards for righteousness. The folk understanding of a

sinful soul is reflected in various legends, sayings, and proverbs. For example, “Взявся як чорт за грішну душу [*To take after (some task) like a devil after a sinful soul*]” (Manzhura 1890: 170); “Гріх душу зазубити, а вставити – не гріх [*It’s a sin to kill a soul but to create (a new one) is not (speaking about illegitimate children)*]” (ibid.: 166). It was believed that a dead body could still betray carefully hidden proof the deceased was a terrible sinner. For example, the corpse would involuntarily move if a *domovyk* laughed nearby (Ivanov 1893: 53) or when a Psalter was read over it (Bin'kovskii 1896: 243). Overall, determining if a soul was righteous or sinful was profoundly important in people’s minds in order to decide on what type of funerals to administer.

Ancestor worship was a major religious component of Ukrainians, so they were curious about the nature of the afterlife. Ukrainian laments, burying customs, and commemorating practices are the best testament to folk views on life in the hereafter. The ideas about the next world were directly related to the nature of death, and people expressed beliefs about this relationship through their rituals. Images of the afterlife are fragmentary, inconsistent, and often illogical, which can be explained by a mixture of Christian and folk beliefs (Generozov 1883: 47). These images derive from a mixture of sermons and depictions in church icons and wall frescos. Many apocryphal songs contained detailed descriptions of heaven and hell, ideas of which were so popular and stable that they found their way into children’s folklore. Although mothers forbade their children from

imitating funerals or the deceased (Vasil'ev 1890: 321), games called “Heaven” and “Hell” were very popular. In them, the players split into two camps – angels and demons. Players competed by dragging members of the other group into their own (Ivanov 1889: 61-63).

Overall, images of the afterlife were expressed in material or concrete terms. People believed that a dead person needed everything there that she had required or failed to achieve in her earthly life – a family, favorite foods, clothes, and so on. People placed treats into coffins even though the clergy fought this custom as a pre-Christian remnant (Abramov 1907: 29). Survivors also put the cut nails of a deceased into the coffin so he could climb a mountain of *mytarstva* in the other world, pull off worms, or get out of the hellish abyss (Kalinskii 1877: 469; Dal' 1994[1880]: 96; Manzhura 1894: 170; Ivanov 1909: 249).¹⁶ Ideas about the other world and afterlife motivated the attitude of the living towards the dead, since Ukrainians replicated real life relations with the souls. People imagined heaven as a place with a table set with everything the soul had earned in this world, donated to other humans, or sacrificed to God (Manzhura 1890: 155). Therefore, very grateful, people could say: “*Хай воно вам там перед душечкою стане [May this [your good deed] stand before [your] soul there [in another world]]*” (ibid.: 163).

¹⁶ According to the canons of Medieval Christian (Catholic) Afterlife, purgatory was imagined as a mountain that must be climbed (cf Weir 2002: 87). Therefore, it appears that the Catholic idea of purgatory parallels the Orthodox idea about the *mytarstva*, or spiritual trials.

Two destinies awaited dead children. In Ukrainian folk beliefs, *rusalky* (female water nymphs) and *mavky/navky* were considered unquiet spirits of females who ended up dying unnaturally, and thus dangerous for the living, but their origin and functions were viewed differently (Kalinskii 1877: 470; Ivanov 1909: 246). Females who drowned or died during the week preceding Pentecost were believed to become *rusalky*, while unbaptized girls became *mavky* regardless of the nature of their death (i.e., were killed by their mothers, were stillborn, or died soon after birth) (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 147). The latter were believed to live in forests or mountains, and the former in bodies of water. Unlike *rusalky*, *mavky* could live without water for a long time. Like *rusalky*, they were believed to sing and dance in forests or fields, but their dancing did not cause grass to flourish like the dancing of *rusalky* did. *Rusalky*, therefore, were helping people in some sense. Both *rusalki* and *mavky*, however, were dangerous for the living: *rusalky* dragged humans into water and drowned them, while *mavky* tricked them into the deep forests with their very human appearance and tickled them to death.

At the same time, there was a belief that unbaptized babies nonetheless ascended to heaven, although they dwelled separately from the baptized children. People also believed that souls of children had distinctive appearances: souls of children who were born out of wedlock or killed upon birth were dirty, while souls of “good” children were white and even had rosy cheeks if the babies had been delivered with the assistance of a “baba,” or midwife (Ivanov 1909: 246).

A different destiny awaited women who died during pregnancy or labor. A pregnant woman who died was to suffer until the Judgment Day, while a woman who died in labor or within six weeks after was “considered a martyr and went [directly] to the Heaven” (Vasil'ev 1890: 320; Miloradovich 1897: 171).

Women who delivered stillborn babies or whose children died did not eat apples till the Jesus' Transfiguration Holiday (August 6 /19). They believed that on that day, God gave heavenly apples to children's souls in the other world, but only to those whose mothers did not eat them. Otherwise such children were told, “*А ваши свини з'їли [Pigs have eaten yours (apples)]*” (Ivanov 1907: 173).

People believed that on Easter and during the preceding week, the gates of heaven were open for all and *mytarstva* were eliminated so that souls could ascend directly to heaven (Bin'kovskii 1896: 259). People believed that those who died during the first three days of Easter were pure souls, and God granted them his blessing (Ivanov 1907: 93). This belief was probably inspired by the church songs that declared an overall forgiveness on Easter and partly by the church ritual of opening the iconostasis gate seven days before Easter Sunday. According to John the Evangelist, an open iconostasis symbolized open heaven (Kalinskii 1877: 459-460). People fasted on Mondays, believing that Monday was the sacred day on which the world was created and that not eating on such a day would grant one a good, easy death: “Whoever fasts this day, will have a nice (good) life in this world and will not be scared to die. If someone dies without previously

venerating St. Monday, it is bad for him to go to another world” (I[vanov] 1894: 143-144).¹⁷ In the folk views, sacred Monday, or St. Monday, was associated with the Apostle Peter who guarded the doors of heaven and hell and accompanied the souls of those who had near-death visions (*завмерли*) on their journey to both (ibid.).

Sinners in hell were thought to sit in craters of boiling tar. To escape, one could grab whatever he had given to the poor during his life. In one legend, a man had given only three green onions, so when his son tried to save him with those onions, he failed. The onions were torn and father fell down back to hell (Ostapchuk 1902: 464). Apart from sinners, there were several categories of people who could not enter heaven due to the “shameful” facts of their lives: bald men (Manzhura 1890: 105), men battered by their wives, and persons attacked by pigs (ibid.: 154).

People believed that the worse the deceased sinner, the sooner his body would rot. The opposite of this was a belief in incorruptible relics of the saints (Moshkov 1902: 25). Bodies of vampires did not rot, but were believed to leave their graves at night and walk to homes sucking blood from the sleeping. Unclean dead were generally believed to move around. Those who died due to an accident, suicide, or murder were bound to the place of their demise: those who hanged

17 “Хто в цей день постить, то тому буде гарно (хорошо) жити на землі, і так же йому не страшно і умирати. Як хто умре не почитавше святого Понеділка, то йому скверно йти на той світ.”

themselves forever returned to the place where they swung, especially during the full moon; those who drowned appeared near that body of water; and those who were murdered went back to the scene of their bloodshed (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 48) and gazed at it (Potushniak 1938: 34).

The worlds of the living and dead were believed closely interrelated. The living had to care about the dead and do their best to arrange for their welfare in the other world. If a deceased person appeared in some form to his relatives less than forty days after death, his soul suffered and asked for prayers on his behalf (Liatskii 1892: 39). The dead also cared about the living. Dead mothers came back to feed their children and wash their clothes (Hnatiuk 1904: 125). The closest kin, whether alive or dead, were always present during major life events. An orphan bride would go to the cemetery to invite her deceased parent(s) to her wedding and ask their blessing for the rite.

The dead were believed to have close communication not only with the living, but also among themselves. Their relations, however, were not always amicable. Thus, when people bought something for funerals, they never bargained over the price because they believed that if they did, the dead would not live in peace, but would haggle in the other world (Malinka 1898: 100-101). If grave-diggers accidentally struck an existing grave, they were to put money into it to buy the place for the newly-deceased from a previous “owner.” Otherwise the dead pair would fight until the Judgement Day (Ivanov 1909: 250). If two corpses

were to be placed into one grave, as happened during epidemics, people provided a stick to the weaker one to help it protect itself from the stronger (ibid.).

Ukrainian minstrels, or travelling blind singers popularized views on death, soul, the afterlife, and Judgement Day among peasants and ordinary city dwellers through religious songs or psalms. They were “agents for dispensing religious information” (Kononenko 1998: 147). A minstrel would describe the Judgement Day similar to church teachings, yet in more accessible terms:

When the Judgement Day will come,
He who does good deeds will go to the [Heavenly] Kingdom.
Sinner, repent – you still can get to the sky.
But if you can't repent
Then you will die for ever and be cursed (Borzhkovskii 1889: 694-695).¹⁸

Road Symbolism in Beliefs about “Bad Death”

In Ukrainian culture, the road, death on the road, and marking such death in a certain way has been historically interconnected. There are many parallels between death and the road in Ukrainian folklore that point to the metaphorical understanding of death and funerals as a rite of passage, a physical and spiritual transfer from this world to another one. For example, people prepared for the other world as they would to a journey, or as they said, “*в дорогу [to a road]*.”

18 “Когда час приходит, страшный суд наступит -
А кто добре вчинить, до царства достигнет.
А кайся, грішнику, дайся до покути,
Перестань грішити, - можеш в небі бути.
Як же ти не зможеш покути прийняти,
Ізгинеш на віки ще й будеш проклятий.” Read the whole psalm on pp. 694-695.

This vision is reflected in proverbs like “*Люди мруть – дорогу нам на той світ труть, а ми сухарів насущим і собі за ними рушим [People die and trample a way to the other world for us; we will first make bread toasts and then follow them]*” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236). Sometimes people used euphemisms for death like “*нішов у далеку путь [has left for a long journey]*” (Brailovs'kii 1885: 81). Fellow villagers would arrange a funeral saying, “*проводити в останню путь [to see somebody off to the last journey]*.” To lament over a dying person in agony was prohibited, for on its way to the other world, the soul could “*збитися з дороги [lose its way; go astray from a road]*” (Demidovich 1896: 136).

Not only was death on the road considered “bad.” Merely being on the road – travelling – was evil. In Ukrainian folklore, the road is dangerous, a place where travellers are unprotected before outside forces. There was always the possibility of sudden death and urgent funerals. This is reflected in sayings and especially curses: “*Чоловік знає, коли виїжджає, а не знає, коли вернеться [A man knows when he will set out on a trip, but does not know when he will return]*” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 222); “*В дорозі всього трапиться [Anything can happen during travel]*” (ibid.); “*Смерть і біда то й на гладкій дорозі здиблять [Death and misfortune would find [you] even on a smooth road]*” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236); “*Не дай, Боже, смерти в дорозі на задньому возі [God forbid to die on a road, travelling on the last cart]*” (Rudchenko 1874: 257); “*Щоб ти нішов круга свима! [May you go travelling around the world!]*” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 72);

“Щоб ти ходив, поки світа та сонця! [*May you wander till the end of the world and the sun!*]” (ibid.); “А щоб ти ходив, як води ходять! [*May you wander like waters move (i.e. endlessly, with no stop)*]” (ibid.); “А будь тобі непутно! [*May your road/way be terribly bad!*]” (ibid.); “А щоб ти на добрий путь не зійшов! [*May you never find a good way/road!*]” (ibid.); “Щоб тебе побило потемнило на путі, на дорозі і куди ти повернешся лицем своїм! [*May you be struck and your vision dimmed on a way, road, and anywhere you turn your face toward!*]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 74); “Побий тебе сила Божя на гладкій дорозі! [*May God's power kill [you] on on a smooth road!*]” (ibid.); “А щоб ти попав на Серпяжин шлях! [*May thee get to the Serpiazhyn road!* (named after the Kozak Het'man Serpiaha-Pidkova and considered dangerous due to bandit attacks)]” (ibid.: 26 7; Sumtsov 1896: 199) and many others.

Devoid of signs in the old days, roads invoked uncertainty over direction. Choosing the wrong way was especially dangerous at dusk and people ascribed it to a demon's snare. Roads were also perceived as dangerous for many other reasons. One was that roads were believed to be limens, boundaries between the human and spirit worlds. As Puhvel (1989) noted, malevolent spirits expelled from private properties “were left to roam the boundaries – a kind of no man’s land – which were often marked by paths and roads” (p. 123). The road was also a boundary behind or near where those who died a “bad death” were buried, which included wandering strangers. There were several categories of people with a high

chance of dying on the road, since they often travelled long distances and could be attacked, die suddenly or violently, and be buried by the roadside at the spot of death. Those were Chumaky (specifically Ukrainian itinerant merchants who were half-peasants),¹⁹ Kozaky, and pilgrims. Folk songs about Chumaky portray their funerals as quick and improper; their burials as taking place in a steppe along a road with a mound above the grave; and their commemoration as insufficient: “There, between three roads/There they dug a grave/There they dug a grave/There they buried a Chumak/.../Mow, guys, reed/We will cook porridge/We will add fish to it/And commemorate the Chumak!” (Rudchenko 1874: 168-169)²⁰; “For that Chumak,/ [They] made a coffin out of a sack/ [They] buried that Chumak/ Near the green meadow” (ibid., 148)²¹; “Oh, a young Chumak died/ On a Monday morning/ [They] buried the Chumak/ In a green ravine/ [They] made over the Chumak/ A high mound/ [They] planted on his grave/ A red viburnum tree” (ibid., 135).²² It is not surprising that there were numerous legends about Chumaky and Kozaky as revenants and about various encounters with evil during religious pilgrimages. For example, a Chumak (the singular form of Chumaky) who died during a trip and was buried by the road turned into a vampire and wandered around the village

19 For more information on *Chumaky*, or *Chumaks* see Rudchenko 1874; Chirovski 1963: 338-339; Krasnykov 2008: 98-102.

20 “Там між трьома шляхами,/ Ой, там яму копали,/ Ой, там яму копали,/ Там чумака сховали./.../ Косить, хлопці, комишу,/ Та наварим кулешу,/ Та вкинемо чубака/ Та пом'янем чумака!”

21 “Нарядили тому чумакові/ Труну із рогожі,/ Поховали того чумаченька/ Край зеленого луку...”

22 “Ой умер чумак молоденький/ У неділоньку, вранці,/ Поховали та чумаченька/ Та в зеленім байраці:/ Висипали над чумаком/ Та високу могилу;/ Посадили в головоньках/ Та червону калину.”

strangling animals and humans (Ivanov 1891: 226-227). The proverb “*Чумак та мельник – то найгірший пекельник* [*A Chumak and a miller are the worst hellish creatures*]” associates a Chumak with evil (Rudchenko 1874: 256). Kozaky and pilgrims were no better: in folk legends, a dead Kozak guarded cursed treasures waiting for a human victim to come (Shiyan 2006: 162-165); a woman, on her pilgrimage to the Kyiv Cave Monastery, was tortured by various reptiles for her sin (Hnatiuk 1912a: 144). Unlike Islam, which holds that the soul of a person who died on his way to the sacred city, Mecca would ascend directly to heaven, Ukrainian culture considered the death of a pilgrim as “bad” as any other road death. They occurred away from home suddenly and often violently, and the funerals did not follow the proper traditional form that was paramount for the salvation of the soul. It made no difference if strangers died near a village, for a village was a closed circle of related people, almost kin, so the local cemetery was like a “family plot” where strangers could not be buried. As in many other cultures, they would be often interred at a special one, often situated by the main road (Holmberg 1927: 35; Speranskii 1895: 404). Such burial sites were almost always marked:

In my time, there was still a custom in Malorossia [Ukraine's official name during the times of the Russian Empire] when [they] made a high soil mound over a dead Kozak. It can still be encountered everywhere in Russia that if someone dies on a road, [they] make over him a considerable hill, erect a wooden cross or post, and carve the name of the deceased on it. The faithful eventually build a chapel [and] travellers stop there: [they] pray for

and commemorate those who died away from their relatives and motherland (Tereshchenko 1999[1848]: 293).

Thus, a cross by the road was a symbol of death or a grave marker.²³ It is hard to determine when a cross was first used as a death marker. It evolved from the Christian tradition of venerating Jesus Christ's death on the cross. During the first three centuries of Christianity, there were no special cemeteries. For example, St. Peter was buried by the triumphal road near Tiber, while St. Paul was buried by the road Via Ostiensis (Dolotskii 1845: 408-409). The cross as a burial sign came to the Rus'an lands from Greece after adopting Christianity in 988 AD. It was already used in the 10th century in the Kyivan Rus' (Shyrots'kyi 1908: 12). Generally,

a cross – even without a grave – reminded of the death of a glorious martyr; by being set by the road, at a crowded place, it [cross] fulfilled its function best. Later on, such places were decorated with chapels and churches; or a cross was initially a grave, one that pointed to a place where an accidentally dead – often murdered – Christian was buried (Speranskii 1895: 404).

Even those whose death was “bad” and who needed prayers for the peace of their souls usually got crosses on their places of burial. For example, there is

23 A cross could symbolize not only death and be not just a grave marker. A cross by the road or in an open space had different forms and function, so it could have several different meanings: it could be a boundary marker (Shyrots'kyi 1908: 26); a memorious place indicating an important event (Speranskii 1895: 406); or protection for travellers. In Ukrainian tradition, a road and a cross as a special place marker are linked in a legend about Apostle Andrew in which he travelled from Constantinople via Chersonesus and Kyiv, climbed a hill, prayed there, and erected a cross, professing that God's grace will shine there. Later, Kyiv was founded on that hill. People viewed roadside crosses, regardless of their origin, as “sacred object[s] that... invoke a religious feeling” (Speranskii 1895: 403). Historically, crosses along roads indicated not only places of death and burial, but mainly the nature of death.

documented evidence that crosses were put on the graves of the Chumaky (Sumtsov 1902: 3). The colour of those crosses told the nature of death: one painted black or red indicated a murder had occurred at that spot or that a murdered person had been found there (Levchenko 1874: 144; Sumtsov 1890: 65).

Other markers were high mounds or piles of stones. Folk ritual prescribed putting various things atop the places where “unclean” dead were buried: branches, pieces of old clothes, straw, grass and so on (Demidovich 1896: 136). This ritual was considered a remnant from pre-Christian times that Churches sought to eliminate. In his diary, Taras Shevchenko wrote in 1857 about such a Ukrainian ritual in relation to the Kyrgyzian funerals he happened to witness:

In Malorossia, the suicides were also buried in the field, but necessarily at a crossroad. During the following year [after the funeral], anyone who happened to walk or ride by the unfortunate deceased had to toss something at his grave – be it a piece of a shirt sleeve if nothing else was available. In a year, on the day of his death, but mostly on a Green Saturday (on the eve of Pentecost), [they] burned the accumulated rubbish as a purifying sacrifice; had a commemorative service, and put a cross at the grave of the unfortunate man (quoted in Bilyi 1926: 85).

It appears that this ritual was observed more often for suicides. An explanation about why it was observed could often be not found. People would simply say “It is supposed to be that way” (Chubinskii 1877: 712).

While some places of “bad death” on the road were marked with crosses or high mounds, others were names for those buried there. Places are central to memory and experience. Legends “aimed at explaining the reason for existence of crosses here and there” (Speranskii 1895: 406) would outlast physical markers. There are numerous such legends. According to one, *Татарська долина* [Tartar Lowland] was named after defeated Tartar soldiers who drowned in the Sluch River. Among them was a Tartar tsar whose ghost kept appearing on a bridge over the river (Bin'kovskii 1902a: 157). Another legend explains the local toponym *Лашчичини нагорби* [Lashchykha's Hillocks]: Lashchykha, an old village woman, was brutally murdered by Polish soldiers. Local people recalled that there once was an oak cross at the site of her death, which was also her burial site (Bilyi 1921: 86). According to yet another legend, a father buried his daughter and her illegitimate baby alive in a grave in a field near the village Ploske (now in the Chernihiv region). By association with this double murder, the field got the name *Погане поле* [Bad Field] (Britsyna and Holovakha 2004: 277-280). In the same region near the town Oleksandrivka, there was a grave called *Батурка*. According to legend, a greedy man from Baturyn had died at that spot suddenly. The place was thus considered cursed and unsuitable for use by either people or cattle, and everyone passing by that grave was obliged to throw something on it (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 65-66).

The association of roads with evil extended to crossroads and road forks as “the crossing of two or more roads or the branching of one into two or more, at whatever angle” (Puhvel 1989: xiii). If evil spirits wandered the roads, crossroads were their place of meeting and congregation. Crossroads had a bad reputation in Ukrainian culture, as in many others, as places of burial of the hanged, criminals, witches and some others categories of people who died a violent death by accident, suicide, or execution and did not deserve interment in the sanctified soil of the cemeteries (Puhvel 1989). Since crossroads were haunted by the spirits of those unquiet dead, they were considered dangerous for the living. And like many other cultures, Ukrainians saw crossroads as places of magic and miracles.²⁴ They were connected with certain creatures of Ukrainian folklore and reflected various beliefs in the supernatural. For example, they were believed to be places where vampires would attack travellers late at night. A sudden whirlwind at a crossroad was considered an agent of evil forces (Manzhura 1890: 154; Bessaraba 1904: 42; Novyts'kyi 1912: 165 quoted in Chabanenko 1990: 16-17). Witches tended to built their houses next to crossroads. People who would settle down in a house at a crossroad would fall into misery and die (Britsyna 2003: 2). In addition, magical rituals were performed at crossroads. For example, a healer would “take off” an illness from a sick person and ritually “return” it to the crossroads (ibid.: 2-3). If a village suffered from summer drought, folk custom prescribed exhuming the body

24 See examples of magic at the crossroads in non-Slavic cultures in MacCulloch 1908: 334-335.

of a suicide – especially if that person drowned or hanged himself and yet was buried in a cemetery – and rebury it outside the village, at a crossroad. This was believed to bring rain to the village (Bin'kovskii 1898: 8). There were certain taboos related to crossroads; for instance, picking up something or staying overnight at a place there was prohibited.

The Ukrainian funeral ritual prescribed halting the procession at each crossroad, placing the coffin on the ground, and praying (Hnatiuk 1912: 247). As Puhvel (1989) explained, that would protect a deceased from either evil forces associated with the crossroads or the spirits of suicides and criminals buried there (p. 100).

It seems that it was important to mark a place of a “bad death” for various reasons. It was primarily for the safety of the living who had to pass by. People believed that the soul of a person killed suddenly and violently would wander around the place of death for the next seven years (Manzhura 1894: 167; Fischer 1921: 355). Such souls, or rather the evil spirits of such dead, were believed to roam the roads at nights waiting for passersby to kill. But marking also helped the dead: those who died a “bad death” needed prayers for the peace and salvation of their souls.

Since roads and crossroads were dangerous, prayers for safety were the main armor of travellers. To counteract the powers of evil and protect travellers, images of Christian saints decorated roads (especially crossroads), together with

crucifixes, crosses, and small chapels dedicated to the Mother of God. They were “signs” or road marks protected by God and “shields for the faithful” (No author 1898: 73).

Conclusion

Ukrainian folk funeral rituals, customs, and beliefs about death and dying at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century were a synthesis of popular religion and official Christian elements. On the one hand, beliefs about death and the afterlife put forth the Christian idea about the eternity of the human soul, Heaven and Hell, and God’s punishment for the sins committed in this world. On the other hand, despite the profound influence of church dogma, they demonstrate the persistence of folk belief in the soul’s reincarnation and multiplicity. They also attest to the necessity to comfort the soul in its other life with physical objects from this world. Since Ukrainian folk ideas about death were closely related to the ideas about the soul, and since the soul was a duality, the attitude of the living towards the dead and the soul was ambivalent.

Magico-religious syncretism was also characteristic of those beliefs. The funeral ritual seemed magical, with a body being the main magical object surrounded by magical prescriptions and taboos. People saw this world as being closely connected to the other one; both populated with good and bad spirits that actively influenced people’s lives and well-being. People believed it was possible to manipulate those spirits, communicate with them, or make agreements.

The world of the dead was a mirror of this world in Ukrainian folk imagination. Death was a natural and expected event, a transition from one world to another. The world of the dead was perceived as a physical reality, with exchanges and transitions between it and the world of the living seen as natural, possible, and even obligatory. In this way, simple, uneducated villagers tried to explain phenomena related to death that were otherwise inconceivable to them. Those who died at old age, at home, not alone, and after all customary rites were considered to die a good death. All the other deaths were considered “bad” and were dealt with inhumanely from a 21st century perspective. Overall, Ukrainians treated their dead with the extraordinary care reflected in the precise multiple steps of the funeral ceremony, elaborate funeral liturgy, funeral hymns, and laments. Therefore, their seemingly callous attitude toward the “bad” dead should not be understood as thoughtlessness. Their attitude was within the framework of their culture. Ukrainians did not fear death and kept close relations with their dead, whom they considered ancestors. What they did fear, however, were the “wrong” things like a “bad death” that resulted in “resurrected” dead. That is why “bad death,” unlike good death, was explained by countless beliefs, omens, legends, and tales.

In the Ukrainian view, “bad death” was closely connected with roads and crossroads, which, like death and funerals, were surrounded by multiple beliefs and taboos. Simultaneously places of death, burial, spirit habitation, and magic,

roads and crossroads were perceived as dangerous for humans. Those who died in a “bad” way found their final rest (or rather restless place) along roads at the places of death and their graves were marked by crosses or piles of stones, branches, or earth. The meaning of such piles was unmistakably interpreted by bearers of the same culture. The tradition prescribed fear of such unfortunate dead and at the same time caring for the salvation of their souls. Beliefs in roads/crossroads as dangerous and in those buried along roads as revenants are reflected in various genres of Ukrainian folklore. Folk views of “bad death” and the associated rituals persisted well into the 20th century with few, if any, changes and did not disappear suddenly after introduction of a new, Soviet social order and official atheism.

CHAPTER THREE:
CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN FOLK BELIEFS AND
PRACTICES RELATED TO DEATH, FUNERALS, AND AFTERLIFE²⁵

Contemporary Ukrainian beliefs and practices are hard to describe as a single entity. Throughout the 20th century, the traditions and the very lives of villagers and city dwellers alike were challenged by numerous historical, social, and political catastrophes: two world wars, industrialization, collectivization, famines, deportations, political terror, and forced-labor camps. As a result, almost every family had victims who suffered unnatural, abnormal death. Many times during the 20th century, especially in the first half, human life was denigrated and funerals acquired an indecent form. Bodies were treated without dignity or

25 I consider contemporary Ukraine having started in 1918 after the Lenin Socialist Revolution of 1917 that created the USSR. Although the redefinition of folk and the announcement of “peasant” beliefs as backward did not come immediately, the ideological process of creating a new, Soviet nation began that year. Furthermore, the major rupture of ordinary people's lives was a direct consequence of the Revolution, and cases of abnormal death and inappropriate burial I look at in this research engulfed Ukrainian lands well before Ukraine (except for its Western regions) was officially pronounced a Socialist Republic in 1922. As for religion in the USSR, it would be an oversimplification to state that it disappeared after 1917 only to miraculously reemerge in 1991. Religious beliefs remained strong among the population. According to the 1937 census, 84 percent of the illiterate and 44 percent of the literate population were believers (Kuromiya 1998: 236). During WWII, Ukraine experienced a religious revival when 126 churches were opened under the Germans only in the Luhans'k oblast' (ibid.: 317), and in 1951 in Voroshylovgrad (contemporary Luhans'k city), “wandering priests” went “from house to house, christening children, performing funeral services, and consecrating wells and houses” (ibid.: 318). Although the Orthodox Church was officially disbanded in the 1920s, Stalin made an alliance with the Moscow Patriarchate during WWII. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church and the Uniate Church were banned, their clergy arrested, and the faithful transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church. It is, therefore, not true that there was no religious life in Ukraine. It is just that Ukrainian Churches were outlawed till 1991. For more on the question of religion in Ukraine and credibility of the Russian Orthodoxy, see Bociurkiw 1982: 30; Bociurkiw 1982a: 82; Wanner 1998: 38-39; Verdery 1999: 72; Himka 2006: 94-95.

reverence, left in the streets with a ban on their removal or thrown into common graves without distinction (Kuromiya 1998: 103; 108). Mass deaths and burials affected the living, the funerary ritual, and people's attitudes towards death. Officially promoted atheism further affected the funerary practice. As Catherine Merridale (2001) stated, "Seventy years of Soviet Communism, and even more effectively, of urban life and secular culture, could not but change the ways that death was celebrated and remembered" (p. 340).

For convenience, I divide the contemporary period into two eras – Soviet (1917-1991) and post-Soviet (1991-present). The major difference between them is the degree of the open use of church rites for funerals (cf Kononenko 2006). In terms of funerals, as Natalia Havryliuk (2003) stated, there was little research or follow-up on the publications of 19th century ethnographers during the Soviet period. Unlike the systematic gathering of data on wedding and birth rituals, funerary rituals were neglected (p. 7). This was caused in part by the different Soviet vision of who the folk were and what folklore should have been about. Soviet ideology imposed changes in all major rituals and strove to eradicate the traditional religious worldview of citizens by shifting the rituals toward the secular, particularly funerals.

Despite this, it is striking that most traditional death-related beliefs and practices continue into the 21st century in Ukraine, remaining largely unchanged, especially in villages. Soviet ideology competed with the habits and minds of

people for more than seven decades, but the collective memory seems to have won. Data gathered by ethnographers and folklorists at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 21st century are nearly identical.²⁶

The audio recordings from Natalie Kononenko's field work²⁷ present, along with other life rituals, a detailed step-by-step description of a contemporary funeral ritual from Central Ukraine, including preparations for death, signs of upcoming death, beliefs about soul and afterlife, and a commemorative feast. Funerals in other regions, although they have their own specific features, tend to follow this description closely in terms of steps of the ritual and folk beliefs about the afterlife. When describing a regular funeral, contemporary Ukrainians would often stress that things used to be done differently and provide examples of what they had heard from their parents and grandparents. Although there are some changes – both insertions and reductions of some elements – in the funeral ritual, the main features remain intact, especially in villages. A possible explanation for this might be that villagers generally resist changes to traditionally passed practices when they are viewed as unnecessary and redundant.

26 The same is true of the funeral in Russian culture, as described by Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby (2008). It is possible to suggest that traditional funerals of all people in the USSR retained the same degree of continuity with pre-Soviet times due to the similar dynamics of the process of creation of the Soviet Republics, and the negative attitudes of the Soviet authorities towards the traditional beliefs and practices.

27 From here on, when referring to Natalie Kononenko's Ukrainian audio files, I use the following format: (NK: file name [time of the recorded segment]). The files should be searched under the category "Funeral" on: <http://projects.tapor.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio/>

Ukrainian funerals remain collective occasions, and this is especially pronounced in villages (Ingram 1998: 38). As Ingram (1998) noted, the “communal aspect of funerary rituals is an extension of Ukrainian everyday life, and a reflection of an aspect of Ukrainian world view” (p. 39). Anyone who knew the deceased feels free to come to the funeral and the more popular a person was, the more attended the funeral. In villages, news about someone's death spreads quickly. As Halyna Iarmosh explained, “If someone died at night then by the following midday everybody knows” (NK: Iabluniv98c [43:26-43:57]).²⁸

In cities, special funerary homes organized secular funerals starting in the middle of the 1960s (Lane 1981: 82). They provided ritual workers who conducted a funeral, organized processions and delivered speeches at graveside. This required a written biography of the deceased (NK: Cherkasy98 [16:20-18:40]). In contrast, villages have had no funeral directing services, so the management of death usually has been informal and community-based. In both city and country during the Soviet era, funerals for Communist Party members were state occasions. The ritual was different for them, stripped of all religious symbolism: “the graveside funeral service was performed by the head of the collective farm, and the reading of the psalter was replaced by speeches” (Ingram 1998: 33). Today, priests officiate at the funerals of both former Party members and those who were not Communists: “Everyone with no exception... no matter

28 “Якщо вночі вмер, то вже до обіду всі знають.”

who they were – Communists or something else – a priest is called for all]” (NK: Berlozy2005G [16:40-17:45]).²⁹ Generally, a secular funeral included speeches by relatives, friends, and coworkers, with a brass orchestra playing on the way to the cemetery and by the grave (Lane 1981: 84; Rouhier-Willoughby 2006: 188).

In contemporary Ukrainian folk beliefs, death is still anthropomorphised. It is often described as female – as an old woman or often a pretty young girl (Zvarych 1993: 44-45; Fitsak 2008: 92). Death can also be “perceived in the abstract” by the relatives as an intuitive feeling (Kononenko 2006: 54) or physically as freezing cold (NK: Iavorivka2000i [37:58 – 41:14]).

People still believe death sends a warning – if not to the person about to die, then to relatives or close friends. Among the omens are unusual behavior by domestic animals like the howling of a dog (Havryliuk 2003: 8; NK: Korolivka9810 [39:28 – 40:55]; NK: Svitilne984 [08:05 – 08:40]; Fitsak 2008: 90), a strange tapping in the house or noise in the attic (Havryliuk 2003: 8), a sudden loud knock on a window for no reason (Antonina O-k, June 19, 2005; file “Antonina_Ok_05”), or a mirror breaking into small pieces (Liubov K-k, July 18, 2005; file “Liubov_Kk_05”). Certain birds are still believed to foretell death, such as an owl, hoopoe, turtle dove, blue tit, sparrow, and cuckoo if they produce worrisome sounds or hit the windows of a certain house (Havryliuk 2003: 8; Fitsak 2008: 90).

29 “Всі без винятку... хто вони були – комуністами чи хто, але батюшку до всіх привозять.”

Ukrainians believe in dreams as death omens. One is warned if he/she dreams about a fence placed across a street; a new house (NK: Kiablunivka981 [35:19 – 38:40]); a cross drawn with white chalk on black fabric or flowers tossed into a deep trench (NK: Velykyikhutir2000e [00:15 – 06:35]); the dead who either call the dreaming person or ask to join him/her; a bloody lost tooth; “a ploughed field or vegetable garden, the dreamer herself digging or turning garden beds, strewn manure, or dry grass” (Havryliuk 2003: 8); or a wedding party passing the dreamer's house (ibid.: 9).

The appearance or behavior of a person about to die is also often said to be self-evident. A dying person's gaze changes, his/her nose gets sharper (NK: Dobron10VI00A10 [00:00 – 05:50], Ploske2000g [01:32 – 02:10], Ploske2000p [31:59 – 32:30]), or face becomes yellow or “wax-like” (Antonina O-k, June 19, 2005; file “Antonina_Ok_05”). The dying asks to be laid on the floor as if trying to be closer to the soil (NK: Moshny98c [45:25 – 47:48], Moshny98d [00:00 – 06:05]).

Preparation for one's own funeral is still very important. After a certain age, usually fifty-five, the majority of village women would prepare funeral, or death, bundles that include the clothing in which a person wants to be buried, fabric to cover the coffin, kerchiefs for those who help during the funeral, candles necessarily bought at a church, two crosses (one for the neck and the other for the

hands), and the 19th century “prayer of permission”³⁰ known today by the folk name “*prokhidna/provodnychok*” (see Kononenko 2006: 51-54). These days, clothes can be purchased and new, but they also can be old, clean, and neat (Ingram 1998: 23; Havryliuk 2003: 9). In some regions, preparing/purchasing a coffin for oneself is considered practical rather than a bad omen (NK: Denhy98b [02:23 – 03:56]; Varvara M-k, June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”).

The manner of dying is often said to be an indicator of one's moral condition. People still believe that only witches and terrible sinners die after prolonged suffering (NK: Lytviak15VI00C [25:40 – 26:44]; Iabluniv98c [33:07 – 34:05]; Ploske2000d [14:37 – 16:25]; Dobron10VI00A10 [05:50 – 06:50], Svitilne984 [09:03 – 09:50]). At the end of the 20th century, villagers still spoke of making a hole in the ceiling to hasten such deaths, yet quickly added that they had heard about such a “remedy” from their parents or used the phrase “people say,” never themselves having seen or done that. Death occurs in a hospital more often now, yet Ukrainians still consider it a “bad” way to die since it is away from home. They therefore try to get their dying relatives home if the end is certain and hospitalization would make no difference. In 2006, several months before her death, an acquaintance of mine, Nadiia S-a, returned home from a hospital after learning that her cancer was incurable. She explained her decision with a proverb,

30 On a thin strip of the prayer of permission that goes to the forehead of a deceased, three depictions – of Mother of God, Jesus Christ, and John the Baptist – are encircled by angels on both sides. There are also words: “Святий Боже, святий кріпкий, святий безсмертний, помилуй нас.” On the second part of it, in Church Slavonic, there is the text of the Prayer of Permission itself (see Figure 3-11 in Appendix A).

“Вдома і солома їдома [At home, you can sustain even on straw]” (Telephone conversation, April 7, 2006).

Standard Soviet practice required a family to call a doctor to register a death and issue a death certificate (Rouhier-Willoughby 2008: 186). After the death occurred, certain people would be invited to the house to attend to the corpse. Ukrainians believe that the body should not be washed and dressed by relatives, so the task is usually given to several elderly neighbor women with experience preparing the dead (Havryliuk 2003: 10; NK: Iabluniv98f [27.59 – 29.19]). They wash and dress a body and put *puty*, or tying ropes, on the limbs (Ingram 1998: 25; NK: files from a subcategory “Cords tying down the deceased”). They also keep vigil over the deceased all night (NK: Iavorivka2005 [17:03 – 17:40], Mliiv984 [00.00 – 01.40]). The practice of games in the vicinity of the dead person persisted into the 20th century, mostly in the Carpathian regions of Ukraine (Bogatyrev 1999[1929]: 121).

Throughout the Soviet period, when priests were not always available, singing psalms while the deceased was still in the house remained the obligation of elderly women in Ukrainian villages. The same was true for quite a while in certain regions after 1991 (Ingram 1998: 37, 57; Kononenko 2006: 56). At my godfather's funeral in 2005,³¹ I was surprised that my mother's five former co-workers were the pious psalm singers. These women, who had been socially

³¹ Ivanov, Fedir Prokopiiovych was buried on June 13, 2005 in a cemetery of his native village, Novoselivka-1 in the Donets'k region of Eastern Ukraine.

active and devoted collective farm workers while young, who had never attended church because there was none in the village until 2007, and who nostalgically recalled Soviet times as more stable, appeared to become devoted successors of the very old ladies who had sung the psalms before them. They had their own handwritten psalm books and looked through their notes while deciding which psalm to sing next (one of the reasons for choosing being a song's beauty). A disagreement broke out between two of them when one suggested, "There is a new psalm, do you know it?" The other replied, "Let the new [psalm-singers] come [after us] and sing the new ones, and we will [sing] these [old ones]." ³² This adherence to "traditional" psalms is noteworthy and supports Petr Bogatyrev's (1998[1929]) observation from the 1920s-30s that people "seek to avoid any innovation in funeral rites" (p. 115).

While a deceased is still in the house, family members and close relatives lament (Kononenko 2006: 58). Where once laments were seen as an obligatory, conventional display of mourning at a good funeral, today they are used less and less in their traditional verse form, especially by the younger generations. This, of course, varies regionally and depends on whether a funeral takes place in a village or city. While traditional laments can be still heard during village funerals in Western and Central Ukraine (NK: files from the subcategory "Laments") as they were recorded in the 19th century, shorter, prose versions are also present in

32 "Там є така нова пісня, знаєте?" - "Хай нові придуть і нові співають, а ми вже ці будемо."

Eastern part of the country, but still containing traditional elements. For example, during pauses in the psalm singing at my godfather's funeral, relatives would quietly address him as if he were alive using traditional themes from the laments: "Get up, look how many [of your] friends came. Look at the sun, for it will be dark over there – the sun will not warm up over there [where you will be]." After a pause, they continued: "No, [he] will not get up any more...."³³ At urban funerals today, loud crying usually substitutes for laments.

People rarely keep a corpse in a house for three nights any more, especially in summer, but they do insist on at least one night (NK: Topylne3 [40.10 – 40.31]). The deceased is placed in a coffin on the day of the funeral and sometimes before. In Soviet days, coffins of Party members were covered with red fabric, while coffins of non-members were usually covered with black fabric if not specified otherwise.³⁴ Today, the black cover is most common. White fabric has replaced straw as the interior lining, although in a hint of tradition, hay or dried grass is reserved for stuffing the pillow under the corpse's head (Ingram 1998: 28; Fitsak 2008: 90; NK: Dobron10VI00A10 [11:40-12:33]). Another interesting difference is the use of flowers, both fresh and artificial. Before the 20th century, they were used mainly for the funerals of small children and young

33 "Встань, подивися, скільки друзів прийшло. Подивися на сонечко, тобі ж там буде темно – там сонце не прогіє." And then continued: "Ні, вже не встане..."

34 A friend of our family, Ivan Stepanovych Suk, who was arrested for the anti-Soviet activity in 1970 and rehabilitated only posthumously, asked his wife to bury him in a coffin covered in white fabric. He wanted the color to symbolize his innocence. His funeral took place in a cemetery in Donetsk city in Eastern Ukraine in 1986.

girls. Today, it is standard not only to place artificial flowers around the head of the deceased (Ingram 1998: 28), but also to throw real ones ahead of the funeral procession on its way to the cemetery (NK: Iabluniv98f [30:56-31:12]). During my godfather's funeral, I as a goddaughter was asked to throw the flowers, or to be a *tsvitochnytsia* [literally, flower girl], as people called me.

People still put money in coffins for the deceased to buy a place in a cemetery or for the soul to “buy off” its sins during *mytarstva*, or spiritual trials (Ingram 1998: 30-31; NK: files in the subcategory “Money for the deceased”). Placing other items in a coffin is also still common. Those can be things the deceased used often during life and which are believed to serve him in another life. At my godfather's 2005 funeral, I witnessed relatives placing a handkerchief and comb into his jacket pocket. My concerned godmother asked his wife if she had put his glasses into the coffin, too, but she replied that was not necessary, since he had stopped using them long ago. People put braided bread and money in the coffin of a parent who had survived his/her own child as “treats for the children” (Havryliuk 2003: 15). People also deposited some “favorites” of the deceased, such as a bottle of alcohol for a drinker or a box of cigarettes for a smoker (Ingram 1998: 31).

There is another change in the traditional ritual: if a village has a priest, he comes to the house of the dead before the body is taken to the cemetery, conducts a liturgy, accompanies the procession to the cemetery, and seals the grave. Yet

clergymen are still not available in all villages, so a priest sometimes makes the rounds of several funerals in different locations. In this case, he comes to the house either on the day of the burial or the previous day and performs the sealing ritual there (NK: Iabluniv98f [27: 59-29:19], Moshny98d [34:10-37:50]).

After the liturgy, the coffin is removed from the house. It is still common to lower the coffin to the doorstep and knock it against the door jam three times as a way of saying goodbye on behalf of the deceased so that he/she will not miss his/her home and return (Ingram 1998: 50; Havryliuk 2003: 16; Zdoroveha 1983: 247; Kononenko 2006: 60; Fitsak 2008: 91).

As the coffin is transported to the cemetery, the funeral procession halts at the crossroads while a priest says prayers or women sing psalms (Ingram 1998: 55; Kononenko 2006: 57; NK: Kiablunivka982 [26:25-26:56]; Fitsak 2008: 91). The usual transport methods now are truck, bus, or the shoulders of pallbearers if the cemetery is nearby (NK: Iabluniv98f [31:35-32:50]; Fitsak 2008: 91).

Traditional funeral practices survived long into the 20th century in some remote Ukrainian regions. For example, Zdoroveha (1983) noted, “Until the 1970s ... in mountainous villages, people would transport their dead in the summer on sleighs” (p. 248). This apparently was a survival of an ancient Slavic custom (Iashchurzhinskii 1890; Biliashhevskii 1893; no author 1902: 23-25; Niderle 1924: 99-100).

Before a coffin is lowered to the grave, the family and all those present say good-bye to the deceased. The traditional way of bidding farewell included a priest's prayers and the kisses of relatives, but in the Soviet era, "friends and relatives each [said] a few words about the merits of the deceased, putting particular emphasis on services rendered to society" (Lane 1981: 84). If the deceased was employed, coworkers would come and "a representative of a working collective often deliver[ed] the main speech" (ibid.: 86). At my godfather's funeral, a priest could not go to the cemetery, so he conducts a liturgy in the house while a "secular mass" (*громадська панахида*) was held at the graveside during which three former work colleagues spoke good words about my godfather's qualities and his professional abilities. Just like 19th century lamenters, the speakers presented an exceptionally positive portrait, following the folk custom that required respect toward the dead, "De mortuis aut bene, aut nihil."

After the grave is sealed and completely covered, a temporary wooden cross is put on the mound to be replaced with a permanent structure later, within approximately a year (Ingram 1998: 60). In my experience, an embroidered towel is left attached to the cross. The last thing that happens at the grave mound is leaving flowers and artificial flower wreaths, often with black ribbons with written messages (ibid.: 61).

Immediately after the burial, a commemorative dinner is served to all funeral participants in the house of the deceased or the local banquet hall (Ingram

1998: 60). In villages, anyone is welcome, but some people abuse this tradition by attending commemorative dinners for people they do not know. *Kutia* or *kolyvo* is still a central element of any Ukrainian memorial dinner (ibid.: 80), yet the feast these days is rich. After my godfather's funeral, men and women sat at separate tables feasting on *borshch* (a traditional Ukrainian beet soup), fried fish, potato, sausages, meat, cheese, green cabbage salad, patties stuffed with potato and liver, cookies, and candies.

Modern Ukrainians articulate many beliefs about death and funerals: it is a taboo to leave an open grave over night; otherwise unexpected deaths will occur soon (NK: Velykyikhutir2000c [34:58-36:38]). One must not look at the funeral procession through a window for fear that the viewer get sick and even die (Kononenko 2006: 57; NK: Velykyikhutir2000d [11:11-11:55]). One should not cross a road in front of a funeral procession, lest there appear growths on the onlooker's legs (NK: Selychivka982 [28:52-29:30]). A small child is allowed to attend a funeral only if s/he attended a wedding beforehand (NK: Iavorivka8VI00A [18:15-18:40]). An older person who died on Saturday or Friday night is believed to have lived through all his assigned time (*вужив свій вік*) (NK: Moshny98d [19:40-20:48]). People believe substances like soil and water that were in contact with a dead body become magical and are used by wizards (Britsyna and Holovaha 2004: 169; Kononenko 2006: 73). The ropes, or *puty*, that fasten the limbs of the deceased are still mentioned as an extremely mighty – and

thus sought for – means of harmful magic (Ingram 1998: 25; Kononenko 2006: 62-63). Modern Ukrainians believe like their forebears that the deceased have magical power and that physical contact with a dead body has a healing effect on “dead bones,” or hygromas. This belief is shared at various social levels, including even the educated. When a hygroma appeared on my wrist in 1989, my grandmother asked me to recall if I had accidentally crossed the path of a funeral procession, for she was sure the two events were related. A surgeon at the hospital suggested that I first try the “traditional method” before considering an operation. The “traditional method” included rubbing my hygroma against a dead body at a funeral. Soon after, an old neighbor died and my parents asked the survivors' permission for me to do so. The relatives expressed their total understanding and agreed, but I refused at the last moment.

Funerals of small or unbaptized children have acquired the same form as funerals of adults. After the WWII, when more value was placed on an individual life and the birth rate in the average Ukrainian family dropped to one or two children, a youngster's death became a tragedy for parents. Children's funerals are considered the worst, violating the natural sequence in which children should bury their parents. They are difficult not only for people to attend, but also for a ritual worker (if in a city) to conduct, for she can provide little or no consolation to the parents (NK: Cherkasy98 [30:55-32:52]). Therefore, the parents' unrestrained grief at such a funeral is perceived as natural and expected, especially if the

deceased was their only child. In villages, a funeral of a student involves the whole school community (NK: Iabluniv98f [15:56-16:50]). In some regions, just as in the 19th century, parents whose firstborn dies do not attend the funeral to bury it for fear that their subsequent children will also die (NK: Domantovo98b [33:58-37:15]), although this custom seems rare these days and exists mostly as a belief. All children's burials occur now at the cemetery and nobody believes that souls of still-born, unbaptized, or murdered babies are condemned. On the contrary, they are thought to be sinless and become angels (NK: Ploske2000i [14:00-14:45], Ploske2000c [04:23-06:03]). At the same time, some villagers have stated that a priest would not attend funerals of unbaptized babies (NK: Ploske2000y [14:23-15:12], Mliiv983 [34:15-35:18], Iabluniv98a [14:55-16:43]).

Funerals of young and unmarried people are usually done in the traditional way, i.e. as a wedding for the dead (Stel'makh 1958: 130; NK: files from the subcategory “Death wedding”). Since Soviet-era wedding fashion introduced Western-style white gowns and veils in the 1960s, this attire was used first by females in big cities and then spread to the periphery (Zhirkova 1980: 106; Rouhier-Wolloughby 2008: 120-121). Young villagers since have dressed for the death wedding in Western attire instead of traditional homemade embroidered clothes and a wreath, and this costume is often a central element of the ritual. Other elements of a wedding can be eliminated or preserved depending on community traditions. For example, in some areas, a *korovai*, or ritual wedding

bread is baked (NK: Mliiv982 [43:05-44:15], Selychivka982 [45:03-46:38]), a *vył'tse*, or small decorated tree symbolizing female chastity is made (NK: Dorohynka2007A [04:55-05:53]), and mother replaces her dead daughter's veil with a kerchief at the cemetery before the coffin is lowered in a grave to symbolize the girl's new, married status (NK: Velykyikhutir2000d [30:20-32:18]). This death wedding ritual is currently observed for every young person regardless of whether s/he died of an accident (NK: Ploske2000i [07:06-08:00], VelykyKhutir2005A [04:10-07:25]; Bohodukhivka98 [28:40-29:42]), was murdered (NK: Hrebelky982 [25:02-28:05]), or committed suicide (NK: Lytviak14VI00A [03:57-05:15], Mokhnach98b [21:50-24:15]; Velykyikhutir2000d [30:20-32:18]). In 1989, I participated in such a funeral for my schoolmate Olia who died mysteriously and violently at age fourteen. She had no parents and her aged grandparents who had custody of her could barely afford the funeral. Thus, the administrators of my school – all Communist Party members in their late 30s-early 40s – and the administrators of the collective farm in my village took the responsibility for the funeral and paid for everything, including the wedding gown and veil in which Olia was buried. The wedding attire was not requested by her grandparents, but it was a traditional, obligatory, element of the ritual which nobody questioned. There were no traditional "groom" and bridesmaids, but all the students from the upper grades participated in the funeral procession and carried the coffin to the cemetery on their shoulders. Dr.

Kononenko's field recordings contain two episodes when an innovation during weddings of the dead had, according to villagers, detrimental consequences for the living. In each instance, a photograph of a living boyfriend was put into the coffin of a deceased girl. Although this was a variation of the traditional way of seeing off a beloved one, it nevertheless represented the symbolic burial of the living persons in the pictures. In one case, the “groom” fell very ill after the funeral of his “bride” and his family had to find a way to remove his picture from her coffin (NK: Dobron11VI00B10 [14:20-17:35]). The second case was much more atrocious: villagers viewed the act as a sinister omen, and expressed their concerns to the young man's family by saying, “What are you doing? This is not going to make any good. If only something bad would not happen!”³⁵ Three years later when the young man had a wife and baby, he and his wife were killed in a road collision. The way the wife's body was mutilated made the villagers talk about the “envy” of the dead fiancée. People agreed that the man had been doomed and that “*вона його забрала* [she took him away]” (NK: VelKhut28VI01A [32:04-34:24]; Velykyikhutir2000d [33:55-39:20]; VelykyKhutir2005A [04:10-07:25]). As Ellen Bodane (2004) rightly underlined, “...intersigne narratives are more often associated with abnormal deaths, unexpected deaths or 'triste' deaths... than with 'normal,' peaceful deaths resulting from old age” (p. 68). “Death wedding” funerals tend to be crowded and emotionally difficult. Motria

35 “Що ви робите? Це не на добро. Хоч би якого лихе не сталося!”

Perepechai contrasted such a funeral with a regular funeral of an old person by saying, “Everyone feels pity when a young (person) dies. And when an old (person dies) – then they say “Thank God for taking (the soul of that person)” (NK: Ploske2005m [18:02-19:30]).³⁶ The “death wedding” ritual is reported performed not only for woman who die young, but also for those far beyond normal marriage age – so-called spinsters known to have remained chaste (NK: Mliiv982 [43:05-44.15]; Ploske2000t [24:51-25.59]). Such cases are rare, however, because the nature of village life forces people to marry, while in cities people are not well informed about others' intimate lives.

The difference between “how it used to be” and “how it is now” is most pronounced in the case of funerals of suicides. Whereas traditional funerals of suicides or other “shameful” dead were silent and quick for religious reasons, suicide in the Soviet era – especially in cities – was not condemned by the atheist state. In fact, it was rehabilitated through speeches of state ritual workers who did not (and obviously could not) relate to ecclesiastical paradigms. One such ritual worker told how she managed “shameful” funerals in her speech:

No, comrades, every person – no matter how bad he was – deserves a couple of good words. They say that [he was] an alcoholic...or a drug addict, [that he] hanged himself, [or he was] shot dead or something else.... Lots of people go to a funeral of a young man.... And I try to say: “I do not know who is to blame – either our youth or our government.... [It is hard] for the youth – education costs money, and there are no jobs. That's why

36 “Усім людям жалько, як молоде умре, а я старе – так кажуть “Спасибі Богу, що Бог прийняв.”

they go into this [drugs, alcohol, etc.].” I try to say something [supportive] to the parents [as well] so that they would not feel bad that their son was a drug addict.... (NK: Cherkasy98 [24:20-25:46]).³⁷

Today, a cemetery is the last resting place for all kinds of dead, including suicides, not only in cities, but also in villages (Ingram 1998: 126; NK: Iavorivka8VI00B [04:48-05:40], Svidyvok98 [15:54-17:02]). While contemporary clergymen cannot forbid this new, “democratic” practice, they forbid the singing of psalms and prayer reading during such funerals, and refuse to conduct the rite and seal a suicides' grave (NK: Berlozy2005G [16:40-17:45]; Iavorivka8VI00B [04:48-05:40], Korolivka9812 [05:44-06:15], Svidyvok98 [15:54-17:02]). Since sealing is viewed as a central element of a funeral, its absence is perceived as having detrimental consequences for the deceased's well-being in the other world (Kononenko 2006: 59). To persuade a local priest to seal a grave, people would go to church authorities in Kyiv and file a petition with proof that a death was not a suicide, but an accident or act committed in a confused state of mind. In a limited number of cases, some petitioners do receive the Patriarch's permission to conduct the full set of church services over the graves of their previously suspected relatives (NK: Kopachiv986 [14:54-16:03], Kropivne98 [00:52-02:24], Velykyikhutir2000d [32:18-33:55]).

37 “Нет, товарищи, ведь о человеке, какой бы плохой не был, пару слов можна сказать. Вот, говорят, алкоголик... или наркоман, повесился или что... людей же много идет – молодого хоронят... И стараюсь говорить: “Не знаю, кого винить: или нашу молодежь, или наше правительство... Молодым учеба платная, работы нет – вот и занимаются этим.” И стараюсь и родителям что-то (сказать), чтобы им в душе было легче, что вот их сын – наркоман.”

Priests look more favorably on those who died from drowning because death in water is more likely to be a result of an accident and is hard to prove otherwise, even if it really was a suicide (NK: Mliiv982 [04:17-04:45], Selychivka983 [11:48-12:30]). In villages, where everyone knows everybody else, people try to avoid the stigma of suicide by denying it. Hanna F-k from a village in the Western part of the country told me a story about her 24-year-old nephew who she said had drowned in the local pond (interview on June 2, 2005; file “Hanna_Fk_05”). She said that since it was a murder, her nephew was buried by a priest and his grave sealed. The same day, I heard a different version of the event from another villager, Ievdokiia D-n, who stated that it was indeed a suicide and provided several convincing arguments to support her claim. She said it was important for the young man's family to deny suicide and retain the status of good Christians in the eyes of the community (June 2, 2005; file “Ievdokiia_Dn_05”). This account and the practice of petitioning to church authorities show that the “bad” way of dying is still a serious matter for Ukrainians and that survivors resist the interpretation of a relative's death as self-inflicted. The traditional, negative attitude towards suicides is still popular. People say places of suicide burials are special, charged with a demonic force dangerous for the living and to be avoided: “[They] built a house on that place, and there...old people said: “Do not build [your house] there... because a long time ago the hangmen and other [“bad” dead]

were buried there... [D]o not build there” (Britsyna and Holovakha 2004: 168).³⁸

Ukrainians still believe that “people who died unnaturally cannot find rest and will keep returning” (Golovakha-Hicks 2006: 234).

For this reason, Ukrainians continued to mark places of unnatural death. The Ethnographic Commission of the Ukrainian Academy of Science interviewed peasants and hunted for written records for its 1925-1926 research into the old folk ritual of making mounds or piles of stone and tossing various objects at them to mark the graves of unquiet dead (Bilyi 1926: 84). Among the cases the Commission found was the so called *Лашчичині нагорби* [Lashchykha's Hillocks]. According to legend, Lashchykha, an old village woman, was murdered by soldiers for using her magic power against them. The site of her death was the place of her burial and local people travelling by that site in the 1920s still tossed at least tree branches on her grave. Once a boy on a horse cart tossed an onion head on the grave, for he had nothing else to toss. He said, “Here, take this onion, Lashchykha, and cook yourself *borshch*” (Bilyi 1926: 86). The Commission also recorded testimony that people – even though they could not explain why – tossed branches, hay, and straw on the grave by a road near the Kopyliv village of the Kyiv region of a man who hanged himself (ibid.: 87). Overall, the Commission listed 24 cases of graves of unquiet dead, including the grave of a Comsomol member who had shot himself. People's attitude about this back then was still

38 “Поставили хату тудя ж, а там... старі люде доказували: “Не нада... тут строїтись, бо тут колись вішалників та отих ховали, не надо строїтсья.”

traditional – i.e. they associated unnatural death and its spot with evil (ibid.: 86-90). In all cases, Bilyi concluded, the old tradition of marking a spot of unnatural death persisted, people still tossed various things on such graves, and when the pile became big enough, it was set on fire. The nature of this ritual, according to Bilyi and other ethnographers, was magical: the living protected themselves from the evil forces that concentrated on such graves or from the unquiet dead who could harm them. The Commission found that this was once obligatory regardless of the “quality” of those who died, since “[t]he type of death – sudden, untimely death, even if it happened as a result of a battle for the faith – unites a bandit, *bohatyr* (hero), Chumak, and anyone who hanged oneself or drowned” (Bilyi 1926: 91).³⁹ Unable to explain why they did it, Ukrainian villagers in the 1920s nevertheless continued to perform the traditional ritual. Events of the 1930s and WWII, saturated with the mass deaths and burials, probably temporarily ended this tradition of commemorating individual tragic death, yet it continued in a changed form later (more on this in Chapter 4).

In contemporary Ukraine, cemeteries remain vivid proof of the cult of the dead and communication with them. Cemeteries and most of their features “have symbolic significance; they illuminate elements of Ukrainian beliefs about the dead” (Ingram 1998: 174). As Lane (1981) stated, the appearance of Soviet cemeteries was affected by the new, Socialist funeral rite: “[A]ttempts have been

39 “Розбійника, багатиря, чумака, вішальника і потопельника споріднює смерть – нагла, несподівана, хоча б і в бою за віру.”

made to minimize their association with church and religion” (p. 85). Thus, marble stones replaced simple wooden crosses, and their epitaphs have an “optimistic tenor and often contain a literal or symbolic reference to the earthly achievements of the deceased” (ibid.: 85). Like every other aspect of a changing tradition, the use of new materials for permanent grave markers spread from cities to the periphery. Villagers now often view granite or marble tombstones as a required way of expressing familial feelings. They try to have a shiny granite headstone with the picture of a deceased engraved by modern technologies instead of a laminated photograph attached to a slab. In 2008, my aunt replaced markers placed on the graves of her elder brother and parents in 1975, 1977, and 2006 with shiny black granite slabs not because the older ones deteriorated, but because, as she explained, the graves looked cheap next to recent headstones, as if the family did not care what the graves looked like. Ukrainians beautify the resting places of their loved ones in many ways. Thus, flowers and various types of trees like cherry, plum, aspen, and lilac are among the most widely planted on or near graves (Ingram 1998: 180).

In times of peace, Ukrainians moved their cemeteries when people moved. Thus, a cemetery from the tiny villages Mezbove, Skuchne, and Vesele was relocated to my neighboring village in 1990 and the residents gradually resettled over the next four years to make way for the planned Dnipro-Donbas Water Canal. The authorities employed contractors to exhume the bones, place them in

new wooden coffins, and move them with tombstones and fences, if any, to new graves in the new cemetery. The remains of “anonymous” elderly people who had died in the nursing home and been buried without distinction were amassed into one coffin at the new site (Valentyna Vasylivna Kirbaba, phone interview on March 14, 2010).

Ukrainian cemeteries convey messages of abnormal death through tombstone designs and decorations. Graves of the elderly are modestly designed with the dates of birth and death and a picture, while those of people who died young or unnaturally are marked in special ways. The graves are designed as if to draw attention to their extraordinarily sad beauty, becoming visual cries of the survivors' grief. Now that tombstones are usually granite, their color serves as an additional indicator of the condition of death. An abnormal death usually rates a black stone. Those of children and young people are more likely to contain their full-size photos. Such tombstones usually have carved messages in verse in which survivors address the deceased. For example, the gravestone of an eight-year old boy in Zalishchyky (Ternopil' region) contains the following couplet and a signature:

Любий наш Івасику
Недовго ти з нами жив
Журбу, жаль і сльози
Ти нам залишив.
Тато, мама, брат

Our beloved Ivasyk
Not long have you lived with us
Grief, sorrow, and tears
You have left for us.
[Your] dad, mom, brother.

Next to this grave is another of an 18-year old relative of the boy bearing the following epitaph:

Спи спокійно, дорогий синочку	Sleep well, dear son
Взятий волею судьби	Taken [from us] by the will of fate
Хай наш сум і гіркі сльози	May not our sorrow and bitter tears
Не тривожать твої сни.	Disturb your dreams. ⁴⁰

This verse reflects two traditional beliefs about the dead. First, death is viewed as an eternal dream, as if the deceased sleeps instead of lying dead. As Philippe Ariès (2004) noted, “This conception of life after death as a state of repose or peaceful sleep... is one of the most tenacious forms of the old attitudes toward death” (p. 42). The second belief is related to the materiality of the soul: survivors do not want to disturb the deceased's soul with excessive grief; they do not want it to feel uncomfortable in another world because of the family's longing. (The “Soul and Its Perils” section below has more on this.) On the reverse of this grave stone is a carved image of a tree broken in the middle and the sun half covered by the clouds (Figure 3-2). Mykola Mozdyr (1996) in his monograph analyzed designs of Ukrainian tombstones on graves of those who had untimely deaths. He mentioned ornamental plant motifs, such as a poplar tree cut close to the ground or broken in the middle. Such a motif is common, for a broken tree is a symbol of growing life that was undercut abruptly in the middle of its development (*ibid.*: 111).

⁴⁰ Numerous examples of epitaphs are listed in Mozdyr (1996) under the rubric “Gravestone poetry.”

Mozdyr stated that the composition of a cemetery memorial is very individual and can be viewed as a narrative. For example, the grave in Figure 3-1 tells of the deceased boy's interests. The back of the stone has a carved image of him playing an accordion. As the dead boy's father explained, the family chose that image because little Ivasyk wanted to learn to play the instrument (personal interview, June 1, 2005). Recent graves of small children are usually richly adorned with flowers and wreaths and have toys placed on them (Figure 3-3).

If there are notes on the tombstones about the untimely death, they are most likely to be about murders and tragic incidents, but never suicides. Epitaphs on such graves are most likely to be in verse. The tombstone in Figure 3-4 specifies in three ways that a teenager's death was violent: the poignant language of the verses; the line at the bottom, “*Загинув у муках [Has died in torture]*,” and the unusual set of dates – three instead of two. The first date indicates when the boy was born, while the second and third dates are preceded by the words “*Убитий [Was murdered]*” and “*Знайдено [Was found]*” respectively, separated by almost a year. People in villages and small towns usually know the family stories of those whose members died unnaturally and tell those even when there are no written notes about the nature of the death on the gravestone except for a picture of the deceased and the dates of her/his lifespan.

The folk tradition of naming places where abnormal deaths took place still exists. For example, there is a pond called *сімнадцятий ставок* [The

Seventeenth Pond] in the village Popiv Iar (in Donetsk region, Kostiantynivka district). In the late 1940s, seventeen horses tied to each other and a herd boy drowned in that pond (Pavlo K-o, August 13, 2009; file STE-060). Soviet authorities institutionalized the tradition of memorializing fallen individuals. Many streets, squares, avenues, and other places throughout Ukraine bore (and some still do) names of heroes (from the state's point of view) who died prematurely or violently, even though the toponyms are not necessarily related to the precise location of those deaths. This custom testifies that even “godless” Soviet ideology treated death within the folk paradigm of martyrdom, sin, and punishment:

The men and women who died in battle on behalf of Soviet power – a modern version of the “good” dead – were martyrs... and their memory became as sacred as those of all the rest. By contrast, the scapegoats and the traitors, the enemies of the people, were not allowed their yard of consecrated soil. There is a feeling, still, of hierarchy, and it matters if your body rots in marsh or under gilded railings and a marble star (Merridale 2001: 343).

The violent or premature deaths of “enemies of the people” were often top secret, and some of their burial sites were found only at the end of the 20th century, while others remain undiscovered. Denying official burials to such slain, Soviet authorities tried to erase memory of them and their right to be commemorated.

At the same time, there are mass murders or national tragedies that are named for the historical toponyms where those events happened. *Бабин Яр* [Babyn Yar or Babi Yar, literally, a ravine of an old woman] is a ravine on the outskirts of Kyiv where the Nazis executed thousands of Jews, Gypsies, Soviet POWs, and Ukrainian nationalists during 1941-1943. *Сатур-Могила* [Saur-Grave, literally, a grave of Saur], is a former Kozak fort once dedicated to Soviet soldiers killed in 1943 while fighting for it. This toponym is no longer associated with Kozak times but with fallen Soviet soldiers who liberated Eastern Ukraine from Nazi occupation. Other Ukrainian toponyms denoting the place of mass unnatural deaths are *Куренівська трагедія* [Kurenivka tragedy], *Чорнобильська трагедія* [Chornobyl' tragedy], and *Скнилівська трагедія* [Sknyliv tragedy], to name just a few.

Mourning and Commemoration

It is ironic that the cult of the dead, which is religious in its essence, got its highest secular expression after the WWII through numerous monuments to the Unknown Soviet Soldier. They were often established over the mass graves (*братські могили*) of unknown fallen soldiers (Lane 1981: 149), but they also existed as cenotaphs, or symbolic graves. The Ukrainian Socialist Republic had more than 27,000 war memorials (ibid.: 148) in nearly every city and village, symbolizing the sacrificial death of the citizens, since human losses in the war affected virtually every Ukrainian family. In my village, a monument to the

Unknown Soldier on a central square is a cenotaph near which granite slabs list the names of 158 villagers-soldiers who were killed in the war. These memorial slabs, with the monument, serve as a huge gravestone and are treated with reverence. At the same time, there is a secluded mass grave marked by a brick memorial form in the old village garden where, according to the testimony, an unknown Soviet partisan killed by the Germans during the Nazi occupation is buried (Figure 3-5). His body was added to the remains of twelve other unidentified soldiers buried there during the Civil War of 1918-1920. (This mass grave reflects the importance of the folk tradition by which bodies of the “strangers” who died in a “bad” way are never buried in a local cemetery.) From the time of Soviet rule, the dead at both the memorial-cenotaph and mass grave have been honored on Victory Day (May 9), and villagers keep bringing flowers and wreaths to them. As many Western ethnographers note, commemoration of the fallen heroes of the Great Patriotic War was central in the Soviet Union (Lane 1981: 86). Yet Soviet commemorative rituals were filled with the traditional symbolism of the cult of the dead and, in particular, the cult of martyred heroes. Victory Day was introduced by the state, but it became a popular remembrance day grounded in folk tradition: the war dead had sacrificed their lives for others and their unnatural deaths required endless commemoration on the side of their relatives and all the living.

The cult of the dead (in particular, the unknown dead) found additional expression during Soviet times through a wedding custom of visiting a grave of an Unknown Soldier after the marriage registration and depositing flowers on it. This new ritual can be viewed as a modification of the ancient custom of inviting dead family members to the wedding. Kosaryk (1958) told of a bride in traditional Ukrainian wedding attire who went around her village on a Saturday in 1956 inviting people to her nuptials. Since her father had been killed as a soldier in the WWII, she went first to the monument to the Unknown Soldier at the central square of the village and performed a traditional invitation ritual. Her fellow villagers were pleased with the way she had paid respect to her deceased father (pp. 151-152).

As Rouhier-Willoughby (2003) noted about the Russian context, “[T]he commemorative aspects of the rite [Victory Day] tie this celebration to the...folk tradition of days of remembrance and *pominki*” (p. 33). The same is true for Ukraine, which has special days for commemorating the dead. After a funeral, relatives arrange memorial feasts, or *pomyinky*, on the ninth day, fortieth day, half a year, and a year after burial (Ingram 1998: 86; NK: files from a category “Commemorative celebrations”). Since the deceased passes to the realm of the “fully” dead on the fortieth day after death and to the realm of ancestors after a year, 40 days, and the first anniversary are the main commemorative days in some regions. One year after burial, a permanent monument replaces a temporary

wooden cross at the grave, since it is often considered shameful to leave a temporary marker beyond that time (Ingram 1998: 89-90). My personal knowledge permits me to state that in villages, procrastination in erecting a tombstone after the passage of a year is met with disapproval. People accuse the survivors of disrespect to the deceased.

As Bogatyrev (1998) noted, mourning – through its various modes of expression – served for “announcing someone's death” (p. 115). For the closest relatives, mourning is now reflected mostly in appearance: they are to wear dark/black clothes and, for women, a black kerchief/band on the head. Such appearance underlines the marked status of the survivors and is recognized by people worldwide from similar cultures. (I was in Canada when my grandmother died in 2006 in Ukraine, and I wore dark clothes for 40 days. My friend Stefan, a student from Serbia, immediately sensed the situation and asked if there had been a death in my family. He correctly interpreted the external sign of mourning because Serbs and Ukrainians share much of the Slavic Orthodox culture.) People respect the mourner and do not try to involve her/him in cheerful activities during the mourning period, which may last up to 40 days, a year, or as long as a mourner decides.

After the commemorative feast one year following burial, relatives pay tribute to the deceased on special annual commemoration days (Ingram 1998: 100-101), such as Great Martyr Demetrius Saturday (NK: Hrebelky981 [02:22 –

08:06]) and Pentecost, the only time of the year when “bad” dead are officially commemorated in churches (Ingram 1998: 113; NK: Hrebelky981 [00:10 – 01:45]). Relatives visit graves not only on such days, but also on birthdays or death anniversaries (Ingram 1998: 89). The annual commemoration of the dead during the Soviet era often combined church liturgy at the cemetery with a secular feature. Kosaryk (1958) witnessed how “when some families served a ritual mass with the church choir, the majority of the people present called a club choir to sing at the graves a [secular] funerary song, 'We Will Not Forget Your Glory,' created by Lytvynenko [a local teacher]” (p. 148).

Commemorations are seen as benefitting the soul (Ingram 1998: 89), but souls of those who committed suicide are not supposed to benefit, for suicide is considered a sin impossible to commemorate. However, this stricture has eased within the family. As Varvara M-k from Western Ukraine said, “You will not pray off a suicide, if [a person] committed suicide. However, [relatives] commemorate [such a person] at home on the ninth day, fortieth day, and a year” (interview on June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”).⁴¹ Another female, Ol'ha Hirka from Central Ukraine confirmed that family members memorialize suicides with the same ceremonies required for the “good dead”: “Relatives commemorate, of course. They do feel pity!” (NK: Denhy982 [35:55 - 36:18]).⁴²

41 “Самогубство не відмолиш, якщо воно само на себе руки наклало. Але вдома поминають на 9-й, 40-й день і на рік.”

42 “Відмічають рідні, конешна. Їм же шкода!”

The *rusalka* cult as a version of the cult of the dead was still observed in Central Ukraine before 1986 (Hrymych 2000: 135-136), although contemporary Ukrainians do not believe in *rusalka* as the spirit of a female who drowned or of an unbaptized girl who died after birth. The revived Ivan Kupalo holiday once observed for commemorating *rusalky* is now more a merry folk festival with performances, food, and alcohol (cf Kononenko 2004).

On a *provody* or *hrobky* day (usually the Sunday after Easter), cemeteries become crowded islands surrounded by parked cars, while the graves turn into feast tables. The living dine at the cemetery, visit graves of their friends or relatives, and treat each other with what they brought (Ingram 1998: 107). Many cemeteries I visited have small individual or large communal tables for that purpose. It is important for families to get together on that day (many people travel from afar) and commemorate their dead. On May 8, 2005, I observed the *provody* day ritual at the Yalta village cemetery in Donetsk region. Although the village is inhabited mostly by descendants of Crimean Greeks, their commemoration of the dead is similar to that in ethnic Ukrainian villages. There are two main reasons for that: (1) Greeks and Eastern Orthodox Ukrainians share the same church culture regarding all rites of passage; (2) they, like other ethnic minorities, were forcefully assimilated during the Soviet period. Relatives try to come to the cemetery before that day to put a grave in order by pulling weeds, painting a fence, and making repairs. On *provody* day, they arrive by noon and

arrange the gravesite to look like a table (Figure 3-6), covered with a tablecloth spread, with big plates of homemade and/or purchased treats (candies, cookies, oranges, apples, walnuts, cakes, etc.) and bottles of drinks and alcohol. A family member fills another big plate with a little of everything and presents it at a relative's grave with the words, “*Поминайте наших* [Commemorate our (dead)].” The receiving relative answers, “*Царство їм небесне* [May they rest in Heavenly Kingdom],” puts the contents of the plate in a container, and replaces them with treats from their “table.” She/he also can offer a shot of alcohol in reply. The relatives have a short conversation, mostly exchanging the latest news, after which the giving relative returns. I saw some families giving away only treats, but others eating full meals of fried fish, meat, potatoes, and vegetables. Much of the food is left on the graves, to be retrieved later and consumed by certain categories of people: candies by children (mostly from poorer families) and the rest of the food and alcohol by local drunkards. Such consumption is viewed as natural and even desirable, for it is symbolically equated with giving alms to the poor for the sake of the deceased. In addition, survivors in some regions leave embroidered towels, or *rushnyky*, on the grave crosses on the commemorative day (Figure 3-7).

Communication with the dead is also seen in a tradition of “paying visits” to the deceased when there is no special commemorative day. During such visits, survivors usually bring water/drinks and sweets, and leave them at the graves. This is true not only for the graves of small children or those who died in a “bad”

way, but any deceased, including the Church hierarchs. Figure 3-8 is an example of food items left by the believers on a grave of the Patriarch. Whenever I am in Ukraine, I always go to the cemeteries with my relatives to “pay a visit” (*nposiðamu*) to my grandparents. We take even numbers of candies and cookies to put on each of their graves, and water to leave in glasses. There is also a verbal formula we and others always use when we arrive at the cemetery: “Hello, grandmother/grandfather, [we] came to visit you.” After spending time near the grave, we utter a farewell formula: “Good-bye, stay here, and we should leave.”

Soul and its Perils

When asked about an intangible phenomenon of the soul, modern people would say they have read some literature on this matter. The most knowledgeable in matters of the soul seem to be people – usually women – who frequent church, listen to the clergy preach, and read religious books (cf Kononenko 2006). One such book cited by Ukrainian villagers in 1998 was “*Загробне життя [Life Beyond the Grave]*” (NK: Mliiv983 [01:08 – 03:05]). Indeed, literature for sale on various spiritual matters abounds in churches and urban book markets. In 2009, I bought a book at a Kyivan book market, “*Душа после смерти [The Soul after Death]*” by Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) published in 2008.

The soul is seen as ethereal, as a breath that leaves the body with the last exhalation (NK: Ploske2000n [03.35 – 07.23]). At the same time, it is anthropomorphized, “pictured as a shadow body, an entity that retains the

appearance of the deceased and walks and sits in the afterlife as if it had a physical substance” (Kononenko 2006: 65). That people believe in the material quality of the soul is evident from their description of its activities. The soul walks, flies, returns, drinks water, comes through the *mytarstva* (spiritual trials), is present (in a house), etc. In fact, the soul's materiality is perceived to exist as parallel to the body. Although separated after death, they nevertheless are intimately related. For example, there is a widespread belief that crying too much over a deceased person would cause him/her to lie in water in the coffin (Kononenko 2006: 64).

People believe that the soul stays in a house for 40 days, during which it attends the spiritual trials, and they leave water in a glass on a window sill for it to drink (Ingram 1998: 27, 87; NK: files from the subcategory “Soul”; Havryliuk 2003: 19). Next to the water is usually a candle put in a glass filled with grain. It burns until the deceased is buried and symbolizes light for the soul (Ingram 1998: 27). After 40 days, the soul “flies around the property until one year has passed [since death], then takes its leave, cries, and goes to its place” (Havryliuk 2003: 19). People can both help and harm the soul of the deceased. Praying for it will ease its lot: “The soul itself can't pray for itself and it can't change anything. But if people pray for it on earth, then things can improve and it (the soul) can move from a worse condition to a better one” (Kononenko 2006:64). However, people may harm the soul and make it restless if they cry too much for the deceased

(Kononenko 2006: 64; Golovakha-Hicks 2006: 234). Extreme grieving may even bring the deceased back (Kononenko 2006: 64-65). Furthermore, people believe that “the dead can take your health, and even your life if you think too much about them” (Golovakha-Hicks 2006: 234). At the same time, the dead are believed to return by their own will as well. Whether the return is voluntary or forced (i.e., caused by improper behavior of survivors like excessive grief), Ukrainians believe that such uninvited visitations are dangerous, since “any apparent return of the dead is an action by demonic forces” (Golovakha-Hicks 2006: 233). When speaking about funerals, informants often tell personal narratives or legends about the returning dead (Britsyna and Holovaha 2004: 152-153; 248-251; NK: Dorohynka2007a [18:25 – 22:25]). Blessed poppy seeds are considered to be the best means against the unquiet dead, sprinkled either in the house or on the threshold of the house to prevent them from coming (NK: Iahotyn2000l [07:40 – 08:45]; Iabluniv98g [06:24 – 08:15]; Ploske2005G [23:28 – 25:32]). Generally, as Inna Golovakha-Hicks (2006) noted, stories about the dead and their return, and dreams about them remain popular, while contemporary narrators use plots which are traditional for those topics (p. 231).

In her chapter, Kononenko (2006) presents a captivating picture of the contemporary folk views of the *mytarstva*, or spiritual trials which the soul has to pass during the first 40 days after the body's death. Although people do not agree on the number of trials (ibid.: 63), what happens to a soul during them is a shared

belief. It gets stopped at each trial, and its sins and good deeds are compared: “There, on the right side, a big angel will show your good deeds, and on the left side that terrible being (a devil) will walk [and] show [your] bad deeds... Terrible horrors will appear for 40 times” (NK: Mliiv983 [01:08 – 03:05]).⁴³ If good deeds outweigh the sins, the soul ascends to heaven; if not, it descends to hell.

The other world in folk imagination “is both spiritual and tangible” (Kononenko 2006: 68). Souls travel around both heaven and hell, which is why it is paramount to remove the *puty*, or the tying ropes, from the deceased's limbs: “You have to remember to remove the *puty*. Otherwise he will be bound up; he won't be able to go” (ibid.: 62). Heaven is viewed as indescribably beautiful: “You have to endure all earthly misfortune just to get into the Heavenly Kingdom. It is so wonderful there that, even if this room were full of worms and even if a worm was eating you, you should still put up with this to get into the Heavenly Kingdom” (ibid.: 62, 73).⁴⁴ Heaven is imagined as a land of abundance, full of food for the deserving souls. As Ol'ha Hirka said, “Whoever is commemorated, he will have everything in front of his soul in the other world; and whoever is not commemorated [will have] only a bare table, where his soul will be” (NK:

43 “А там буде з правої сторони ангел великий показувати ваші добрі діла, а зліва буде ходити отой страшний, показувати злії діла... Буде сорок раз показуватися дуже страхіття великі.”

44 “На змелі треба пройти всі невзгоди, лише щоби потрапити в царство небесне. Там так гарно, що навіть якби ця кімната була повна черв'яків і навіть якщо б черв'як тебе їв, все ж таки треба терпіти, щоби потрапити в царство небесне.”

Denhy98b [28:35 – 29:11]).⁴⁵ The ultimate goal of the souls of all deceased is to await the Judgement Day. As many elderly villagers believe, it is to come soon and then all the dead will be resurrected (NK: Denhy98b [26:55 – 27:53; 28:48 – 31:00]). The resurrected are imagined to get up from their graves, so the living should keep the gates to the family plot open and put the cross at the foot of the grave to make resurrection smooth (Kononenko 2006: 65-66).

It is believed that the souls of righteous people are not scared at the moment of death because they see the angels who will escort them to heaven, while souls of the sinners see demons awaiting them, and, frightened, and do not want to exit the dying body (Kononenko 2006: 55). People believe that those who die on Easter or during Easter week are lucky because their souls ascend directly to heaven, avoiding the spiritual trials, no matter how many sins they committed in life (Ingram 1998: 104; NK: Iavorivka2000j [08:51 – 10:00]; Kononenko 2006: 64).

One of the distinctive features of contemporary Ukrainian beliefs about the soul is its capacity to communicate with the living and with other dead. Communication between the living and the dead usually happens in dreams. In some prophetic dreams, dead relatives are perceived as benevolent helpers. For example, a deceased uncle told his nephew in a dream where to look for missing documents (NK: Velykyikhutir2000e [00:15 – 06:35]). In 1978, my informant,

45 “Хто поминає – перед душею в того на тім світі буде все, а хто не поминає – то голий стіл, там, де душа його.”

Valentyna Z-y, then 20-years-old, had a dream about her father about a year after his death. At that time, her family's water supply was interrupted. The pipe broke underground, but nobody knew where to find the break to fix it. In the dream, the dead father instructed Valentyna where to look for it. She had to count a certain number of steps from their house wall and dig down. Nobody in the family doubted the dream; they followed the instructions and, indeed, found the pipe fracture (phone interview on December 19, 2009).

An example of more complicated communication on both levels consecutively (living-deceased, deceased-deceased) is a dream in which the deceased complains about missing something in the other world. In order to help the soul of the deceased, the living need to “mail” the missing object to the other world through another deceased; i.e. the missing object should be physically placed in a coffin of another dead person who will supposedly pass it to its intended recipient (Britsyna and Holovaha 2004: 161; NK: Hrechivka3 [28:45 – 28:10], Svitilne984 [21:04 – 21:40]). For example, a deceased daughter complained to her mother in a dream that the high-heeled shoes in which she was buried were uncomfortable, so her mother bought low-heeled shoes and placed them in the a coffin of a fellow villager who died the night she had the dream (Kononenko 2006: 52-54). Sometimes, however, the living respond to such dreams by giving to people around them whatever the deceased asked for. For example, when my aunt had a dream in 2006 in which her recently deceased

mother said she wanted *bublyky* (sweetened thick ring-shaped dough rolls), my aunt bought them in a store and distributed them among her coworkers, asking them to commemorate her mother's soul. The coworkers were supposed to say, “May her soul rest in Heavenly Kingdom” before eating the *bublyky*. Since this is a cultural norm, modern Ukrainians usually react to such dreams and commemoration requests with understanding.

Communication between the dead is usually ascribed to them by the survivors. At my godfather's funeral, people said he was “taken away” for companionship by his friend, who had died just 40 days before. Another example is the aforementioned case of the “death wedding” when a village ascribed a young man's tragic death to the “envy” of his dead fiancée and said “*вона його забрала* [she took him away].”

Ukrainians still believe that the quality of the deceased's afterlife is preconditioned by the careful performance of the funerary rituals and the behavior of the survivors. They believe in a special status for souls of people who died tragically – that they are restless and can be alleviated only with the prayers of the survivors: “[One] has to pray off God's forgiveness for that person [who died unnaturally], so that the soul would find rest. What are the 40 days [after the death] for? [One] has to pray [during that time] for the soul of the deceased” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015).⁴⁶ This belief is reinforced by

46 “Треба вимолити в Бога прощення для тієї людини, щоб душа знайшла спокій. Для чого сорок днів дається? Треба молитися за душу померлого.”

contemporary clergymen who encourage believers to pray for the souls of all their relatives, but stress that those whose death was unnatural require special prayers: “The most important things that add to the salvation of the soul are appropriate Christian funeral and prayers for a deceased, [and] remembering the [dead] person” (Rev. Roman, July 17, 2005; file “RevRoman_05”).⁴⁷ “How to help the soul? Solely by praying for it. Praying is paramount, also [you need] to do good deeds in memory of a deceased. [There are] a general prayer, [a prayer for] those sinless dead, those who died tragically, or the regular deceased. But anyone can express [such prayers] in his own words. At least we have a general prayer that should stir our spirit to pray for a deceased. It also should urge us to seek to materialize our sentiments towards that [deceased] person” (Rev. Roman, July 24, 2009; file STE-048).⁴⁸

Beliefs about Roads and Road Magic in Modern Ukraine

Road beliefs, like beliefs about death, share much with beliefs recorded in the 19th and early 20th centuries, even as they adapt to current reality (cf Petrov 1926). Modern Ukrainians still believe in the malevolent nature of crossroads, sometimes making erudite statements like, “Crossroads are anomalous

47 “... щоб людину поховали по-християнському, належно, і щоб за людину молилися, згадували. Це вирішальні речі, які можуть додати до спасіння душі.”

48 “Як допомогти душі людини? Винятково молитися. Однозначно молитися, однозначно здійснювати якісь добрі діла в пам'ять про померлого. Молитва загальна, молитва за невинноубитих, нещасливо загинувших чи просто усопших. Але кожний в праві собі своїми словами це виражати. Наразі маємо загальну молитву, яка повинна загально збуджувати в нас молитовний дух за упокійного і відповідно повинна якось побуджувати нас до більш детальної конкретизації нашого сантименту до тієї особи.”

phenomena” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 30, 2007; file DS220025). My parents and grandmothers always instructed me to never pick up anything at the crossroads, for things found there could be purposefully cursed by “bad people.” Ukrainians believe it is not acceptable to build houses at crossroads (Britsyna and Holovaha 2004: 165-169), and that only people related to devilish forces would do that: “They say that witches usually build their houses at such places. Take as an example H. or my own neighbor” (Ol'ha O-k, June 20, 2005; file “Olha_Ok_05”). When modern Ukrainians provide numerous beliefs about crossroads or roads and then add that they are just superstitions, it does not mean they do not believe them. As Oleksandra Britsyna (2003) emphasized:

As for the narrators' affirmations that hardly anyone believes nowadays in the necessity of being cautious, those, probably, can be classified as a certain “artistic method.” It allows proving “from the contrary” the danger of neglecting a traditional legend and in this way to build up a narrative based on a story of what happened after the traditional prescriptions have been disregarded (p. 3).

The road in contemporary Ukraine is still perceived as a dangerous liminal space from which humans have to protect themselves. Therefore roads are still marked with crosses and other religious objects for divine protection. For example, churches or communities have erected and blessed numerous huge concrete and wooden crosses – historically called *криж* (*криж* - sing.) or *фізру* – along roads and highways (Figure 3-9). Those are meant for protection

of travellers and often have the phrase “*Cnacu i coxpanu [Save and Protect]*” written or carved on them, the same phrase traditional for Orthodox neck crosses.

Safety on the road is one of the biggest problems facing those who use any mode of transportation, including walking. People place responsibility for road accidents on agents of evil. The danger and high degree of uncertainty on the road make drivers and passengers in Ukraine resort to supernatural protections, summoning guardian angels to assist them during the trips. Public bus drivers and taxi drivers place various kinds of protective symbols – icons, prayers, and various Christian and non-Christian amulets – in their “private” space, turning it into a sacred area. They feel free to demonstrate their belief in the protective power of such symbols openly. Christian protective symbols are often used with the non-Christian ones, and such eclecticism is of no concern for either the drivers or passengers because what matters most is safety. Not all drivers are willing to talk about the protective objects they have or allow a stranger to step inside their private space and photograph the objects above the windscreens. Those who do, however, are usually open and provide insights into the meaning of and their attitude toward their protection items.

Generally, drivers prefer Christian symbols. Most are small crosses and “Triptych” icons portraying the Mother of God, Christ the Savior, and St. Nicholas. The size, quality, and the number of icons vary from bus to bus, but in some cases the driver's private space appears as an icon corner traditional to every

Ukrainian house (Figure 3-10). This is common in buses that transport groups of religious tourists to well known holy places, monasteries, nunneries, churches, and so on. Yet crosses, crucifixes, and rosaries are also popular among most drivers who deal with “regular” passengers. Many get their icons from priests who bless their vehicles. While some drivers ask a priest to bless their buses only once, others repeat this ritual annually to enforce the power of those religious symbols to protect them, their buses, and their passengers. When asked about the carrying of passengers of other faiths, one driver stated, “There is one God. If this [religious object] protects me, it will protect them as well” (Kyiv, male bus driver, about 35 y.o., July 29, 2007; file DS220021).

Most of the icons are paper prints, sometimes laminated and widely available for purchase in churches and markets. Some icons and religious objects seem specifically designed for vehicles, for they have silicon adhesive on the back to attach them to vertical surfaces. Some drivers confessed to buying their icons in markets. This means that the symbols were not blessed in church, but the drivers still believed in their ability to protect them on the road. Many drivers preferred to have an icon of their patron saints along with the “Triptych” icons. They generally admitted that St. Nicolas was the designated guardian of all the drivers and all away from their homes.

The protective religious symbols were often gifts to drivers from friends, relatives (most often wives), godmothers, or even passengers – for example,

tourists driven to religious sites. Sometimes drivers inherit their buses from other drivers already outfitted with a set of religious symbols. According to my informants, the new drivers neither replaced nor removed them. They believed in the protective potency of such symbols regardless of the original owner and often added their own symbols to existing ones.

Icons are often turned to face passengers, demonstrating to them that the drivers believe in the ability of the religious symbols to protect against danger. The icons can also face the road, meant to defend the moving vehicle from possible harmful outside forces. Not all drivers, however, are religious. Those who are not did not speak directly about it, but their hesitancy implied what one driver openly expressed: “It is not about whether I believe or not..., but there *is* something in it, right? Something *is* over there....” (Kyiv, male driver, 30 years of experience, July 22, 2007; file DS220006).⁴⁹

Passengers usually approve of such religious symbolism. As a female informant said, “When I am in a bus where I see the icons, I feel I can ride safely. I feel the driver cares. If I do not see anything in a bus, then I think that the bus is from the state garage and nobody really cares either about the bus or the passengers” (Liubov D-o., 32 y.o., Kyiv, July 30, 2007; file DS220026). Sometimes, however, the invisibility of protective symbols in a bus does not mean they are not present. Some drivers do not like to display their preferences and hide

49 “Не те, що я не вірю. Але щось там є, правда? Щось є..”

such symbols. They keep an icon or a cross inside a document binder and certainly have crosses on them as hidden protective symbols. As one older driver exclaimed, "Where have you seen a driver without a cross or an icon? Where have you seen a driver who would not pray before starting his work in the morning?" (Kyiv, male bus driver, 17 years of experience; July 30, 2007; file DS220025). A taxi driver confirmed that all his colleagues had icons in their cars and he could not think of any taxi driver who would not use such defensive means (Hennadii Z-v, May 15, 2009; file STE-001).

A driver's private space is divided into the "official" and "unofficial," the "sacred" and "profane." The sacred space is represented by the religious/magical objects of protection. Not only are icons, crosses, or rosaries used, but there are also plenty of talismans supposed to bring good fortune to the driver. I witnessed personal amulets, horseshoes, various figures of adorable pigs, and pictures of bulls (2007 was the year of the Pig and 2009 of the Bull in the Chinese calendar; Ukrainians keep toy figures of the corresponding animals to ensure a lucky year). One driver whose bus contained icons and a small cross had his own "guardian angel" and showed me a small blue charm on a key chain that has been protecting him for 20 years. He would not let me take a picture for fear it would lose its magical power. A few drivers admitted they needed protection from the passengers. They carried black sunglasses while driving for fear of curses from the passengers. "And people happen to curse [drivers]," said one. "But I wear

[black] sun-glasses. They can't curse through sun-glasses. They hide my eyes, and they [cursers] need to see your eyes. And reflection [of my sun-glasses] turns back her [curse]" (Kyiv, male bus driver, about 35 y.o.; July 22, 2007; file DS220003).⁵⁰

Overall, drivers have not only physical protective objects, but also special incantations by which they ask for a successful day and a safe road, like “*Боже, поможи!* [May God help],” “*В добрий час!* [For the good time],” and “*В добру нуть!* [For the good road].”

Origins and Persistence of Folk Beliefs about Death, Soul, and Afterlife

Folk beliefs about death, soul, and afterlife, no matter how naïve or extravagant they may seem, are not just the fruit of the wild imagination of uneducated people that survived into the 21st century. Most have written origins with close parallels to canonical or apocryphal material. Those two sources, intermingled and influencing each other, and probably were perceived as equally holy by the people.

Church dogma and the early writings and Biblical comments of Christian theologians influenced the folk understanding of the essence of soul and its fate after the death of a body. These came to Kyivan Rus' from Byzantine and South

50 “А як люди, буває, клянуть! А я очкі вдіваю. Вони дуже очків бояться. Очкі вдіваєш – у мене глаза не видно. Надо, щоб вона прокляла – подивилася в глаза. А бльоск (моїх окулярів) її (прокльон) відбиває.”

Slavic areas after Christianization in the form of apocrypha and teachings of the saints (Batiushkov 1891: 148).

The soul was understood as a special living being inside every human body. While interpreting the writings of Macarius of Egypt (4th century AD), people imagined it as a small creature and tried to determine its location in the body and the ways it left the body upon death (Batiushkov 1891: 174). Death as a monster who kills with various weapons comes from the apocryphal “The Life of Josef the Carpenter” (Batiushkov 1891b: 326). A composition by Macarius of Alexandria (4th century AD) titled “St. Paul's Vision” describes two types of soul – righteous and sinful – as well as the soul’s negotiations with good and evil spirits upon death (Batiushkov 1891b: 326). Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria wrote about the moment of death and the soul:

Godly powers stand across the unclean spirits, and represent good thoughts, words, and deeds that belong to the soul. And the soul, between the fighting angels and demons, awaits, with fright and shivering, for either its justification or condemnation and death. If it lived piously and Godly, and deserves to be saved then the angels take it, and the soul calmly goes to God surrounded by the five sacred forces.... But if it turns out that the soul has lived in unchastity and debauchery then it will hear a powerful voice: “May be taken by the unclean, and may not see the God's glory.” God's angels leave the soul and demons take it. They start mercilessly to beat it and take it down to earth; [then] they split open the earth and push the soul, which is tied by unbreakable ropes, to a dark land, into the hell and hellish dungeon (quoted in Zvarych 1993: 43).

“The Life of Basil the New” portrayed four stages of dying and what happens after death: angels accompany the soul through the 21 spiritual trials, and on the fortieth day the soul is put where it belongs until Judgment Day (Batiushkov 1891b: 328). This writing was a rich source of folk belief about the arial trials (Ivanov 1909: 252).

Dolotskii (1845) analyzed the writings of one of the Church Fathers, Macarius of Alexandria, about the soul and the Church obligations to pray for the soul of the dead. On the third day, according to Macarius, the guardian Angel relieved the soul of the sorrow it felt after separating from the body. Macarius elaborated on what happened to the soul after a deceased was commemorated on the third day: Jesus orders the soul to ascend and bow before God. The soul is then allowed to view the beauty of paradise. This happens for six days, until the next commemoration by the church on the ninth day. After that, the soul comes to bow before God a second time and is sent to view hell and the tortures of the sinners. There, the soul is terrified and spends the following thirty days fearing it will end up there forever. Then the next bow before God occurs, and only after, the lot of the soul is finalized on the fortieth day (pp. 412-413).

Another piece of writing, “The Tale about the Dispute between the Soul and Body and [about] Ascension (“On Twenty Spiritual Trials”)]” was also very popular. According to it, very righteous souls ascend directly to heaven, avoiding the spiritual trials. Souls of people who die without penitence but who have few

sins some good deeds are interrogated by the *mytari* (those who are present at each spiritual trial) and end up observing heaven and hell, while sinful souls are caught and tortured by the devil (Batiushkov 1891: 150). Stories about the soul visiting both heaven and hell relied heavily on a legend about Macarius of Alexandria (Batiushkov 1891b: 326).

Many folk beliefs about the afterlife have been influenced by the writings of theologians like Ephrem the Syrian (4th century) and his “The Vision of St. Theodora” and John Damascene (8th century) (Batiushkov 1891b: 330). “Legend about Exodus of the Soul” by Philip the Hermit (11th century) described resurrection of the dead, the Second Coming of Christ, and the end of the world. He borrowed images from Ephrem the Syrian's writing, “On the Vanity of Life and Penitence” (Batiushkov 1891b: 338-339). Athanasius of Alexandria wrote about the usefulness of sacrificial offerings for purification from the sins of the dead. Thus, among various things, *kanun* with added honey was brought to church on his days (Dolotskii 1845: 415-416), and the Apostles bequeathed in their decrees the singing of psalms on the third, ninth, and fortieth days (for Moses was mourned for 40 days), and a year after death (Dolotskii 1845: 414).

Church representatives, whether village priests or Church fathers, generated religious writings popular in Western Europe – dialogues between Death and a Human, Angel, devils, and so on. The book “Synodicus” by Presbyter Afanasii Kibal’chich in 1734 contains a poem about Death. The cover page of the book

depicts Death as a human skeleton holding a scythe and shovel (Egorov 1903: 168-169). In the poem, Death appears as an anthropomorphic creature whose gaze is fatal for humans irregardless of their age or social standing:

Oh, Death, Death! You are terrible,
[I] see you have a scythe of a wide reach,
Without any iron or weapon,
[You] make people weak and sick.
Anyone at whom you stop your eyes
Will become dead soon....

You scythe [people of] any age and title like grass,
Most often you carry human race to a coffin.... (Egorov 1903: 168)⁵¹

Once very popular in Western Europe, dialogues between Death and a Knight entered Ukrainian ecclesiastic writings in the form of “The Dispute between Life and Death” and later turned into popular legends (Gudzii 1910). Generally, the apocrypha were elaborated on and spread into masses by both educated and uneducated agents like beggars or blind minstrels. As an observer in 1879 noted, a beggar's prayer for those who died in a “bad” way was similar to a prayer a priest would read on a commemorative Saturday (L.M. 1903: 7).

51 О, смерте, смерте! Ти еси страшная.
Виджу, же в тебе коса замашная.
Без железа и без всякого оружия
Твориш людей немощних и недолужних.
На кого очима своїма позриш,
То вскорє его и мєртва сотвориш.
...
Всякий возраст и чин аки траву косиш,
Найбарзе часто человеческий род ко гробу носиш.

The vivid pictures of the soul's fate after the death were widely presented in icons, especially the so called folk icons (Sumtsov 1905: 6-7; cf Lohvyn et al. 1976; Otkovych 1990; Himka 2006). The icon of the Last Judgment Day incorporated both folklore and apocryphal motifs by the second half of the 16th century. The scene of hell presents a “classical” range of sinners like gamblers, drunkards, the greedy, wizards, gluttons, adulterers, a tavern maid (Otkovych 1990: 12), a female who killed her newborn, and a man who steals bees (Sumtsov 1905: 6). From the 16th century on, some craftsmen appeared in visions of hell, “especially millers, but also tailors, weavers, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, and others” (Himka 2006: 238). They are usually depicted as tormented on fire or, like a cobbler, with “a spike up the anus” (Himka 2006: 238). Unjust judges and merciless landlords were often depicted “walking single file into hell escorted by a demon at the front and rear of the line, all followed by a bagpiper” (Himka 2006: 239). Among other icon motifs from the 17th-18th centuries are lords “riding into hell on a handcart pushed by a demon..., devil ploughing with landlords in harness..., a devil stabbing a moustachioed landlord with a pitch-fork, another a devil carrying a landlady on his back” (Himka 2006: 240). Death is depicted on such icons as a skeleton with various metal tools as a scythe, sword, and pitchfork (Lohvyn 1976: LXXXII; Otkovych 1990: 58). Those motifs were not purely Ukrainian. Many were present in Byzantine and post-Byzantine iconography and were variations on the theme “death of the rich man”

(Himka 2006: 240-245). While church authorities did not like folk icons, they were popular among the people because they helped simplify, interpret, and visually explain the content of canonical plots (Otkovych 1990: 52, 56). Yet the Church, through various rituals, certainly benefited from popularizing the notion of what happened to the soul after death, especially that of a sinner (Batiushkov 1891: 157).

Songs performed during funerals originated in the 8th century (Dolotskii 1845: 402). The Prayer of Permission in the form of a paper document placed in the hand of the deceased originated at the time of Theodosius the Hermit of Kyiv in the 11th century in response to a rich nobleman's pleas to guarantee his salvation (Dolotskii 1845: 404-405). The Moscow Patriarchate introduced the tradition of commemorating the dead on Demetrius Saturday into Ukraine (Katrii 2004: 66). The name of the Saturday goes back to the 4th century martyr Demetrius of Thessaloniki (Kalynskyi 1877: 306), whose feast day was celebrated on October 26 (November 8 in the new calendar). The tradition of commemorating fallen soldiers on this day started after Russian Prince Dmitrii of the Don defeated the Tartar Khan Mamay in a crucial battle in 1380 (Katrii 2004: 66).

Therefore, beliefs about death, soul, and afterlife expressed in the 21st century show the strong continuity of religious ideas. Many beliefs are almost direct quotes from early Christian writings. Nevertheless, certain beliefs seem to be peoples' attempts at hermeneutics: they interpret unclear ecclesiastical texts,

put them in contemporary context, and explain them through familiar phenomena. Thus, women in 2005 described the phenomenon of aerial tollbooths by relating them to the idea of crossing border customs, which is understandable in the modern world (Kononenko 2006: 63). Older generations of Ukrainians believe that descriptions of the afterlife are fixed: “People read various Bibles, and it is written there everything [about] how it is there, in the other world” (NK: Denhy98b [28:35 – 29:11]). However, other descriptions represent a mixture of Biblical sources, folk tradition, and religious philosophy. There were also apocryphal beliefs that the Church did not accept, but which persisted. Although the Church insisted on being the only intermediary between the living and the dead, it gradually incorporated many folk beliefs and rituals into the funerary rite.

Conclusion

Neither Soviet ideology nor the modern way of life have completely overturned traditional beliefs. Ukrainian funeral rituals, customs, and beliefs about death remain much the same as they were before the Soviet era, although with some local variations. Funerals preserve the public aspects of death, a mixture of popular religion with Christian elements persists, the Church continues to fight some folk beliefs, a belief in life in another world and ascribing supernatural power to the dead still suggest a cult of the dead, and the death hierarchy – good death-good burials, “bad death”-special burials – is maintained. There is no clear

division between body and soul, and contemporary informants present them as a single unit. During funerals, Ukrainians still tend to do everything possible to help and please the souls of the departed and to take precautionary measures against the unquiet dead.

Modern Ukrainians believe in ancestral spirits, ghosts, in the sacredness of graves and cemetery grounds. Ancestral worship is a major component of people's religious practice and daily lives. They believe the dead enter their dreams from the other world to deliver important messages, and thus view communication with their dead as natural and beneficial. Cemeteries reflect the cult of the dead and in a material way present this communication with the dead. Ukrainians not only arrange gravestones as beautiful, expensive “homes,” but also write epitaphs in verse addressed to the deceased. They also visit their ancestors' graves on certain commemorative days and “share” festive meals with them.

Despite the continuity between modern Ukrainian customs and beliefs about death and those from earlier times, some traditional funeral rituals and attitudes related to “bad death” eased in the 20th century. For example, suicides got a sort of amnesty at least on an official secular level, yet a negative attitude on a popular level remains. Those who died in a “bad” way are buried in regular cemeteries, yet such graves are still marked through special design of the gravestones and language of inscriptions. Magic related to roads and crossroads has changed its forms of expression, but has not disappeared. It has merely adjusted itself to the

modern way of life. In today's Ukraine, roads are marked with crosses and crucifixes, and drivers protect themselves and their passengers by icons and various amulets of both Christian and non-Christian nature.

The modern cult of the dead is an example of cultural continuity reinforced by the historical events of the WWII and official attitudes. Numerous cenotaphs to Unknown Soviet Soldiers acknowledge the importance of life and sacredness of death for the sake of one's own land and the well being of others. To remember every lost life has been a motto articulated by the Soviet government since 1945, and phrases about memory and memorializing at the funerals of ordinary people sound very much like official slogans during the Victory Day (May 9) parades and public speeches. Such a reverent state attitude accords with the folk custom of marking the precise places of “bad death” and unusual burials, conducting additional funerary rites, and making extra efforts on behalf of the living for the sake of the souls of those who died in a bad way. Caring about tragic deaths of those slain during the war probably encouraged those who marked individual tragic deaths in times of peace. Although crosses as markers of burials of tragic deaths ceased to exist during the Soviet era, and although Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainians used other means of marking places of abnormal death, the practice of marking places of death and treating “wrong” deaths differently continues, as the following chapter will demonstrate.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONTEMPORARY ABNORMAL DEATH MEMORIALS IN UKRAINE

The locations of accidental or violent deaths on Ukrainian lands were almost always marked, regardless of whether the markers indicated graves or simply cenotaphs. As one of my interviewees said, setting up abnormal death memorials was an everlasting tradition: “It is a permanent tradition. Probably, it's been always that way in Eastern Orthodoxy” (Oleksandr P-i, 46 y.o., July 6, 2009; file STE-030). As the Ethnographic Commission documented in the 1920s, this folk tradition of marking a precise place of sudden or violent death was still alive and widespread (see Chapter 3). During the numerous turmoils of the Soviet Union, mass unnatural death and mass burials – whether known or secret – became common. The most atrocious unnatural, violent deaths and mass burials occurred during the Holodomor (the man-made famine of 1932-1933), years of political repression, and during WWII. Yet even then, the place of an individual's violent death along some road often became a permanent grave, and thus a marker. One example is the mass grave in Figure 3-5. Another comes from the Khmel'nyts'k region. As local people said, Germans escorted a large group of Soviet POWs down the road near the town of Kryvyn in 1943. One of the prisoners, who people recalled was not Ukrainian but Georgian, asked the locals watching this procession silently by the road to give him a piece of bread.

Someone tossed him a piece, but the soldier took just one bite before a German guard shot him. The locals buried that unfortunate Soviet soldier at the place of his death by the road. In the beginning, only a small mound of soil defined his grave, but sometime in the 1980s, local authorities erected a granite memorial surrounded by a fence (personal conversation with Ol'ha Honchar, July 6, 2009) (Figure 4-26). In this case, we deal again with the following of a well-established folk tradition – burying those who died a “bad death” at the spot and never burying strangers in a local cemetery.

It is hard to define precisely when Ukrainian ADMs to traffic fatalities started, or rather, when they started to acquire their modern look. They certainly started appearing en mass during Soviet times when a system of roads was developed and automobiles became a feature of everyday life in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. ADMs dedicated to victims of traffic collisions seem to have appeared long before the collapse of the Soviet state in 1991. It is not surprising that prior to 1991, Soviet ADMs were designated by anything but crosses. As many of my informants recalled about the spread of ADMs and their designs during Soviet times: “Not memorials, but various markers – a wreath or something else – stood way before 1980” (Pavlo K-o, 67 y.o., August 31, 2007; file DS20028)⁵²; “I know for sure [ADMs] existed before 1991.... I started working as a truck driver in 1989; they already existed at that time” (Hennadii Z-

52 “Ну, не пам'ятники, а різні позначки – то віночок, то щось інше – до 1980 вони вже стояли.”

v, 35 y.o., May 15, 2009; file STE-001)⁵³; “Roadside memorials before 1991 existed as flowers; little crosses were symbolically painted, but mostly they existed as flowers. And in the 1970s or 1980s, there were few of them [ADMs with the contemporary design]” (Nadiia K-a, 43 y.o., July 5, 2009; file STE-022)⁵⁴; “It is most probable that during the Soviet times there were just wreaths – they stood at places of collision for some time” (Anatolii K-k, 45 y.o., July 7, 2009; file STE-041)⁵⁵; “They absolutely existed [prior to 1991]. If ADMs appeared, they were not made of granite, but of concrete or something else... They were not crosses, rather small pillars. I remember [seeing] color photographs [at those pillars] and inscriptions-dedications. I remember that we, school students, were often sent to whitewash trees along the road [near the school]. That's where I saw those ADMs. It was either at the end of the 1960s or beginning of the 1970s, probably around 1974” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).⁵⁶

The number of current ADMs resulting from traffic collisions is enormous. Unfortunately, nearly 7,000 people die in Ukraine annually in traffic accidents (Admin 2009; Chernenko 2010). It happens because of a combination of factors – the poor quality of many roads, inadequate training of many drivers, driving

53 “Я точно знаю, що були і до 1991... Я почав їздити з 1989 і тоді вже були.”

54 “А придорожні пам'ятники були до 1991 як квіти; хрестики були символічно намальовані, а в основному квіти. А в 1970і чи 1980і вони були поодинокі.”

55 “За радянських часів, скоріш за все, просто віночки там були – на певний час на місце аварії їх ставили.”

56 “Але вони однозначно були (перед 1991). Це були не гранітні, якщо ставили якісь пам'ятники, а бетонні чи ще якісь. Це були не хрести, а як стели малесенькі. Фотографії пам'ятаю такі кольорові круглі і написано – кому і що. Я пам'ятаю, коли ми навчалися в школі, нас зі школи виганяли на трасу білити дерева. То я такі пам'ятники бачила. Це кінець 1960-х або початок 1970х, 1974 дець.”

violations, the absence of substantial fines for such violations, unofficial immunity from the rules for certain categories of drivers, and risky behavior by drivers and pedestrians. Numerous ADMs along the roads are unfortunate testimony to the death statistics and prove the old folk belief about the road as a dangerous space. The number of ADMs along the roads is so high that, in theory, each highway and road could be assigned an ADM density index calculated as the mileage between the destination points divided by the number of abnormal death memorials along the way. For example, the city of Chernihiv is 150 kilometers north of Kyiv, and I counted 47 memorials on both sides of the road between the two cities in 2007. Therefore, the ADM density index for the Kyiv-Chernihiv highway is 3.2. My informants who drove regularly usually said that they encountered ADMs very often: “I always see them along the roads, regularly” (Vitalii K-i, 24 July 2007; file DS220015)⁵⁷; “I see them often. Different stretches [of roads] have different number [of ADMs]” (Hennadii Z-v, 35 y.o., May 15, 2009; file STE-001)⁵⁸; “I see them everywhere, and their number is becoming progressively larger” (Nadiia K-a, 43 y.o., July 5, 2009; STE-022)⁵⁹; “Lots [of ADMs], and they have a tendency to appear in certain places. I do not know why it is that way. Probably, accidents happen at those places more often [than at other

57 “Я постійно їх зустрічаю на дорогах. Регулярно.”

58 “Часто їх бачу. На різних відтинах (дороги) різна кількість (пам'ятників).”

59 “Бачу їх всюди і їх стає дедалі більше.”

places]. I think their number is growing. [You] drive the same roads and notice that [ADMs] appear there” (Anatolii K-k, 45 y.o., July 7, 2009; file STE-041).⁶⁰

The precise number of ADMs along the roads is unknown, and finding out did not seem to be important to the authorities prior to 2009, or at least it did not provoke any actions against ADMs. As the Head of a Road Maintenance Services said, “About three or four years ago, we gathered information for the higher authorities – I do not remember what the purpose of that was – about the number of ADMs per kilometer along our roads. Probably, they just gathered such information, [but] did not do anything about [ADMs]” (Iurii Sh-o, Kyiv, July 26, 2007, file DS220017).⁶¹ At the beginning of 2009, when the *Ukravtodor* and The Ministry of Transport and Communication announced the Group Decision to destroy roadside memorials⁶², the road service estimated that there were about one million ADMs in the country. In Kyiv only, about 5000 wreaths and 2000

60 “Дуже багато, причому вони чомусь розставлені в певних місцях. Не знаю чому так, мабуть, у тих місцях аварії відбувається найчастіше. Думаю, (їхня) кількість зростає. Ідеш по тих самих дорогах і бачиш, що (вони) з'являються там.”

61 “Років три-чотири назад ми збирали інформацію для вищестоящих організацій – я не пам'ятаю, з якою метою – скільки в нас пам'ятників стоїть на кілометраж доріг. Мабуть, вони просто інформацію зібрали, ніякого ходу не давали цьому.”

62 The official reason for destroying ADMs, according to the *Ukravtodor* officials, was to make driving safer and aesthetically appealing. I was, however, unable to find a published version of the Group Decision on the official websites of either the *Ukravtodor* or Ministry of Transportation. The only reference was an article titled “Whether Memorial Signs along Ukrainian Roads Will Be” and dated by February 4, 2009:

<http://www.ukravtodor.gov.ua/clients/ukrautodor.nsf/14b948599efab5a6c2257242004ca42c/826980d8b9b97013c2257553004cac8a?OpenDocument&Highlight=0.ритуальні> (last consulted on August 25, 2010). In the article, the officials asked the mass-media to support their initiative and explain its meaning to the public. Next day a similar article appeared on the official website of the Ministry of Transportation: <http://www.mintrans.gov.ua/uk/news/2009-02/10561.html> (last consulted on August 25, 2010). Both articles stated that ADMs could not be found in any “developed country of Central Europe.” That statement was repeated by various journalists who presented the initiative as the law since then.

memorial slabs had to be removed (Fedchenko, 2009). In various regions of the country, the estimated numbers were different: over 500 in the Khmel'nyts'k region (Hribiniuk et al. 2009) and about 300 in the Zakarpattia region (No author 2009a). In April 2009, the *Ukravtodor* presented on its official website numbers of ADMs in (only) five regions that were to be destroyed: 381 ADMs in the Vinnytsia region, 318 in the Chernihiv region, 273 in the Chernivtsi region, 198 in the L'viv region, and 163 in the Ternopil' region (Ukravtodor 2009).

Given their numbers, I am not able to document all existing memorials in Ukraine. I have documented 87 sites and recorded oral descriptions of two more. Most of the memorial sites I describe in this chapter I documented during field trips to Ukraine in 2005, 2007, and 2009, yet many pictures were sent to me by others. In the latter cases, I seldom have additional information about the circumstances of the accident or memorial placement. Some memorials persisted from 2005 through 2009. Throughout this chapter, when I describe memorials documented during my fieldwork, I write in the ethnographic present, although many of the sites I documented exist now only in the photographs. The 2009 Group Decision has resulted in an unfortunate outcome for my research: many ADMs along roads disappeared, preventing me from photographing memorials in 2009 that I noticed in 2007, or repeating documentation of sites I documented in 2005 and 2007. For example, a site in Figure 4-69 existed in 2007 as a black granite vertical slab inserted into a steep hill along the highway Donetsk-

Horlivka. The size of the slab was like that of a cemetery tombstone and easily visible to anyone driving by. In the summer of 2009, however, I could spot the memorial site only by asking the driver to slow to the minimum speed. It turned out that the slab was replaced with a small (about 15x20 cm) black metal plaque inserted shallowly into the soil and leaning against a small stone behind it. The tiny new marker was hardly visible to travellers. Some memorials disappeared within months or even weeks from their setting, not because they were made of perishable materials like artificial flowers or ribbons, but because officials encouraged their demise. Since I was still able to document many sites in 2009, the choice of which memorials disappeared was selective. I assume the road service first noticed and destroyed those that stood close to roads or were eye-catching because of size or design. I became an involuntary witness to such aggressive destruction during my bus trips in the summer of 2009. The memorial in Figure 4-65 appeared early in May, 2009 at the edge of the road from the town of Avdiivka to Donetsk at the Avdiivka border. It was first a thin vertical granite post no further than two meters away from the road. Its small square base was dug into the ground and supported by a log for stability. In June, a slanted bar was added to the structure, at which point it became evident that the ADM would take the form of an Eastern Orthodox cross. In July, a short vertical segment was added above the slanted bar. The people building that memorial needed only to add a horizontal bar above the vertical segment and another vertical segment on top. At

the beginning of August, however, the memorial was gone – not carefully removed, but forcibly broken at the base so that a metal wire from inside the vertical post stuck out. The remains of the base and ground around it were white, suggesting a generous treatment with lime solution.

The identity of those who erected the ADMs is seen on signs where present. In some cases, passersby provided the information, but in others, it is impossible to determine. Of 87 memorials, only four commemorate the death of several people in one traffic collision: a memorial in Figure 4-82 contains the names and dates of birth and death of three dead males; Figures 4-68, 4-71, and 4-74 are of memorials each dedicated to two young men. In only one case is each individual represented by a separate cross. Five metal crosses on the memorial near train tracks in Figure 4-11 symbolize the death of five passengers in a car that passed over the tracks as a train approached (personal conversation with Oksana Babenko on August 10, 2006). The rest of the memorials apparently represent the death of a single individual each; at least there are no references to more. It is impossible to determine without a sign listing the information. A memorial in Figure 4-48 contains three wreaths attached to a light post near the apparent site of a road accident. They could be dedicated to one deceased person or to three. Figure 4-13 is also difficult to interpret: it shows three small memorials next to each other, but does not explain if they appeared in chronological sequence dedicated to three people killed in different collisions or to three victims of one. Because of this

uncertainty, I treat multiple memorials at one site as separate ADMs if their designs are distinct from each other. By this scheme, Figure 4-13 represents three ADMs (a metal fence, pillar, and wreath), Figure 4-24 shows two sites (a flower cross and metal cross with a car tire for a flower bed), and Figure 4-48 depicts a single site (one post with several wreaths). Of all the memorials I document, only one was set up, not by surviving relatives or friends, but by an organization for which the deceased worked (see Figure 4-71).

Whenever possible, memorials appear at the place of abnormal death, so their locations are sometimes unusual. For example, a tombstone with a car tire in a park in the densely populated city Eastern Ukraine city Kharkiv denotes the place where a young man was murdered (Figure 4-64). A monument deep inside a plowed field presumably marks the site of another young man's death (Figure 4-84). If a memorial is not possible at the exact death locale, it is usually placed as close as possible. Thus, a memorial in front of a Kyiv electronics store's window is dedicated to a young man who was actually shot at the building's steps (Figure 4-37). According to this “rule of the immediate proximity,” ADMs commemorating traffic fatalities can be attached to trees closest to the accident or to segments of sidewalk across from the tragedy.

When and Where ADMs Appear

I cannot classify Ukrainian ADMs as either an urban or rural phenomenon. According to my fieldwork, Ukrainians can set them up anywhere, and not only to

victims of traffic collisions. People tend to mark a place of any kind of unnatural death, no matter where or why it happened. For example, the memorial in Figure 4-1 is dedicated to the 11-year-old village boy who accidentally drowned in a local pond, while a memorial several meters away is dedicated to a young man who allegedly committed suicide by drowning (Figure 4-2). A man about 60 years old died of a heart attack in the street, an event and place marked by a cross and wreath (Figure 4-6). (Information again reported by a local passerby.) My interviewee mentioned yet another marker at the place of a separate heart attack death: “I once witnessed [how] a taxi driver had a heart attack. He was taken out of his car, and later on I saw... the taxi car's stop and there is a small metal fence across the road. So I saw red carnations inserted into that fence for the following 40 days. I mean they [his survivors] were bringing flowers there for 40 days. However, there is no wreath at that place [now]” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).⁶³ The aforementioned memorial in Figure 4-11 and the one in Figure 4-12 are located near train tracks and commemorate lives of people hit by trains. A memorial in Figure 4-37 is dedicated to a young man shot with a gun. A memorial to a victim of manslaughter is located in a city park (Figure 4-64), and another in memory of a youth murdered by a group of teenagers is set up on a village street

⁶³ “Я була свідком... у водія стався інфаркт – витягли з машини, то потім я бачила... там зупинка, а через дорогу – металевий тинок. І от до 40 днів я бачила квіти – червоні гвоздики вставляли в той тинок. Тобто до 40 днів вони носили квіти. А вінка немає на тому місці.”

(Figure 4-61). The ADM in Figure 4-71 preserves the memory of two electricians who died while working together on a city street.

How soon ADMs appear after death is impossible to verify without personal interviews with surviving relatives or friends. Some ADMs follow quickly on the cause event, while it is rare for any to indicate when they were erected. Survivors sometimes set up an ADM as soon as possible after a tragedy. As one interviewee said, “[My friends set up the ADM] approximately two weeks after the funeral [of their son]. They laid flowers and a wreath at the place of tragedy immediately, and the ADM [itself was set up] later” (Liubov D-o, July 30, 2007, file DS220026).⁶⁴ Two interviewees connected the appearance of ADMs to the special 40 day commemorative period after death. One stated that two wreaths appeared 40 days after the collision that killed her in-law and niece (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053). Similarly, another said he set up a memorial to his brother on the fortieth day (anonymous bus driver, July 22, 2007; file DS220006). According to folk belief, this 40 day period commemorates the soul of the dead, for it still is present on earth. “What are the 40 days for? [One] has to pray [during that time] for the soul of the deceased” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015).⁶⁵

⁶⁴ “Десь тижня за два після похорону. Квіти вони одразу поклали з віночком на місце трагедії, а потім – пам'ятник.”

⁶⁵ “Для чого сорок днів дається? Треба молитися за душу померлого.”

Designs of Ukrainian ADMs

ADMs present a good opportunity to examine the effects of a changing culture on popular religious beliefs and practices. Scattered across the country, ADMs became voices of both continuity and change. In terms of design, past architectural traditions coexist with current ones. Since most existing ADMs are recent and those from previous decades have mostly disappeared, it is hard to know if there is a significant change in form and content between newer ones and those of the 1980s and earlier. I documented three dedicated to Soviet unknown soldiers that are at the places of burial and not just cenotaphs (Figures 3-5, 4-26, and 4-29). Their designs, however, emerged around the 1980s, a long time after the burials. Many Ukrainian ADMs look like gravestones and are usually made of the same materials – marble, granite, poured concrete, or metal. It seems that ADM designs follow tombstone “fashion,” which has been changing since the 1960s (Mozdyr 1996). Ukrainian survivors buy ready-made memorials from funeral supply shops, choosing from existing designs and sometimes customizing them. In this respect, cemeteries are certainly better sites for researching changes, for the grave sites are legal, typical for their times, and always identifiable.

In only three cases did I encounter memorials containing parts of the crashed vehicles, specifically a car tire (Figures 4-24, 4-25 and 4-64). In all three, the tires are used as flower beds, and at least in the case of the memorial in Figure 4-64, this function seems to be the primary one. It is in the middle of a city park

where no cars drive. In two other cases, the tires might be artifacts from after the crashes, since the memorials are located near the roads. My informants said the tradition of using crashed vehicle parts in memorials existed before 1991, yet mainly if a victim of a crash was a professional truck driver (Hennadii Z-v, 35 y.o., May 15, 2009; file STE-001).

The Table 4-1 shows the design variations and materials used for building ADMs in different parts of Ukraine, based on my research findings:

Table 4-1. Designs and Materials of Ukrainian ADMs, %

		Metal	Plastic	Granite	Concrete	Stone	Other	Total
Cross	WU	14.9 (13)	1.1(1)	-	1.1(1)	-	1.1(1)	20.7 (18)
	CU	1.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-	
	EU	-	-	1.1(1)	-	-	-	
	SU	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Wreath	WU	-	5.7(5)	-	-	-	-	32.2 (28)
	CU	-	20.7 (18)	-	-	-	-	
	EU	-	3.4(3)	-	-	-	-	
	SU	-	2.3(2)	-	-	-	-	
Slab	WU	1.1(1)	-	4.6(4)	-	-	-	18.4 (16)
	CU	-	-	1.1(1)	1.1(1)	-	-	
	EU	1.1(1)	-	3.4(3)	1.1(1)	-	-	
	SU	-	-	2.3(2)	2.3(2)	-	-	
Obelisk	WU	1.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-	4.6(4)
	CU	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	EU	1.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-	

	SU	2.3(2)	-	-	-	-	-	
Fence	WU	10.3(9)	-	-	-	-	-	10.3(9)
	CU	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	EU	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	SU	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other	WU	-	-	-	-	1.1(1)	-	13.8 (12)
	CU	-	-	-	-	-	1.1(1)	
	EU	1.1(1)	1.1(1)	-	-	1.1(1)	3.4(3)	
	SU	2.3(2)	2.3(2)	-	-	-	-	
Total		36.8 (32)	36.8 (32)	12.6 (11)	5.7(5)	2.3(2)	5.7(5)	100 (87)

Legend: U – Ukraine; W – Western, C – Central, E – Eastern, S - Southern

Just as tombstone designs may vary, so do those of the ADMs. Yet certain tombstone designs are common across Ukraine because they are mass produced, and only a small portion is custom made. A customized gravestone, as well as an ADM, cost more and take longer to make. Those who set up memorials are usually family members of the deceased rather than friends. It seems that they are free to choose any design for the memorial if they can afford it. In this sense ADM in Figure 4-71 is unusual: the huge rock was probably chosen as a “design” by the employer and did not cost anything.

As Table 4-1 shows, the most widely used materials in Ukraine ADMs these days are metal and granite or a combination. Since wreaths appear to be the dominant feature of many memorials, plastic, of which they are made, is also very common. Materials listed as “Other” in Table 4-1 include wood, fabric, and brick.

For example, Figure 4-6 presents a small wooden cross. Yet I have observed that wood is not typical for ADMs in any part of the country, probably because of its limited durability, and most of the Ukrainian abnormal death memorials are expected to last a long time. Figure 4-63 shows plastic flowers tied to the post with a fabric band, and in Figure 4-60 withered flowers designate the place of tragedy. I will elaborate on the data in Table 4-1 throughout this chapter, and will use additional tables to illuminate the details.

Crosses

The cross as a Christian symbol and symbol of death remains one of the most common designs for modern Ukraine ADMs. The landscape is saturated with various types of crosses, which have different meanings, but remain symbols unmistakably interpreted by those who share the same culture. Ukrainians distinguish between large crosses along roads that symbolize God's protection for the travellers (Figure 3-9) and smaller crosses as memorials dedicated to the victims of unnatural death. Typical Ukrainian fatality memorials are the various crosses and shrines that commemorate victims of the Holodomor. Each cross stands not for the sudden death of an individual, but for the prolonged, agonizing starvation of hundreds – death sanctioned by the authorities. Often, Holodomor crosses are set up at places of mass burials of those who starved to death. Such memorials stand as symbols of national tragedy and denial. For decades, Communist authorities banned discussion of the catastrophe and the

commemoration of the millions of Holodomor victims.⁶⁶ Only after the Soviet Union's collapsed in 1991 did small plain crosses appear as markers of the mass burials and the secret files on Holodomor opened to the public, although some are still closed, even for scholars.⁶⁷ Some of the Holodomor memorials were set up by local communities and are very simple, while others were sponsored by the Ukrainian government after careful choice of the design (e.g., the memorial on the Mykhailivs'ka Square in Kyiv).⁶⁸

Many of my interviewees stated that a cross as a marker of sudden violent death, especially along roads, was not used during Soviet times because the USSR was an atheist state, so the places of such death were marked in other ways – usually by stars (pyramids topped with five-pointed stars), ribbons, or wreaths. Even today, cross-free ADMs are not unusual. At the same time, many *are* decorated with crosses and other religious symbols, alone or in combination – the figure of the Mother of God, lantern, votive candle, icon, and the phrase “Eternal Memory” engraved into a memorial's surface or written on a ribbon used for

66 A family friend, Ivan Stepanovych Suk, born in 1924, was arrested in 1970, accused of lies against the Soviet State, and imprisoned. The reason for prosecution was political: he was writing a book on Holodomor, based on own memories and testimonies of other witnesses. The manuscript was confiscated and destroyed. Suk was rehabilitated only posthumously.

67 That was stated by Ukrainian researcher of the Holodomor, Dr. Liudmyla Hrynevych in her paper “The 1932-33 Famine-Holodomor in Ukraine as an aspect of Stalin's Preparation for War: A New Hypothesis on a Motivation for Genocide” presented at University of Alberta on November 4, 2008. CIUS, Pembina Hall.

68 Some examples of the Holodomor memorials in Ukraine and worldwide see: <http://www.maidan.org.ua/holodomor/pamjatnyky/pamjatnyky.html> (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

flowers. The table below demonstrates the popularity of religious symbolism on ADMs.

Table 4-2. Religious Symbolism on ADMs, %

	Western region	Central region	Eastern region	Southern region	Total
No religious symbols	14.9(13)	21.8(19)	12.6(11)	8.1(7)	57.5(50)
Some religious symbols	28.7(25)	3.4(3)	2.3(2)	3.4(3)	37.9(33)
Unclear	-	-	2.3(2)	2.3(2)	4.6(4)
Total	43.7(38)	25.3(22)	17.2(15)	13.8(12)	100(87)

As Table 4-2 shows, more than half of the memorial sites in my research display no religious symbols and can be considered secular. Most of the non-religious ADMs use wreaths and flower bouquets. It is difficult to discern any symbolism in them, although I argue that at least one wreath contains the clear sign of a cross arranged with white flowers (Figure 4-34). When both a cross and a wreath are present at a memorial site (usually the wreath is placed on the cross), I consider the cross to be the dominant feature of that memorial, assigning the ADM to the design category “Cross” (see Table 4-1) and adding it to the memorials bearing “Some religious symbols.” Some memorial photographs are taken from afar or they are so richly decorated with flowers and/or wreaths that it

is hard to determine if they carry religious symbols. Table 4-2 classifies those cases as “Unclear.”

Some of the documented crosses are unadorned (Figures 4-11, 4-25, and 4-36). Others are decorated, many with metal, symbols of the Trinity, and so on, reflecting Eastern Orthodox aesthetics. For example, the crosses in Figures 4-7, 4-8, 4-10, 4-28, 4-33, and 4-54 have a decoration called *cross bottony*. The upper vertical and both lateral arms terminate in three small connected rings forming a trefoil representing the Christian Holy Trinity. Cross bottony is often encountered in cemeteries on grave crosses of the Eastern Orthodox. One memorial, in addition to having trefoils, is adorned with another widely used Christian symbol – lines radiating outward from the intersection of the cross and symbolizing the sun's rays (Figure 4-29). The cross attached to a tree trunk in Figure 4-24 is decorative in itself, as it is made of artificial flowers.

Wreaths

While wreaths are normally secondary adornments on cemetery graves, they are usually the dominant feature of an ADM; i.e., they serve as markers of unnatural death by themselves. In such cases, the entire memorial itself is called *вінок* [a wreath] and this term is sufficient. These wreaths are most often encountered along the roads to commemorate the victims of traffic collisions. Their shapes vary greatly. Interestingly, wreaths used in most of the Ukrainian annual and life passage rituals (e.g., during the Ivan Kupala celebration, for a

bride, or on wedding bread) are round. Wreaths on graves and ADMs are many shapes. Round ones are shown in Figures 4-6, 4-7, 4-32, 4-34, 4-40, 4-41 (the same site, but documented in 2005 and 2007), 4-45, 4-52 and 4-70. The diameter of a round wreath varies, but it tends to be small. Wreaths can also have a symbolic tear drop shape, usually larger than round ones. Examples of such wreaths are in Figures 4-20, 4-30, 4-47, 4-50, and 4-72. The inner space of a wreath is often filled with flowers as in Figure 4-72, although some cheaper wreaths have flowers only along their edges as in Figure 4-31. Yet another wreath design is a symbolic flat flower basket where a curved “handle” is usually made of coniferous branches laced with a narrow plastic ribbon (Figures 4-10, 4-19, 4-39, 4-44, 4-48 [the bottom one], 4-49, 4-68, 4-73, 4-82, and 4-86). One of my informants described an ADM site dedicated to her 35-year-old in-law and 12-year-old niece killed in a 2006 traffic collision: “There are two wreaths over there..., the simplest ones, round-shaped. No, not heart-shaped or in a form of a tear drop – just round wreaths made of artificial flowers. Wreaths are attached to the tree which they smashed into – two wreaths next to each other. The colors are different, but the sizes are the same” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).⁶⁹

69 “Там два віночки... такі самі прості круглі. Ні, не форма серця, не форма сльози, просто круглий вінок, зроблений із штучних квітів. Вони тримаються на дереві, в яке вони врізалися. Два віночки поряд. Різна кольорова гама, а розмір однаковий.”

No matter how a wreath is shaped, it is usually a closed curve with a border of plastic evergreen needles and flowers centered inside and/or distributed along the edge, although some wreaths have broad leaves (Figures 4-44 and 4-68). The evergreen needles symbolize eternity – the eternal memory of a deceased person's life in this world and eternal life in the other world. I have observed wreaths of not only roses or carnations, but of many types of live and artificial flowers in various shades of white, yellow, pink, red, lilac, and even blue.⁷⁰ There is, however, an unwritten rule regarding the number of flowers: funeral wreaths and bouquets usually have even numbers, since in Ukrainian and other East Slavic cultures, an even number has a strong association with finality and death. When I bought four roses in Kyiv in 2009, the lady at the flower kiosk was quick to confirm that they were meant for the cemetery and bound them with a thin black ribbon as a sign of mourning.

Slabs

Although slabs are primarily characteristic of a cemetery and used as tombstones, they are chosen for ADMs almost as often as crosses. My observation of many Ukrainian cemeteries reveals that a cross is rarely used as the primary design at a grave site these days. Instead, slabs of various sizes and designs are used. Most ADM slabs are vertical; I documented only one placed horizontally

⁷⁰ Ukrainian wreaths and crosses do not convey additional meanings by their colors, unlike, for example, in the former Yugoslavia, where, painted white, “they signify the death of a very young person or a small child.” (Rajkovic 1988: 175) During my fieldwork, I never encountered wreaths or crosses painted white. At best, there were unpainted crosses if they were made of non-corrosive steel.

(Figure 4-42). Slab shapes vary considerably. They can be rectangular, sometimes twice as long as wide (Figures 4-74 and 4-84). Squares (Figure 4-66) seem less popular and I did not encounter them often. Sometimes a slab is a trapezoid with a slanted top (Figure 4-73), and sometimes the slanted top is longer than the bottom edge (Figure 4-64). The latter design is called *parus* [mainsail], as it was explained to me at a funeral supply shop in Kyiv (conversation on August 30, 2009). A slab can also be a pentagon (Figure 4-86). I documented one slab shaped like a flower bud (Figure 4-81).

The base of a slab usually balances the whole structure, and can be smaller than, equal to, or larger than the main, upper part of the slab depending on the size of a memorial. Figures 4-74, 4-82, and 4-84 illustrate slabs with the largest bases. As mentioned earlier, granite or concrete slabs are popular and a single memorial often combines both so that a granite upper part is placed on a poured concrete base (Figures 4-68 and 4-86). The slabs tend to be gray, dark gray, or black. A slab usually has an inscription, often paired with a portrait of the deceased. Some inscriptions are carved into granite or concrete (Figures 4-13 and 4-81), but others are on a metal tablet attached to the surface of the memorial (Figures 4-20 and 4-66). Photos of the deceased can be engraved into the surface of a slab (Figures 4-74 and 4-81) or attached as a separate detail (Figures 4-19 and 4-64). It seems that slabs dedicated to young people tend to be made of more expensive materials,

have unusual shapes like that of a flower bud, and provide a maximum of information about the deceased, including their photos.

Obelisks

The obelisk, or *tumbochka*, is a memorial form that replaced a cross on the graves of atheists in the Soviet era. That distinctly Soviet form of cemetery memorial also served as an ADM design. Road fatalities were marked by small obelisks topped with five-pointed stars. Because the star was considered their dominant feature, they were often called simply “stars.”⁷¹ As for their chronology, two of my interviewees said they remembered ADM stars closer to the end of the Soviet era: “I remember from my childhood [late 1970s-early 1980s] there were almost no crosses; [instead] there were 'stars.' Almost all of them [ADMs] were 'stars.' As a child [I remember] an important road that ran through [my] village, and almost all the places of the fatalities were designated [by 'stars']” (Vitalii K-i, July 24, 2007; file DS220015)⁷²; “Already by the end of the Soviet times they [‘stars’] started appearing. Where I lived, [people] set up a red ‘*tumbochka*’ with a star on its top... along the roads” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015).⁷³

⁷¹ A star evidently served as a substitute for a cross for deceased atheists, yet according to Kononenko (2006), some Ukrainians still secretly put a small Orthodox cross inside an obelisk, as its hollow structure allowed for it. (p. 70, Note #10) Kononenko also noted that after 1991, there was a wave of replacement of Soviet symbols with Orthodox ones and crosses began to supplant star-topped obelisks on atheists' graves. During my fieldwork, I encountered such obelisks – both as grave markers and ADMs. Graves from the Soviet times have pyramids terminating in either crosses or stars, but most recent graves, and especially ADMs, terminate in crosses only.

⁷² “Я пам'ятаю з дитинства – там хрестів майже ніколи не було, там була зірочка... Майже всі вони були зірочками... В дитинстві через село проходила траса важлива – там майже всі місця, де були аварії, позначені (зірками).”

⁷³ “Ще при кінці радянських часів вони почали з'являтися. У нас ставили тумбочку червону, а зверху зірочку... вздовж доріг.”

Today, ADMs designed as obelisks can be found not only in the former Soviet republics, but also along the roads in the former Yugoslavia (Rajkovic 1988: 31) and possibly other post-Socialist lands. For various historical reasons, atheism was less successfully forced upon the western parts of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic than elsewhere. It is, therefore, natural that the obelisks as both grave markers and ADMs are less likely to be encountered in modern Western Ukraine than the rest of the country. Three such obelisks in my collection come from the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine (Figures 4-62, 4-83, and 4-85). All of them seem to consist of a top metal pyramid on a base of poured cement. Only one obelisk-like ADM of unusual form comes from the western region (Figure 4-21): it has a pyramid point since three metal wires join at the top, yet it looks different from other ADM obelisks because of its hollow structure.

Fence

While some memorials blend into the natural surrounding or cooperate with it, others are apart and special. By the former, I mean ribbons, wreaths, and flowers, live and artificial. When used to indicate ADM sites, ribbons, wreaths, and flowers are often elevated above the ground and attached to tree trunks or light posts. They do not stand out in summer and may look like a beautiful decoration to a cultural outsider. By the latter, I mean memorials surrounded by rectangular fences, which turn them into exclusive spaces indicative of spatial prohibitions. Fences around graves can usually be found in cemeteries, though

this tradition varies from region to region and even village to village, sometimes depending on the financial standing of the survivors. It seems, however, that the tradition of fencing in a grave or family plot appeared in the mid-20th century when Ukrainians started using permanent materials like metal and granite as grave markers. People extended this recent custom to the newer ADMs. The subcategory “Fence” in Table 4-1 above represents only memorials where fences constitute their dominant and often only architectural feature. Table 4-3 below provides a more detailed picture of fence use:

Table 4-3. Use of Fences Around ADMs, %

		Western region	Central region	Eastern region	Southern region	Total
No fence		26.4(23)	22.9(20)	17.2(15)	12.6(11)	79.3(69)
Fence	By itself	6.9(6)	-	-	-	20.7(18)
	With a cross inside	5.7(5)	1.1(1)	-	-	
	Cross as a fence element	3.4(3)	-	-	-	
	With a tombstone inside	1.1(1)	1.1(1)	-	1.1(1)	
Total		43.7(38)	25.3(22)	17.2(15)	13.8(12)	100(87)

Table 4-3 shows 69 sites, or 79.3% of all the documented ADMs, have no fences, and only 18, or 20.7%, are fenced. In six of those 18 cases, a small rectangular fence stands alone without other elements like a cross or a tombstone within. It does not, however, mean that there are no flowers or wreaths inside the

fence; flowers can be permanent, i.e., planted, or deposited artificial or live. The fence can be painted single or multiple colors – shades of blue, silver, red, or black (see Figures 4-26 and 4-27). It can also remain unpainted if made of noncorrosive steel (Figures 4-25, 4-33, and 4-36). Some fences have beautiful undulating metal ornaments (Figures 4-5 and 4-27), others end up with a “flat” upper horizontal frame, and still others have vertical metal bars terminating in arrows (Figures 4-2 and 4-22). In six more cases, an inside cross is either taller or shorter than the fence sides (Figures 4-7, 4-23, 4-28, 4-29, 4-33, and 4-54). Three others have a small metal cross as an inseparable part of the fence instead of an independent element located within (Figures 4-1, 4-5, and 4-14). The three remaining fences enclose a tombstone – either a vertical granite slab (Figures 4-26 and 4-59) or obelisk (Figure 4-83). Although Table 4-3 demonstrates that fenced ADMs are likely to be encountered in the western part of the country, it does not show how popular fences in cemeteries of the different regions are.

Other ADM Designs

Included into the category of “Other” designs in Table 4-1 are monuments, shrines, ribbons, and flowers. The memorial site in Figure 4-37 is the only monument ADM I documented. It is an upright black marble pillar supporting a decorative vase. In the middle of the pillar is an inscription tablet designed as an open book symbolizing knowledge. At the top of the left “page” is a small bronze Orthodox cross. A picture of a deceased young man in an oval bronze frame

occupies the main space of the “page” with the years of his birth and death below the portrait. The right “page” provides the young man's name, his occupation (student in the Law Department of Taras Shevchenko State University in Kyiv), and a statement that his death happened where the ADM stands. The letters and numbers on the tablet are raised and covered with bronze. Some of my informants told me they witnessed other monuments being built along roads. They stressed the grandeur of those monuments and their obvious expensiveness. In most cases, such monuments were dedicated to young persons. The ADM in Figure 4-3 is an example of a religious shrine made of stone. It contains a figure of the Mother of God and a sheltered lantern with a small cross on its roof. The site is richly decorated with artificial flowers.

Another unusual ADM design is a huge rough stone to which a metal inscription tablet is attached (Figure 4-71). Such a tablet stands itself as a memorial at one site (Figure 4-69). I speculate that this tablet was brought by the survivors to replace a granite slab that was destroyed by the road services after the Group Decision.

“Other” metal memorials are variations on framed portraits of the deceased men (Figures 4-77 and 4-80). The frame in the first case is attached to a tree, and in the second case, to a post by different devices. One “Other” memorial form made of plastic is a laminated color portrait of a deceased man attached to a tree trunk with two black ribbons (Figure 4-78).

Ribbons are often combined with live or artificial flowers, but can also be the primary feature marking a place of tragic death. Figure 4-63 shows a white and a red ribbon of thin fabric tied around a tree trunk, and a thin garland of small artificial yellow flowers braided with green leaves. I assume that the fragility of the ribbons caused their disappearance by 2007 when I revisited the site after two years. The garland-leaf braid also disappeared: it was too light to withstand winds.

Plastic flowers are the dominant feature of only two sites I documented (Figures 4-67 and 4-75). An ADM in Figure 4-67 has an additional feature – a black fabric band tying the flowers to a light post. Live but withered flowers around a light post constitute the memorial site in Figure 4-60. It is possible that those flowers were part of a wreath.

Designs of abnormal death memorials in Ukraine often reflect the age of the person they commemorate. Those dedicated to youth are designed more beautifully, decorated more richly, and built of more expensive and durable materials. For example, all the large, customized, and expensive ADMs I documented commemorate the lives of youth (Figures 4-3, 4-37, 4-42, and 4-74), while plain memorials tend to commemorate older people (Figures 4-4 and 4-6). The untimely death of a youth is considered more tragic than that of the elderly and is therefore marked more distinctly to draw the attention of passersby.

Anonymity of ADMs

Some memorials I documented contain information about the people they commemorate, but often it is impossible to get such information from ADMs. Despite lengthy inscriptions on two memorials (Figures 4-26 and 4-29), I still consider both sites anonymous ADMs. Each inscription explains that the memorial is dedicated to a WWII Soviet soldier (both sites are graves, not cenotaphs), yet the inscriptions provide no information on their identity. The table below provides details about numbers of anonymous and personalized memorials in my research.

Table 4-4. Personalization of ADMs, %

		Western region	Central region	Eastern region	Southern region	Total
No personalization (anonymous ADMs)		32.2(28)	21.8(19)	9.2(8)	3.4(3)	66.7(58)
Personalization	Full	4.6(4)	2.3(2)	3.5(3)	2.3(2)	27.6(24)
	Partial	6.9(6)	1.1(1)	2.3(2)	4.6(4)	
Unclear		-	-	2.3(2)	3.5(3)	5.7(5)
Total		43.7(38)	25.3(22)	17.2(15)	13.8(12)	100(87)

What I mean by “full personalization” is that an ADM provides a portrait and information on the ethnicity, age, sex, birth and death dates, and life of the person who died at that place. A fully personalized ADM looks like a standard tombstone. In addition to these details, some memorials contain statements about

a tragic death that had happened at the site. I, however, exclude this statement from the elements necessary for the “full personalization” of a memorial. I believe such a statement is redundant, since an ADM would be automatically interpreted as a site of unnatural tragic death by a cultural insider, regardless of the presence of the statement. I consider the personalization partial if any of the elements necessary for the full one is missing. As Table 4-4 shows, most of the memorials, (66.7%) are anonymous: they provide no personal information, and those who have tragically lost their lives remain totally unknown to observers. Most anonymous memorials appear as wreaths, flowers, or crosses. Memorials personalized only partially most often contain either portraits of the deceased or their names and dates of life; i.e. the dead person can still be identified either visually or through the dry facts of life chronology. According to my data, the names of the deceased are usually presented with the dates of birth and death, never alone. In this respect an ADM in Figure 4-42 is unusual. It contains a photo of a deceased person that does not reveal his face. It also contains his name and just the year of death instead of a full set of dates. The reason I classified this ADM as a fully personalized is the degree of fame of the deceased. The facts provided on the memorial are sufficient to find the identity from the Internet. The deceased was Oleksandr (or Aleksandr in Russian) Beresh – a famous Ukrainian Olympic champion gymnast. Therefore, the picture and inscriptions on the memorial identify the late Beresh as a professional. Similarly, an inscription on

another memorial identifies two deceased men as belonging to a certain professional group – electricians of a city Tram and Trolleybus Department (Figure 4-71). An inscription on another ADM identifies the deceased as a student at death (Figure 4-38). Yet another inscription identifies a deceased man by both his family roles (a son, brother, husband) and his professional affiliation (military), as well as his military specialties (a battalion commander, lieutenant colonel, and tanker) (Figure 4-69). An inscription on the ADM in Figure 4-82 identifies the relationship among three males who evidently were killed in a traffic collision.

An ADM in Figure 4-73 is an example of what I classified as “Unclear.” An onlooker can see the last name of the deceased, yet it is a unisex name in Ukrainian. Therefore, it is impossible to define the gender of the deceased from the inscription.

Language of the Memorials

Not all the memorials have written messages on them. By message, I mean any phrase or text providing information other than the name of the deceased and his or her dates of birth and death. I was able to document only ten memorials (11.5%) that had something written on them, as the table below shows.

Table 4-5. Addressees and Language Styles of the ADM Messages

		Western region	Central region	Eastern region	Southern region	Total
Addressed to passersby	In prose	3	1	2	2	10
	In verse	-	1	-	1	
Addressed to deceased	In prose	-	-	-	-	-
	In verse	-	-	-	-	
Unclear		1	-	2	2	5

Not a single message on the 10 memorials was addressed to a deceased person, but to the passersby. This differs from the contemporary custom of engraving messages on the cemetery tomb stones addressed to the deceased (cf. Mozdyr 1996: 119-126). It is as if the ADMs if invite passersby to stop and read the messages to find out more about those whose lives ended so tragically. Some messages narrate a little, and often in a traditional, formulaic way. For example, an ADM in Figure 4-2 has a phrase *Тут загинув* [Here has perished] as the upper line of an inscription tablet. Next is the full name of a young man and his dates of birth and death. The bottom line reads *Вічна пам'ять* [Eternal Memory]. These opening and closing phrases are characteristic of inscriptions on regular cemetery tombstones with the difference being that instead of “Here perished,” the phrase *Тут покоїться/спочиває* [Here rests] is used in the cemetery (cf. Mozdyr 1996: 92). Variants of both the opening and closing phrases can be encountered on other

ADMs. For example, instead of “Eternal Memory,” a closing phrase reads *Помним, скорбим!* [(We) remember, mourn!] (Figure 4-69). Both phrases – “Eternal Memory” and “[We] remember, mourn!” – testify to the cultural belief that in the eyes of the survivors, it is important to remember about dead loved ones. As for the opening phrase, it can read *На этом месте трагически погиб* [At this spot, tragically has lost his life] (Figure 4-38), or *Здесь трагически погибли* [Here have tragically lost their lives] (Figure 4-71), or *Трагически погиб на горе матери* [Has tragically perished, to (his) mother's misfortune] (Figure 4-84). Such phrases serve to stress that memorials are places with special meaning, places of *unnatural, wrong* death. This custom of underlining the obvious reflects the state of grief and psychological trauma of the survivors because, as I noted earlier, memorials are always unmistakably interpreted by Ukrainians as places of unnatural, untimely, or violent death, even if there are no messages on them.

Messages on other memorials tell fuller stories, not only about those who died, but also about those who were left behind. Their language is not necessarily poetic. Messages in prose tend to be brief because of limited space for inscriptions and reflect the most important information about the deceased from the point of view of the survivors. It seems that it was important for the people who set up the ADM in Figure 4-82 to explain the relationships among the three persons who probably died in the same vehicle:

MIKHAILICHENKO, NIKOLAI ANATOLIEVICH 7 IV 1972	
son MISHKOI, GREK IVANOVICH 4 VIII 1998	son MISHKOI, MARK IVANOVICH 30 VIII 1999
TRAGICALLY DIED 21 VI 2006	

When a memorial is dedicated to members of the same family, it can be be noted by a shared last name, identical patronymics, and dates of birth. In the memorial above, two boys were certainly brothers (they shared the same last name and patronymic, and had only one year of age difference between them). Their last name and patronymics, however, do not match the first and the last name of an elder man listed on the memorial. The fact that all three were a family is conveyed verbally and spatially: the name of the elder man is written at the top of the tablet, while the names of two boys are written below, side by side with each other. Such graphical representation is characteristic of a genealogical tree. In addition, the word “son” is written above each boy's name. These two words make the relationship among the three males clear: the elder man was a step-father of the boys.

A message written on another ADM (Figure 4-37) focuses on other sorts of details, namely on social standing of the deceased and the good prospects awaiting him had he not been tragically killed:

На этом месте
трагически
погиб студент
юрфака КПУ
им. Т. Шевченко
СЕРГЕЙ
РОМАНЕНКО
1975 – 1996

At this place
tragically
died a student
of the Law Department of the
Kyiv
T. Shevchenko University
SERGEI
ROMANENKO
1975 - 1996

To be a student at a Law Department is very prestigious in Ukraine, and the survivors probably found this an important detail of the young man's short but potentially promising biography to be displayed for others. As I was told by different passersby, this memorial was set up by the parents of the young man, who was shot dead at the steps of a building next to which a memorial stands. The inscription reflects the sense of pride the parents felt about their son.

A message on the ADM in Figure 4-69 emphasizes the high level of professionalism of the deceased, and lists the loved ones left behind:

Здесь
13 января 1991 г.
погиб
комбат
подполковник
танкист
ФУТОРНЫЙ
Виктор
Александрович

Here
on January 13, 1991
perished
the battalion commander
lieutenant-colonel
tanker
FUTORNYI,
Victor
Aleksandrovich

сын, брат, муж,
Помним, скорбим!

A son, brother, husband
[We] remember, mourn!

The order of the family associations by which the deceased man is represented in the inscription – a son, brother, and only then husband – might be indicative of certain things. It could, for example, indicate that it was his biological family who initiated the setting up of the memorial, or it might indicate that the deceased had married shortly before the accident, or that relations between the survivors are complicated. A conventional way of listing the survivors on cemetery tombstones or funerary ribbons is from the closest to more distant family members. Usually a wife and children in such listings precede biological parents or siblings.

A message on an ADM in Figure 4-71 is unusual, for it demonstrates lack of emotional attachment by those who have set up the memorial. Its dry language, the use of initials instead of full names, and no information on how old the two workers were betray that it must have been the employer who set up the memorial for the workers killed in an accident:

Здесь трагически
погибли
Скорик А.
Диденко В.
Электромонтеры ТТУ
20.10.1992г.

Here tragically
died
Skorik, A.
Didenko, V.
Electricians from TTU [Tram &
Trolleybus Department]
20.10.1992.

Two memorials (Figures 4-26 and 4-29) dedicated to the unknown Soviet soldiers of the WWII have identical messages that are written in official and standardized language typical for the Soviet war discourse:

Невідомому солдату
полеглому
за Батьківщину
у Великій
Вітчизняній війні

To the Unknown Soldier
fallen
for Motherland
in Great
Patriotic War

Only two memorials (Figures 4-42 and 4-81) have poetic inscriptions in verse form. The first one was set up by friends and teammates of Oleksandr Beresh who mourned the loss of a friend, leader, and talented sportsman. The poem consists of five couplets. The line length is even, and a couplet rhyme is regular. After the fifth couplet, a concluding line at the bottom follows, which is not connected to the poem in terms of rhythm or rhyme, though. The language is highly poetic, and the author used many literary tropes:

Alas! You can't believe this in your heart
Yet the fate has a right to create evil.
Great gymnast Aleksandr Beresh
Will not be able to fly up like a star.
The sportsman died in motion, and immediately
In the grindstone of two collided cars.
Motherland's pride and an inspired warrior,
Who has elevated to the Olympic heights.
The leader of our Olympic team,
Our champion, friend, and pal,
In both Ukrainian and Taurican lands
A tornado of sorrow broke in our lives.
Why him and why so absurdly?
From where is thrown out the moment of the doom?
Wreaths...flowers...and long ribbons
Made of funerary crepe are waving over the coffin.

The sportsman in a full blossom of strength, hopes, and talent -
He'd rather have enlarged his glory through the achievements!
But the constant of the eternity has been ordered
To say the last "Good-bye" to him....

No, we are not all equal before Death – She persistently chooses the best of us....⁷⁴

There is a "signature" at the left bottom corner of the slab: *"Те, хто тебе любить
и помнит [(From) Those who love and remember you]." 2004.*" The inscription
is a poetic epitaph through which the friends of Oleksandr Beresh honor him,
stress his high level of skill and high status, compare him to a star, and call him an
inspired warrior. The poem is certainly written specially on the death of Beresh,
probably by one of his friends. Interestingly, the concluding line of the epitaph
reveals the folk belief about Death as an anthropomorphic creature who is able to

74 Увы! Душою этому не веришь.

Судьбе ж дано порою зло творить.
Гимнаст великий Александр Береш
Уже звездой не сможет воспарить.
Спортсмен погиб в движении мгновенно
На жерновах столкнувшихся машин.
Отчизны гордость, воин вдохновенный
До Олимпийских поднятый вершин.
Наш капитан команды Олимпийской
Наш чемпион, товарищ наш и друг.
На Украине и земле Таврийской
Печали смерч ворвался в наш досуг.
Ну почему вдруг он и так нелепо,
Откуда рока выплеснут момент?
Венки... цветы... и траурного крепа
Над гробом вьется бесконечность лент.
Спортсмен в рассвете сил, надежд, таланта
Ему в свершеньях, в славе бы расти!
Но повелела вечности константа -
Сказать ему последнее прости...
Нет, перед смертью мы не все равны. Она упорно лучших выбирает...

pick up a human to die and who does not take human lives randomly, but chooses the best representatives of humanity.

A verse from a different ADM (Figure 4-81) is located below the personal information about the deceased girl:

Как тяжелы минуты эти,
Когда закону вопреки,
Не стариков хоронят дети,
Детей своих хоронят старики.

How hard are those moments
When, against the law [of life]
Not children bury their old parents,
But parents bury their children.

This poem, or rather a stanza of five lines, is a “generic” poem that was not written specifically in memory of the deceased girl, but was probably chosen by the survivors from among the available when they ordered the slab. There are two roses engraved on the granite slab below the poem. The memorial itself has a form of a rose bud. This form, along with the engraved flowers on a symbolic level, speaks about the beauty of a young girl and her untimely death at such a tender age (she was 19 years old).

In addition, the language of the ADMs reflects certain social and historical issues such as the Russification process. From a purely linguistic point of view, there are two main languages used in the written messages on ADMs: Ukrainian and Russian. Choice of the language was probably determined by a linguistic/social/professional group to which a deceased person belonged and perhaps by personal preferences of the survivors. For example, sport – especially

at the Olympic level – has been associated with the Russian language since Soviet times. It is, therefore, natural that the late gymnast Beresh and his friends were speakers of Russian. At the same time, the use of language mostly coincides with historic-geographical borders, so that messages on ADMs in Western Ukraine are in Ukrainian, messages in Eastern and Southern Ukraine are in Russian, and messages in Central Ukraine can be in either language.

Maintenance and Commemoration

It is hard to predict what will happen to the ADMs in terms of maintenance, due to the Group Decision 2009. Prior to it, however, ADMs existed as long as survivors took care for them. Much certainly depends on how far survivors live from the ADM sites. The closer they live, the more likely it is that the ADMs will stay for the long term. The ADMs encourage people to gather, and relatives and friends visit them at more or less regular intervals. Of eighty seven sites, only a few bore signs of abandonment or deterioration at the moment of documentation. For example, the ADM in Figure 4-60 appears as a bunch of somewhat withered flowers on the ground around a light post. My interviewee stated that she had seen a “memorial” for quite a long period of time at that site (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053). It is possible that the memorial fell victim of the Group Decision of 2009 and was removed not long before I was able to document it. Also, I never found again the ADM shown in Figure 4-63 after 2005 when I

documented it for the first time. I assume the ribbons disappeared because of exposure. The rest of the memorials were clearly cared for. It is difficult to know if an ADM is being taken care of when there is no written information about the dates of the accidents on them. The most reliable way to verify that would be to visit the sites after the all-Ukrainian day of commemoration, which is usually on the following Sunday after Easter. Just as Ukrainians go to cemeteries that day and care for grave sites, so do they for the ADMs of their relatives. Most of the time, they bring fresh flowers to the permanent sites or they replace old wreaths and artificial flowers with new ones. The presence of fresh flowers and new wreaths, at least after Easter, prove that the living remember their dead relatives and continuously remind people about their tragic deaths. Figures 4-8 and 4-9 are about an ADM documented in 2005 and 2009. Since the day and month of the man's death are not indicated on this ADM, I presume that I first documented the site within the one year period after his tragic death. This is the peak mourning period when the survivors go frequently to the cemetery, bring water and sweets, and keep a ritual embroidered or plain towel or kerchief tied to a temporary wooden cross on the grave. They obviously did the same with the ADM site. Hence, the votive candles, kerchief, candies behind the right candle, and white trefoils of a black-painted cross in Figure 4-8. In 2009, this ADM site appeared to look “calmer,” all black and less outstanding, yet still visibly cared for. Figures 4-37 and 4-38 represent photographs of another memorial documented in 2005 and

2009 respectively. This ADM is known by passersby as *always* having fresh flowers on it, regardless of defined commemoration days. Figures 4-40 and 4-41 show the third memorial in 2005 and 2007. The new, bright wreath in Figure 4-41 replaced the old one on a commemoration day that happened that year a week before I documented the site.

ADM graves of unknown soldiers (Figures 3-5, 4-26, and 4-29) are constantly cared for by both local authorities and local communities. For many of those people, these graves might symbolize graves of their own relatives who never returned from the war. The bricks on the first ADM are freshly lime-washed and fences on the two last memorials are painted; there are flowers planted on the first two and a plastic wreath on the third one. Although during summers weeds grow high, they are usually cut on certain dates, and especially before Victory Day (May 9). (July 6, 2009; conversation about Figures 4-26 and 4-29 with Ol'ha Honchar.)

Flowers are not the only things left at the ADM sites. Religious artifacts, for example, can be encountered – oil lamps and votive candles similar to altar lamps and candles used in churches (Figures 4-3 and 4-8). I encountered a kerchief tied to a cross only once (Figure 4-8), in 2005. It was placed on the ADM the same way it is usually placed on a grave cross in a cemetery (Figure 3-7). Survivors often leave some objects that the deceased liked or might need in the other world. For example, there are two shot glasses, two plastic cups (one of them, taken

down by wind, lies near the slab), and a cigarette (Figure 4-74). The cigarette is obviously for the young man who is depicted with a cigarette in his mouth on the slab surface. Those who visited this ADM obviously brought alcohol and poured it into the shot glasses for the souls of the deceased. Plastic glasses could be filled with water, again for the thirsty souls of the deceased. Thus, a tradition of leaving food and drinks on the graves in the cemetery has extended to the ADMs and reflects a living folk belief about the afterlife and physicality of the soul.

Age and Gender

Twenty memorials provide information about 23 deceased people regarding the exact or approximate age of the deceased and their gender (Figures 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-10, 4-20, 4-24, 4-37, 4-42, 4-61, 4-64, 4-66, 4-74, 4-77, 4-81, 4-82, and 4-84). Another 11 ADMs provide information about the gender of thirteen deceased, but not their age (Figures 4-13, 4-19, 4-26, 4-29, 4-30, 4-59, 4-68, 4-69, 4-71, 4-78, and 4-80). Sites of multiple victims present certain complications for calculations. At one such site, the names of people of different ages can be inscribed. For example, an ADM commemorates three males of whom the oldest one was 34, and two boys 7 and 8 years old (Figure 4-82). Because of those complications, the table below represents not sites, but the ages and genders of the individual victims I was able to document:

Table 4-6. Age and Gender of the Deceased as Reflected in the ADMs

		Up 12	Teens	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	U	Total
Western region	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	M	1	1	2	2	2	2	4	14
	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central region	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	M	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	3
	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern region	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	M	-	1	3	-	1	-	5	10
	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southern region	F	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	M	2	1	1	1	-	-	2	7
	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		3	4	8	3	3	2	13	36

Legend: F – female, M – male, U – unknown

As Table 4-6 shows, only two identifiable memorials are dedicated to females, while 34 to males. It appears from my data that males are commemorated more often than females and/or that they die due to accidents more often than females. There are definitely more male than female drivers in Ukraine. On the other hand, those are often pedestrians who are commemorated through anonymous ADMs, and many of those pedestrians might be females. Because of the number of anonymous ADMs in my research, I cannot state that memorialization is gender-biased. At the same time, I would take a risk to state that memorialization is “age-biased”: big, expensive memorials tend to be set up

in memory of young people – especially beautiful ones – and such ADMs are more likely to fully identify the deceased.

ADMs as Sites of Protests: The Dead as Spokesmen

There exists a contemporary type of specifically Ukrainian ADMs which I call “resonant” ADMs. Such ADMs transcend their individual or family significance and become “embodied memories;” i.e. they serve as mnemonic markers for the many. They started appearing approximately in 2006 in different parts of the country, yet under quite similar circumstances. If the majority of “regular” ADMs – especially those along roads – testify to the blind chance that struck humans in the wrong place at the wrong moment, where victims and perpetrators possibly might share some responsibility for what had happened, the “resonant” ADMs are different. Each of them symbolizes an “evil murder on the road.” There are several common features that unite people who caused death. Such people are called *hamantsi* (wallets) by Ukrainians. This word provides, metonymically, their collective psychological portrait: they are young with high social status, disproportionally high incomes, and connections in the world of business and politics that make them automatically immune to the corrupt judicial system. As a result, they demonstrate complete disregard for any rules, including the driving rules.⁷⁵ The most gruesome event inspiring the appearance of a

⁷⁵ See examples of the “resonant” accidents presented in the media: Borodai 2008a (Khrkiv city). (The name of the website is provocative and misleading, yet the abbreviation “ПІОФНО”

“resonant” ADM occurred in Kremenchuh (Poltava region) on April 5, 2008. A heavily intoxicated local businessman was driving his Porsche Cayenne at an estimated speed of 180 km/h and caused the deaths of three pedestrians whose bodies were torn to pieces. Their funerals took place on April 8, and the same day the relatives of the victims were said to have come to the place of tragedy to sit and cry. A memorial was immediately set next to where the tragedy had taken place, and several days later, dozens of protesters came to express their anger. They brought flowers, candles, and pictures of the deceased. They blocked a part of the road, and demanded justice – in this case, a just punishment for the driver and acceptance of new government laws providing for road safety. Some of the protesters were not related to the victims, but they came out of moral conviction to fight back, to petition the authorities.⁷⁶ The Internet forums discussing this accident were full of comments by outraged Ukrainians who did not feel safe or protected on the roads; they viewed the event as just another incident in a chain of the “war of the impudent and blatant with the weak and submissive” (Borodai 2008). Many were voices of despair calling for revenge, suggesting the Lynch Law for the “wallet” drivers.

stands for “Прискіпливий Огляд Роботи Народних Обранців [The Close Review of the Work of the People's Deputies]”); No author 2007 (Kyiv).

⁷⁶ See photos from the protest, the ADM site in Kremenchuh, and the petition text on: http://talks.guns.ru/forum_light_message/146/310591-m7056862.html; <http://www.kremenchug.ua/news/society/5397-my-trebuem-publichnogo-rassledovanija-dtp-po-vine.html> (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

Such “resonant” ADMs are the monuments of protest, sites of confrontation. Despite the aggressive suggestions of some of the Internet users, memorials are non-violent protests against outrageous violence on the roads. They serve as symbols of disordered social relationships and even class conflict (cf Harrison 2004: 146), stratification of the society into the rich-and-powerful and poor-and-powerless. Such ADMs attract people who assign a different meaning to the death of the victims: to them, the death was not accidental; it was a murder unofficially sanctioned by corrupt authorities, both local and state. Such ADMs inspire people to cooperate and demand social action – if only temporarily.

In Kyiv, pedestrians and cyclists held a protest called “*Час наїхати на владу* [*It is Time to Run over the Authorities*] to fight for the right to have designated safe bicycle lanes and not become victims of the “wallet” drivers.⁷⁷ It was organized after a 20-year-old cyclist was struck and killed by a drunk driver (Lebedieva 2008). Among six cyclists who became victims in June 2008 was well known Ukrainian translator Anatolii Perepadia. A group memorial for all six victims appeared only on December 12, 2008 and had the form of a bike with a plate containing the names of the victims (Avk 2008). Memorials resulting from such accidents become signatures of protest against the killing of intellectually advanced people (cyclists in big cities like Kyiv or Kharkiv are mostly people

⁷⁷ Video from the protest demonstration: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LE8Mc5nvPIU> (last consulted on August 25, 2010). The verb *naïikhaty* has a double meaning in contemporary Ukrainian: to run someone over and to bully.

with a European worldview and values) by the feeble-minded whose only religion is money. Those who erected a special memorial in Kyiv in a shape of a bicycle with the names of six victims in December 2008 certainly followed the design and tradition of the ghost bikes known in Europe and North America.⁷⁸ Those memorials, too, are political statements reminding cyclists about danger on the roads and motorists about the need to share road space. At the same time, in the West, they are often used as artistic installations and sometimes serve as road signs warning about potentially dangerous locations. In Ukraine, however, both ghost bikes and other ADMs appear only as desperate statements of tragic deaths that have taken place. Since there are no cyclist lanes in Ukrainian cities, such memorials become protests against authorities who disregard the lives of ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

Given the enormous number of ADM sites in Ukraine, it is impossible to systematize all of them. My research is an attempt to provide a general overview. Although ADMs are cenotaphs, i.e., symbolic burials with the actual remains in cemeteries, many have the appearances of graves. Characteristically, such

⁷⁸ The ghost bike first appeared in October 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri and then spread around the world. Usually, deformed bicycles painted white – hence, ghost-like – and with small plaques attached to them are chained to suitable posts near places where cyclists were killed or injured by motorists. Read more about ghost bikes: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_bike; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1034562/White-ghost-bikes-pay-tribute-dead-riders-danger-spots-Britain.html>; <http://jscms.jrn.columbia.edu/cns/2007-03-27/twarowski-ghostbikesunite.html> (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

memorials are often fenced just as individual graves in Ukrainian cemeteries are. This may happen because there are no agencies specializing in manufacturing ADMs; Ukrainians have to order ready-made tombstones from funeral supply shops, which commission them for the “regular” cemetery sites. They are cheaper than memorials which are custom designed. The designs of such tombstones certainly reflect regional variations; i.e. both ADMs and cemetery tombstones in one region differ from those in another region. Yet, despite all differences, there is a certain degree of repetition of typical designs in various parts of the country. This probably happens because the burial agencies usually produce standard memorials out of standard materials. In addition, ADMs and cemetery tombstones representations of certain social ideas and beliefs; i.e. they reflect a shared cultural understanding of death-related issues as well as death-appropriate aesthetics within the Ukrainian milieu.

Designs of death-related architectural forms change over time for various reasons, one of them being change in public attitudes toward open expression of religion. Thus, a once popular Soviet memorial form, the star-terminating obelisk, was widely used for both the grave sites and ADMs in Soviet times. Nowadays, it is almost out of use as a tombstone, but can still be encountered at the places of abnormal death, albeit with a cross instead of a star. Crosses as common public markers of death returned around the 1990s and “legally” appeared on ADMs. Yet I argue that a cross is not the primary identifying feature of Ukrainian ADMs,

especially within cities. Contemporary cemeteries, especially in large cities, have moved away from the modest, uniform tombstone designs of previous times. This tendency to customize memorials and make them grandiose to the point of being architectural arts forms has affected some ADMs as well.

Standard ADMs consist of wreaths, crosses, slabs, flowers, and ribbons in various combinations, though “wreath-only,” “ribbons-only,” or “flowers-only” memorials are also quite common. There are no strict principles of decoration, so numerous variations are observed, and people often demonstrate the importance of visual aesthetics in memorial decorations. The non-standard designs of ADMs range from original customized monuments made of marble to religious shrines, obelisks, stones, and other smaller forms. Many elements of contemporary Ukrainian ADMs such as photos of the deceased, use of vehicle parts (tires), providing the affiliation information, etc., link them to the culture of modernity and even postmodernity. ADMs tend to become personalized more and more, although anonymous sites still predominate. Messages on ADMs communicate to the living important social facts of the deceased, such as role, status, or occupation, and tend to relate the deceased to a certain age group. All memorials that identify the deceased by dates of life in my research commemorate younger people. The oldest deceased people my research identified were 45 year-old males (Figures 4-10 and 4-66). The fact that the majority of the identified victims were male should not be interpreted as a sign that memorialization favors that gender. It

is impossible to know. I documented more than twice as many anonymous ADMs as personalized ones, and the former do not specify gender.

The double commemorative practice seems to be common; i.e. survivors visit grave sites and ADM sites and display the same patterns of ritual behavior at both: they leave flowers, votive candles, food, water, alcohol, candies, cigarettes, etc. Survivors visit ADMs regularly and often on the special commemorative days, similar to their practice at grave sites.

The Group Decision of 2009 on destroying ADMs interfered with my fieldwork plans. On the other hand, it became potentially useful for verifying how resistant the popular ritual of marking places of tragic death was. The next chapter will reveal public attitudes among Ukrainians towards both ADMs and the 2009 Group Decision that prescribed their destruction.

CHAPTER FIVE:

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADMs IN UKRAINE

From the social psychology point of view, attitudes are “evaluative (positive or negative) reactions to people, issues, or objects” (Brown 2006: 195). According to the Tricomponent Theory of Attitudes, they consist of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Breckler and Wiggins, 1989). The cognitive component embraces all the knowledge people have about an attitude issue in question. The affective component includes feelings people report/display. Finally, behavioral components imply actions, since attitudes tend to be linked to certain types of behavioral tendencies, mostly those of approach or avoidance (Brown 2006: 196). It is commonly held that attitudes can be formed through any of the three components, i.e., through cognitive, emotional, or behavioral factors. Attitudes are a flexible construct: they can change along with a person's experience or they can be modified in a certain direction through, for example, persuasion. Despite this seeming instability it is still possible to measure attitudes through either implicit measures (i.e., automatic associations, when people do not know what is being assessed) or explicit measures, through self-reports. In this chapter I present and analyze public attitudes of Ukrainians towards ADMs based on results of my survey, personal interviews, and comments by readers of electronic media. While doing this, I focus more on cognitive and affective components of attitudes, i.e.,

what people think and how they feel about ADMs. The behavioral component is researched less due to the objective difficulties like the number of ADMs' first-hand stakeholders and their willingness to speak about the matter. In addition to this specific problem, it was hard to solicit or measure attitudes towards ADMs in general because there is no single term for them in Ukrainian. The expression “roadside memorials” is well understood in the English-speaking world, yet it cannot be easily translated into Ukrainian. The survey respondents in 2007 sometimes associated the word *пам'ятник* [a memorial] with an officially sanctioned memorial and thus listed eternal flame and memorials dedicated to the Soviet Soldiers of the WWII, memorials dedicated to the Chornobyl' *liquidators* (people who were in charge of the removal of the consequences of the April 1986 Chornobyl' catastrophe), or even the Taras Shevchenko (Ukrainian national symbol, 19th century poet) monument as ADMs. Such survey forms had to be discarded. In 2009 I tried to eliminate the confusion of terminology that could influence people's attitudes and tried to obtain the emic term by asking my informants how they called places indicating death in traffic collisions and how places of tragic deaths generally were marked. There was no single definition of this phenomenon, but a number of generic terms. My interviewees and survey respondents used various words and phrases in their answers: roadside memorials, crosses, crosses with pictures, wreaths, wreaths near roads, mourning wreaths, wreaths at the roadsides, memorial wreaths, wreaths made of artificial flowers,

small memorials, improvised memorials, flower beds, ribbons, funerary ribbons, etc.⁷⁹ I subdivided all the respondents into two groups – official and unofficial, since their attitudes were different.

The Group of Respondents with “Official Attitudes”

2009 was a turning point for both my research and public attitudes towards ADMs in Ukraine when in February Ukrainian officials publicly announced the illegitimate status of the roadside memorials and their intention to destruct them. Official respondents included those whose jobs required them to deal with ADMs and decide on whether those should stay at the sites where they are, be moved, or be dismantled. Among such respondents were representatives of the road maintenance services, road constructions, local city authorities, and a businessman on whose property an ADM is located. It also included the authorities responsible for introducing and implementing public laws or regulations regarding ADMs (e.g., the Ukrainian Ministry of Transportation, State Office for Automotive Roads of Ukraine, or *Ukravtodor*, and the State Automotive Inspection Department of Ukraine, or *Derzhavtoinspektsiia*). Finally, attitudes of the official group respondents were reflected in the mass-media. There was almost no interest in ADMs prior to the Group Decision of the *Ukravtodor* and Ministry of Transportation to get rid of roadside memorials of all kinds. Several relevant

⁷⁹ “Пам'ятники при дорозі, хрести, хрести з фотографією, вінки, вінки біля дороги, жалобні вінки на узбіччі, мемореальні вінки, вінки з неживих квітів, маленькі вінки, пам'ятники, імпровізовані пам'ятники, клумби, стрічки, траурні стрічки.”

online publications mentioned ADMs primarily in relation to the poor quality of roads which contributed to the fatal accidents that they marked (Kulyk 2007; Hulan 2007; No author 2008) or on the “resonant” accidents when ADMs served as sites of social protest (Borodai 2008; Borodai 2008a). None of those publications concentrated on the phenomenon of ADMs per se. Immediately after the Group Decision, however, numerous print and electronic publications appeared, dedicated purely to memorializing traffic deaths. The publications stirred public awareness of ADMs, provoked a few public debates about their appropriateness, and labeled roadside memorials a public problem to be solved. Most of those publications seemed to try to modify public attitudes toward ADMs in a direction the authorities desired. The authors were newspaper journalists who tried to base their arguments on logical rather than emotional grounds and present opposing views – those of the functionaries and ordinary citizens – yet tended to quote mostly authorities, such as a state or local official whose attitudes towards ADMs were negative. The authors often borrowed terminology from the official sources, calling ADMs “ritual signs” (Hribiniuk 2009; Shandovs'ka et al. 2009), “improvised memorials” (Kos 2009), “symbolic graves” (No author 2009), and even “ritual obstacles” (Fedchenko 2009). Through such publications, the authorities retranslated their attitudes and tried to convey several main, yet not always true, ideas about ADMs: 1) they are a very recent folk invention (i.e., have no cultural continuity); 2) they negatively affect any driver's mood and ability to

react to the road situations quickly and thus cause further accidents; 3) they spoil the aesthetic look of the Ukrainian roadsides; 4) they violate the Ninth Article of the “Law of Ukraine Regarding the Automobile Roads” [*Закон України про автомобільні дороги*];⁸⁰ 5) they are inappropriate for any “developed European country.”

Some mass-media publications openly campaigned against ADMs and at least one author went as far as to say that ADMs testified to the “loss of culture in such a delicate sphere as commemorating memory of the deceased” (Tishchenko 2010). In addition, authors of mass-media publications often presented excerpts of interviews with the Ukrainian clergy. Their attitudes cannot be really considered official attitudes, since Ukraine is a secular state. At the same time, the media positioned priests as moral authorities, as experts in religious and spiritual matters. In such publications, priests spoke on behalf of the Church and advocated against ADMs (Hribiniuk and Zamoroka 2009; Kos 2009; No author 2009; Shandovs'ka et al. 2009; Tishchenko 2010). The main arguments of six priests cited in five publications (all of which appeared after February 2009) were that the Church did not approve of ADMs and that people who set them up abused the sacred symbol of the cross: “The Church approves of a cross on a grave.

80 “Закон України про автомобільні дороги” [Law of Ukraine Regarding the Automobile Roads] was adopted by the Supreme Council of Ukraine in 2005. Its Ninth Article enumerates all the objects that are permitted along the roads and stresses that any objects not listed are prohibited. ADMs are not listed there, therefore, they are illegal “by default.” See the full text of the Law: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=2862-15> (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

According to the Bible, during the Second Coming of Christ, all the dead will resurrect and pick up those crosses that stand on their graves. That is why it is not worth setting up ritual signs at the sites of accidents” (a priest from Uzhhorod city; No author 2009a); “Eastern Orthodox Christians do not have a custom of setting up monuments to those killed near a building or in front of a hospital. Now look at the monuments designed as Orthodox crosses. A cross summons a believer to stop and cross oneself, and is it worth doing on a road section where accidents may happen? Memorials should be set up in cemeteries, and [we] should pray for those who lost their lives on the roads at the places of their burial” (a priest from Khmel'nyts'kyi city; Hribiniuk and Zamoroka 2009); “A place where a cross, shrine, or some other religious sign is being erected under the Church authorities' approval becomes a place of public veneration, and the majority of roadside crosses do not have Church approval. Instead they entirely represent private initiatives” (a priest from L'viv; Kos 2009); “All the ritual signs along the roads are a sort of cult. This does not help the soul of the killed people. We should just pray for [such] a person”; “Since there is no grave of a person killed near the road, any [religious] symbols should not be there [present]. Flowers, wreaths, or memorials – all these should be in a cemetery” (two priests from Khmel'nyts'kyi; Shandovs'ka et al. 2009); “The appropriateness of a great Christian symbol at a place of unnatural death is doubtful, since traffic accidents happen because of someone's fault. It means that the great deceiver acted through a person who

caused an accident. And whether his [Satan's] actions deserve to be marked by crosses is a rhetorical question, I think” (a priest from the Ternopil' region; Tishchenko 2010).

Interestingly, both in my personal interviews and in the mass media, people in power who expressed “official” attitudes would often balance them with the “unofficial” ones. It is as if tried to divide themselves into official functionaries who had to follow certain professional rules or instructions and people who empathized with the survivors: “From a moral point of view, we understand those people whose loved ones died in traffic accidents, and there is a memorial set up at that place. We have, however, the instruction to destruct all those objects” (Hribiniuk 2009). The functionaries also acknowledged what Haskins and De Rose (2003) called the “spatial rites” of survivors – their access to ADMs to leave flowers or other memorial offerings (p. 391): “I am against them appearing along the roads, since there exist [defined] norms, there exist roadway regulations... Yes, it is understandable that this [ADM] is [a sign of] memory and it has a right to exist, but it has to be either in a cemetery or beyond a point of reach, so that they [ADMs] would not disturb drivers and where the survivors could come to” (Iurii Sh-o, July 26, 2007; file DS220017).⁸¹

⁸¹ “Я противник, щоби вони ставилися на узбіччі, бо є норми, є наші вимоги дорожні... Я ж говорю, це зрозуміло, що це пам'ять, це воно повинно все бути, але воно повинно... або пам'ятники ставляться на кладовищі, або в смузі відвода, де вони не заважають водіям, учасникам дорожнього руху, куди навіть рідні можуть прийти.”

The ADM in Figure 4-38 is located a meter away from a window of the electronics store. The current Director of this store was puzzled by the questions regarding the memorial and the hypothetical possibility of it being dismantled or moved: “I came [to work as a Director] two months ago. They said that it [the memorial] stood [there] - the previous Director said. On the one hand, from a humane point of view, it is okay, but on the other hand, I, of course, think that memorials belong in cemeteries. This was not a fallen hero... I would suggest transferring this memorial to a cemetery where it belongs, but who is to decide [on such matters]?” (anonymously, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220009).⁸²

ADMs in Figures 4-42 through 4-46 are located not too far from the office of the Kyivan State Roadway Maintenance Service (*Київська Державна Шляхова служба*), and this Service is responsible for many other ADMs. When asked about them, a Service foreman mentioned that many cause seasonal troubles when Service workers have to mow the grass or clear snow along the roadways with machines: “A mowing machine has to go around such a memorial, and we then have to send workers to manually cut down the grass [around such memorials]. I used to work in both Kyiv and Sumy regions, and there [Sumy] we mowed manually as well [around ADMs]” (Serhii, July 24, 2007; file

82 “Я прийшов два місяці тому. Сказали, що він стоїть – попередній директор сказав. За великим рахунком, з одного боку, ніби, як з людського погляду, це все – нормально, а з іншого боку, звичайно, я вважаю, що пам'ятникам місце на цвинтарі. Це не горой поліг... я би все ж таки запропонував цей пам'ятник перенести на цвинтар, де йому і місце, але до кого звертатися?!”

DS220014).⁸³ Yet, according to both the Head of the Service and the foreman, it never occurred to them to dismantle the memorials: “We try to go around them... We can't raise a hand against them, for those, let's say, are sanctities...” (Iurii Sh-o, July 26, 2007; file DS220017).⁸⁴ “Memorials are just memorials... I personally, as a normal human, do not mind them... No, we don't touch them, do not destroy” (Serhii, July 24, 2007; file DS220014).⁸⁵

The Group of Respondents with “Unofficial Attitudes”

I obtained “unofficial attitudes” partly through personal interviews, but mainly through a short survey and various web forums. In the latter case, I collected the comments to online articles dedicated to the problem of ADMs in Ukraine. All the people from this group expressed their personal feelings about ADMs, yet they could not influence the official decisions regarding them on either local or state levels. Unofficial group respondents included those ordinary Ukrainians who pass by ADMs on daily routes, survivors who set them up, pedestrians, car owners, professional drivers like taxi drivers and public bus drivers, and the clergy. I include the attitudes of the priests I interviewed in this “unofficial attitudes” group, since churches are silent on ADMs: “The Church does not say anything special about ADMs, for it is not some specifically religious

83 “Йде якщо косарка, вона цей пам'ятник об'їжджає і доводиться потім туди людей посилати, щоби вони вручну самі викошували. Я тут у Київській області працював і в Сумській області, і ми там обкошували – і все.”

84 “Ну, ми ж намагаємося їх об'їжджати... В нас рука не піднімається їх зносити, бо це святині, будемо говорити...”

85 “Пам'ятники як пам'ятники... Мене особисто як нормальну людину вони не дістають... Не чіпаємо їх, не зносимо.”

matter” (Rev. Oleksii, July 11, 2007; file “RevOleksii_05”); “I am not aware of any designated opinion of the Church on the crosses at the places where people died in road collisions” (Rev. Roman N-k, July 17, 2007; file “RevRoman_05”).⁸⁶ Among my interviewees there were one Jehovah's Witnesses spiritual leader (*смапоства*), two Ukrainian Eastern Orthodox priests (of the Moscow Patriarchate), and four Greek Catholic priests. Therefore, each priest tended to present personal attitudes based on the knowledge he had gained at the seminary. As a result, questions about the human soul and afterlife, the necessity for maintaining the memorials, duration of that maintenance, and so forth, evoked different answers, even from representatives of the same denomination or congregation. Despite a commonly held opinion that cemeteries were the only legal and sanctified burial places where crosses are appropriate, none of the seven priests I interviewed expressed negative attitudes towards ADMs. Five were neutral, while the attitudes of the remaining two priests were rather positive.

That the mass media influenced the attitudes about ADMs in respondents of the “unofficial” group is evident from their reactions to my questions. While in 2007 people were astounded to hear any questions about ADMs, especially about any prospective regulations of them, in 2009 some respondents stressed that their attitudes were formed by the mass media, or at least they implied that

⁸⁶ “Церква про це свого слова якось спеціально не каже, бо це не є якась спеціальна церковна справа”; “Я не знаю якоїсь загальної церковної думки щодо хрестів на місці загибелі людей в автокатастрофі.”

modification of their attitudes was possible and would depend on the strength of arguments of those speaking about ADMs: “[My reaction to the Group Decision is] positive. I listened to the [arguments] in favor and against in the news, and I agree with those who are against [ADMs]” (Hanna B-i, July 6, 2009; file STE-027).⁸⁷ “Frankly speaking, I cannot support the argument why I am against these ADMs. If there were a person next to me who would convince me that they are necessary I would maybe agree with her. If there were another person who would convince me that they are not necessary, I would, again, agree with *her*. I do not have a definite opinion” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).⁸⁸

Virtually all my respondents from the unofficial group – interviewees and survey respondents – were aware that ADMs were everywhere in Ukraine, and not restricted to the country. All had been exposed to various ADMs and were convinced that the number was huge and constantly growing: “They are all over Ukraine and in Russia [as well]. We were driving and saw that in the Crimea, there is one wreath next to another” (Liubov D-o, Kyiv, July 30, 2007; file DS220026).⁸⁹ “I used to drive to distant places [like] the North [of the Russian Federation], Surgut, Nefteyugansk, Moscow, Urals. There are many memorials

87 “(Я ставлюся) позитивно, бо я послухала в новинах (аргументи) “за”(і) ”проти” і все ж таки згідна з тими, хто проти.”

88 “Якщо чесно, я не можу сказати аргументовано – от чому я проти оцих пам’ятників. Якщо би зараз сиділа поруч зі мною людина, яка мене би переконала, що от вони потрібні, то може я б і пристала до цієї думки. Якби сиділа інша людина і сказала б аргументовано, що це непотрібне, я би пристала до цієї думки. В мене немає *конкретної* думки.”

89 “Вони по всій Україні, в Росії. Ми їхали, бачили: в Криму на трасах - віночок на віночку.”

along those long highways” (Hennadii Z-v, May 15, 2009; file STE-001).⁹⁰ “I saw roadside memorials everywhere, and especially many of them in Germany” (Ihor, a truck driver; private conversation on July 8, 2009). “In Ukraine... if you drive, there is a memorial, [another] memorial, [and yet another] memorial..., and their numbers become bigger and bigger” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 22, 2007; file DS220005).⁹¹

Despite their numbers, whether or not memorials had a right to exist was not considered an appropriate or timely topic for public debates prior to 2009 and the idea of active participation by state authorities seemed alien. My respondents suggested that even if there were such laws or regulations, they would conflict with the natural, or rather traditional urge of people to commemorate their dead. Virtually all respondents acknowledged that there were no regulations regarding ADMs in Ukraine, and that any decisions regarding setting them up were at the survivors' discretion: “It depends on a person, on what her heart tells her [to do]: if it tells to set up [an ADM] then set it up” (anonymous bus driver with 30 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007, file DS220022).⁹² “There are places where they [ADM]s should not be set up, but they nevertheless appear there. My understanding is that this is up to people: they set them up and the road police do

90 “Я раніше їздив далеко: і на Північ, Сургут, Нефтеюганск, Москва, Урал. І там на цих великих трасах дуже багато пам'ятників.”

91 “В Україні... Їхать – пам'ятник, пам'ятник, пам'ятник, пам'ятник... І їх же ж все більше і більше.”

92 “Це від людини залежить – як їй серце підказує: ставити – значить, ставити.”

not pay attention” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 22, 2007; file DS220004).⁹³ “There is nothing [written against ADMs] in the driving instructions. Neither road police nor government will do anything [against ADMs] because it is the private matter of every single person” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 24, 2007, file DS220013).⁹⁴ “Probably there are regulations. If they [ADMs] were prohibited then [people] would not set them up. And people erect them. It means there are no “prohibiting” laws. It probably started spontaneously, and nobody prohibited this... I have seen them for years and years, and nobody prohibits them. Probably, an eager beaver who would ban them has not yet come” (anonymous bus driver with 30 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007, file DS220020).⁹⁵ “I do not think it is so simple to prohibit a family [to erect an ADM]. We need to show solidarity to the pain of others, since pain is not somebody else's. Property can be somebody else's, [but] pain should be our common [lot]. Pain implies solidarity. This is a family's will, since [the accident is] a family's tragedy, and it is the family's right to put a cross or a wreath... This is not something that has to be done, yet it is not something that needs to be forbidden” (Rev. Oleksii, July 1, 2007; file

93 “Є навіть такі місця, де їх не можна встановлювати, но їх, в принципі, встановлюють. Я так розумію, що це просто все від людей залежить – встановлюють і ГАІ якось не звертає уваги.”

94 “В правилах дорожнього руху нічого (проти) не написано. Ні ДАІ, ні уряд нічого не зроблять, бо це особиста справа кожної людини – який хочеш, такий став.”

95 “Мабуть, нема законів, бо якби забороняли, то не ставили б. А люди ставлять – значить, немає заборонних законів. Це, мабуть, виникло так спонтанно і ніхто то не забороняє... я бачу їх роками і ніхто не забороняє. Значить не прийшла ще така гаряча голова, яка б це заборонила.”

“RevOleksii_05”).⁹⁶ “I do not know... it is unlikely that they [regulations] on ADMs exist... Maybe there are some instructions on the roadsides. I would be surprised if there aren't any. It is probably a violation [to erect an ADM], especially in cities... I think some regulations exist, but nobody wants to fight with people over this... I think they [laws on ADMs] will be necessary, but at this moment it is not something important... It will come, and we will mature to having such unpopular decisions regarding the implementation of the monuments” (Vitalii K-i, July 24, 2007; file DS20015).⁹⁷

During the summer 2009, many respondents – some of them already knew about the Group Decision, and some learned about it from me – still did not approve of it, or at least their attitudes were not polarized: “I think it is impossible to regulate such things by laws. Everything in this matter [of ADMs] is very subjective, [and] whoever does not want to [erect an ADM] does not erect it. For someone this [setting up an ADM] is very important; [therefore] he has a right to lay down flowers [on an ADM] or something like that” (Ol'ha H-r, July 4, 2009; file STE-012).⁹⁸ “Any person must to have a right to erect a memorial, cross, or

96 “Я не думаю, що це так легко родині, батькам заборонити. Ми маємо бути солідарні з чужим болем, бо біль не є чужим. Це майно може бути чужим, але біль – це те, що повинно бути спільним. Він вимагає солідарності.”

97 “Я не знаю... напевно чи вони (закони) існують про пам'ятники... напевно, є якісь придорожні іструкції; мені було б дивно, якщо їх немає. Тобто це, напевно, порушення, особливо в місті... я думаю, ...якісь інструкції з цього приводу є, але просто ніхто не хоче вступати з цього приводу з людьми в конфлікт... Я думаю, що вони (закони) будуть потрібні, але це не на часі... Це розвиток суспільства... Колись дійдемо до того, що будуть прийняті непопулярні рішення щодо цих пам'ятників.”

98 “Мені здається, такі речі взагалі не можна регулювати законом. Це все дуже індивідуально – хто не хоче, той не ставить. Для когось це важливо – він має право покласти квіти або щось подібне.”

lay down flowers where her loved ones got killed in a way that person wishes” (female surveyed in 2009, 20 y.o., with experience of loss (from this point on, abbreviated as WEOL)).⁹⁹ “More important is what people who set up a memorial think. It is a memorial sign, and since people have already set it up, they would feel wronged if the memorial got prohibited all of a sudden. This [the ADM] is not a paint that could be washed away from a fence. This is really a reminder about somebody's life” (Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file STE-007).¹⁰⁰ “I think, since they already exist, then... maybe [it would be better] to stop setting up new ADMs and let stay those which already exist” (Volodymyr; July 4, 2009; file STE-018).¹⁰¹ “It's better to first deal with people's souls, for there is distrust there [toward the government], they protest. This regulation [about ADMs], ...there should first [be] a certain level of the [society] morale, and only then [should] laws appear on such delicate matters. There are strict laws, for example, regarding stealing, and here – here is the soul. It is necessary to make people ready first and then prohibit [ADMs]. Once people thought it was all right to ruin churches... If it [an ADM] already there, let it be. [Destroying ADMs] will bring much pain [to those who erected them]” (Nadiia K-a, July 5, 2009; file STE-022).¹⁰² “I did not

99 “Кожна людина повинна мати право на встанову пам'ятника, хреста, квітів на місце загибелі його рідних таким чином як вона сама цього бажає.”

100 “Важливіше думка людей, які спорудили такі пам'ятники. Це свого роду мемореальний знак і раз уже люди встановили його, то мабуть вони почувалися скривдженими, якщо його раптом заборонили би. Це не фарба, яку можна змити з паркану, це дійсно нагадування про долю людини.”

101 “Думаю, раз вони вже є, то... Можливо, якщо зупинити (встановлення), то зупинити, а ті, які вже є, то хай будуть.”

102 “Треба спочатку навести лад у душах, бо коли люди зневірені, вони все сприймають у штики. Цей законопроект... спочатку налагоджується мораль, а вже потім видаються такі,

hear [about the 2009 Group Decision]. For many people this [destroying ADMs] will be yet another tragedy, for some people treat it [an ADM] as a very important thing in their lives. I think the authorities first should have asked the people and then decide” (Andrii P-k, July 6, 2009; file STE-038).¹⁰³ “I can keep saying that I am against [ADMs], but if I were to decide on them, I do not know if I would vote for such a law [banning ADMs]... I sort of in favor of such a law, but I do not know if I would implement it and if I would even create such a law” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).¹⁰⁴ “I think our roads will always have such memorials, so there is no sense to prohibit [them]” (Rev. Roman, July 24, 2009; file STE-048).¹⁰⁵

The strength of attitude is believed to depend on a degree of involvement of a person with what is being judged. More than a half of the 173 survey respondents (99 respondents (Na), or 57.2%) reported having the personal experience of losing someone they knew due to an accident, yet only 21 of them (21.2%) reported having personal experience of setting up ADMs at the places of accidents. I intentionally included questions about such personal experience to

які мають таку тонку грань. Є чіткі закони, наприклад, не красти, а тут – тут душа. Треба спочатку підготувати (людей), а потім забороняти. Колись люди вважали правильним зносити церкви. Раз уже його поставили – хай він стоїть. Це буде завдати дуже великого болю, бо якщо вже люди поставили...”

103 “Не чув (про рішення). Для багатьох людей це буде ще одна трагедія, бо дехто вважає це (мемореал) дуже важливим у своєму житті. Думаю, влада могла би запитати думку народу, а потім приймати рішення.”

104 “Я можу говорити, що я проти (пам'ятників), але якби від мене залежало прийняття законів, я не знаю, чи я би навіть проголосувала за цей закон... Ніби я за закон, але сама не знаю, чи я б його виконувала і чи я б його створила, коли б це від мене залежало.”

105 “Я думаю, що наші дороги завжди будуть із такими пам'ятниками, тому забороняти немає сенсу.”

further subdivide my respondents and verify how the experience would influence people's attitudes toward ADMs. Informants with a personal experience of sudden tragic loss could better relate to the problem of ADMs; such experience could influence the affective and behavioural components of their attitudes, making respondents more in favour of ADMs. In the attitudes of respondents without such experience, the cognitive component would dominate, I reasoned, and they would be rather against the memorials. The table below represents the ratio of those survey-takers who reported having personal experience with sudden tragic death:

Table 5-1. Experience of Loss and Erecting ADMs in Survey-Takers

Respondents with:	Na	Out of Na, %	Out of N, %
Experience of loss	99	100	57.2
Experience of setting up ADMs	21	21.2	12.1

As the table shows, not many informants dealt with setting up ADMs (12.1% of all the survey takers), yet the number of people who experienced loss from a sudden tragic death is stunning. I got an indirect confirmation about the mutual dependence between experience of tragic loss and attitudes towards ADMs from personal interviews. Informants stressed they were in no moral position to disapprove of ADMs since they never faced a situation of losing someone due to sudden accidental death: “It is hard for me to say [why people set up ADMs], since I have never buried anyone that way [after a deadly accident]” (Ol'ha H-r,

July 4, 2009; file STE-012);¹⁰⁶ “They [ADMs] do not make me tense or irritated. I can just imagine the feelings of the survivors. For them it serves as an additional reminder of what has happened and how” (Volodymyr, July 4, 2009; file STE-018);¹⁰⁷ “Someone will not even notice [ADMs], but a person who had that experience – who lost a relative or friend – will pay attention [to ADMs]” (Larysa K-a, July 13, 2009; file STE-044);¹⁰⁸ “My attitude toward them has changed, for when you personally have not experienced some grief, you can sympathize, or at least you think you sympathize... So now I drive and think, 'Lord, how much human grief there is along the roads.' [My attitude] has surely changed because it has happened to me. When it does not happen to you [personally] then it [feels] remote, but when it happens to you, it becomes very close. Even though I say I am absolutely against [ADMs], [my] attitude is changing now. I keep noticing them... There are small memorials [and] photos engraved, and I notice how many young people, how many children... I mean I pay closer attention. Willy-nilly, I pay attention. I don't know what kind of personality you should have to be absolutely untouched by other people's grief” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).¹⁰⁹

106 “Важко сказати (чому ставлять мемореали), бо я нікого так не хоронила.”

107 “Вони не напружують і не нервують, я просто можу уявити відчуття родичів, які це пережили. Для них це служить зайвим нагадуванням про те, що відбулося і як відбулося.”

108 “Один, може, і не зверне уваги на це (на мемореал), а інший, якщо стикнувся з цим – загинув у нього родич або товариш – він може звертати на це увагу.”

109 “Моє ставлення до них змінилося, бо коли ви не пережили якогось горя, ви можете співчувати, принаймні, ви думаете, що ви співчуваєте, а так от я їду і думаю: “Господи, скільки людського горя на дорогах”. Змінилося однозначно, бо це сталося зі мною. Коли не з тобою, то це таке далеке, а коли з вами це стається, це вже стає дуже близьким. Навіть коли я кажу, що категорично проти, то якраз ставлення змінюється - я їх зауважую сама для себе: там же невеличкі пам'ятники, фотографії викарбувані і я дивлюсь, що скільки молодих, скільки дітей... Тобто я на них пильніше звертаю увагу. Хочеш-не хочеш, а око звертає увагу.

The Table 5-2 provides a comparative look at the survey results of respondents divided along the line of personal experience. The leftmost column presents the survey questions (see Appendix B) modified into declarative sentences, while numbers represent percentages of respondents whose answers to the corresponding survey questions were positive.

Table 5-2. Attitudes towards ADMs: The Survey Results, %

	N	Na	Nb
ADMs are a Christian tradition	57.8(100)	60	74
ADMs are special/sacred places	63(109)	60	49
ADMs are safety hazards	42.2(73)	42	31
I am for standard design of ADMs	34.1	29	30
I support anti-ADM initiatives	27.2(47)	26	21

In this table, N=173 (or total number of survey takers), Na=99 (those who have experience of loss), and Nb=74 (those without such an experience). Columns 3 and 4 represent (in raw numbers) how the total number is distributed among those two groups of people. As the table shows, 63% of the survey-takers perceived ADMs as places with special, spiritual significance. More than a half (57.8%) viewed ADMs as a Christian tradition. This certainly did not imply only ADMs designed as crosses but the tradition as a whole. Nearly a half of

respondents (42.2%) considered ADMs as potentially dangerous distractors for drivers, yet less than a third (27.2%) admitted their willingness to support state initiatives directed against ADMs along the roads. Also, only 34.1% of respondents would vote for a unified, standard design of ADMs.

It is worth mentioning that the interviewees demonstrated similar discrepancies as well, and that the attitudes expressed towards ADMs tended to be inconsistent, depending on whether they were held before or after February, 2009. Interestingly, those respondents who had personal experience with abnormal death and setting up ADMs provided comments at the very end of the questionnaires more often than the other group and their comments tended to be lengthier. Some of the comments explained why people spoke out against ADMs; others, however, stressed the necessity of ADMs. It seemed that the former respondents also tried to come up with a compromise: “There is no difference for me personally, but maybe it would be better to destroy ADMs only in cities and leave them along the roads” (male surveyed in 2009, 21 y.o., WEOL);¹¹⁰ “As a matter of fact, they [ADMs] do not bother me, although I think they are not necessary. I would like to ban them, but if that does not happen, I will not protest” (female surveyed in 2009, 20 y.o., WEOL).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ “Мені особливості різниці немає, але, можливо, демонування буде краще лише в містах, на дорогах (мемореали) можна залишити.”

¹¹¹ “Власне, мені вони не заважають, хоча я вважаю це зайвим. Я була б не проти заборони, але в протилежному випадку – не протестуватиму.”

Many Ukrainian informants, including those opposing ADMs, saw a definite historical continuity between contemporary ADMs and ways of marking sudden death in previous times, and even spoke about the pre-Christian roots of ADMs, linking memorials to the cultural tradition of commemorating ancestors. For respondents with positive attitudes towards ADMs, such historical continuity was a sort of legitimizing factor, while ADMs opponents rejected this view: “ADMs at the places of traffic collisions – this is a tradition, an element of [our] culture that has a right to exist” (female surveyed in 2009, 33 y.o., WEOL);¹¹² “We have a custom of honoring our ancestors. This [ADM] is a tribute to a person you loved and respected. It is viewed as an expression of your respect and grief” (Hanna B-i, July 6, 2009; file STE-027);¹¹³ “This is a tradition back from Kozak times. A Kozak had two graves: one was where he died and another one where he was buried, and this custom continues since then... It's an old custom, yet maybe it differs throughout the regions. In one, it is done this way, and in another, that way” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220013);¹¹⁴ “Maybe there are some [Christian] roots in it [the tradition of ADMs], yet maybe there is some mixture of the pagan and Christian traditions. It's a part of something that ensures continuity with the past, something that has no logical explanation”

112 “Пам'ятники на місці автокатастроф – це традиція, елемент культури, що має право на існування.”

113 “ У нас прийнято шанувати предків, це данини людині, яку ти любив, яку ти поважаєш. Ну, так у нас, вважається, ти свою пошану чи повагу висловлюєш, скорботу.”

114 “Це ж традиція ще з козачества: у козака дві могили: одна - де загинув, а друга там, де похоронили. І обичай такий остався ще з козачества... воно давно, тільки, може, порізненому в регіонах України – там так, а там так.”

(Vitalii K-i, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220015);¹¹⁵ “It's been since the old times, since the gray past” (anonymous bus driver with 30 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007; file 220020);¹¹⁶ “It has turned into a tradition. Whether someone thinks this is a Christian tradition or non-Christian, or fashion, [I say] this is a tradition. We've been having this since long-long time ago” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053);¹¹⁷ “It's been since the old times. There used to be wooden crosses before, but now they erect memorials” (Varvara M-k, June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”);¹¹⁸ “[This came from] pagan traditions” (female surveyed in 2009, 24 y.o., WEOL); “Here in Ukraine, we have an old tradition of the roadside crosses... As a rule, those were graves where soldiers were buried or there were some mass burials. Those were marked with crosses” (Rev. Roman N-k, July 17, 2007; file “RevRoman_05”).¹¹⁹ Other pro-ADMs respondents viewed them as an important element of Ukrainian culture that should be preserved for its own value: “I would like those memorials to continue to be erected in the future” (female surveyed in 2009, 18 y.o., WEOL); “It is absolutely obligatory to set up

115 “Мабуть, є якісь корені в цьому, але, мабуть, суміш паганської і християнської традиції тут є. Я думаю, це (традиція придорожних мемореалів) - частина чогось, що забезпечує якусь таку сталість, тяглість з минулим; те, що не має логічного пояснення.”

116 “Це віддавна, це з давних давен.”

117 “[Ц]е переросло в традицію. Чи хтось там думає про християнські традиції чи не християнські, чи мода – от традиція, традиційно в нас уже давним-давно так склалося.”

118 “[Ц]е віддавна. Раніше були хрести дерев'яні, а тепер – пам'ятники всі ставлять.”

119 “У нас в Україні є давня традиція придорожніх хрестів... Як правило, це були могили, якщо це були поховані воїни, які загинули там, чи масові поховання якісь – це в цьому випадку були (хрести).”

memorials [underlined by the respondent]” (female surveyed in 2009, 17 y.o., WEOL).¹²⁰

Some of those interviewed and surveyed stressed that setting up ADMs was not a conscious choice of the survivors but rather a question of them following a trend, a sort of fashion, a stereotypical behavior: “People think that it is supposed to be that way” (female surveyed in 2009, 25 y.o., WEOL); “[It's] a tribute to the traditions” (female surveyed in 2009, 24 y.o., WEOL);¹²¹ “Well, it's done that way. How does it happen nowadays? Someone has done something, and I must do the same. It's not that a person decided by himself, but he rather has this idea that if someone has set up [an ADM] then 'I am not worse; I must set up as well'” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015);¹²² “Some people do not know themselves why [they erect ADMs], but it is like a wave of fashion. 'Those [people] have set up [an ADM], and will I not?!' I do not understand that; I call it 'munkeying.' [He] does not understand why [he does it], but he still does it. ADMs are a big tribute to fashion. 'Everyone does it, and I will do it'” (Nadiia K-a, July 5, 2009; file STE-022);¹²³ “One [person] tries to surpass another [person] here. 'That [person] set up a small cross. Oh! I can set up [something] bigger, a

120 “Я б хотіла, щоб такі пам'ятники встановлювали і надалі”; “Пам'ятники потрібно ставити обов'язково.”

121 “Люди вважають, що так прийнято”; “Данина традиціям.”

122 “Ну, це так заведено. Зараз як? Хтось зробив так - і мені так треба. Не сам вирішив, а притримується думки, що раз той поставив (пам'ятник), а я що – гірший?! Значить і мені треба.”

123 “Деякі люди самі не знають, чому, але це наче хвиля моди: ті поставили, а я ні?! Я цього не розумію, я називаю це мавпування: не розуміє чому, але робить. Пам'ятники – це велика частина данини моді: всі так роблять і я так зроблю.”

whole memorial!” (Ol'ha M-k, July 6, 2009; file STE-033).¹²⁴ “I think the rule of '[doing] like everyone else' works here. 'Someone did it [erected an ADM] and I will do it.' I would not even call this 'fashion,' since a person does not think about fashion in this situation. For example, they set up big tombstones in cemeteries. Is it an element of fashion? I know this because we dealt with a memorial: it should look better than the one on a neighbour's grave. Whether this is fashion or not, there is something about it in our Ukrainian psyche” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).¹²⁵ Interestingly, the idea about fashion and competition was first spontaneously expressed by one of the interviewees closer to the end of my fieldwork. I used that idea several times while soliciting respondent's attitudes before the end of summer 2009.

Ukrainian respondents, especially those with experience of loss and priests considered the place of tragic death to be special. They emphasized the importance of such a place, or rather of knowing the exact spot where a tragedy happened, and underlined a special attachment to such place, a desire to make it tangible: “The place of death of someone dear in a... road collision – it is obvious that the survivors would like to seclude that place. On the one hand, this is the place of their memory, and, on the other hand, it's a good reminder [for others] to

124 “Один наперед одного у нас. Той поставив маленький хрестик – о! А я ж можу більше поставити – цілу плиту!”

125 “А ще, я думаю, що спрацьовує (принцип) “як всі”. Хтось (так зробив) – то і я собі зроблю. Я і модою б це не назвала, бо людина не думає тут про моду. А от пам'ятники великі на кладовищах ставляться – то це елемент чого? Я це знаю по собі, бо ми ж пам'ятником займалися. Він має бути краще, ніж у сусіда. Це мода чи не мода, а є щось таке в душі нашої українській.”

behave on the road. Thus, there are many such ADMs and they have a right to exist” (Rev. Roman, July 24, 2009; file STE-048);¹²⁶ “[ADM reflect] the emotional attachment to the place of tragedy” (female surveyed in 2009, 20 y.o., WEOL);¹²⁷ “[ADMs are set up] for the survivors to be able to bring flowers [to that place]” (female surveyed, 18 y.o., WEOL);¹²⁸ “There is human pain and human memory connected to that place. To mark it with a cross – it is understandable” (Rev. Roman, July 17, 2005; file RevRoman_05”).¹²⁹

One of the reasons ADMs are viewed as special and almost sacred is because many of them are designed as crosses or contain images of crosses. Crosses as religious symbols were always perceived with reverence prior to the Soviet times, and their public presence was not questioned. Speranskii (1895) noted the special attitude of people to crosses by the roads: “A roadside cross – regardless of its origin – as a sacred object was to incur religious sentiment” (p. 403). Such religious sentiment and reverence are still demonstrated today by contemporary informants: “A road widening may happen and it [an ADM] is in the way. It has to be destroyed, and how [is one] to destroy a cross?! This [cross] is... sacred. A human has lost a soul there [at that place]” (anonymous bus driver

126 “[M]ісце смерті когось із близьких або рідних у результаті... ДТП – очевидно, що рідні захочуть якимось чином обійти це місце. Воно, з одного боку, є місцем їхньої пам’яті, а з іншого (боку) – це гарна пригадка (іншим), що на дорозі треба себе вести обережно. Під цим оглядом, таких пам’ятників є багато і вони мають підстави, щоби існувати.”

127 “(Пам’ятник – це символічна) емоційна прив’язаність до трагічного місця.”

128 “(Пам’ятники) для того, щоб люди (рідні) могли принести квіти.”

129 “Є людський біль і є людська пам’ять, яка пов’язана з цим місцем, і людина позначає його хрестом – це можна зрозуміти.”

with 30 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007; file DS220020);¹³⁰ “Well, if a road widening [is a reason for destroying crosses], it is one thing, but to [destroy a cross] for any other reason – you can't do it. Any cross is [related to] memory. You can't [destroy it]” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 29, 2007; file DS220023);¹³¹ “[It is a good tradition] to put a cross on such a place, so that anyone passing by would see that is a special place. That person then would cross himself and say 'God, let this soul rest in peace.' And if it is a cross, then it should be a big one so that it would be visible from everywhere and anyone seeing it would understand that this is a sign: something bad may happen and it is better to pay attention” (Rev. Serhii, August 14, 2005; file “RevSerhii_05”).¹³²

There was, however, a difference of opinion among the clergymen about consecrating ADM sites which had crosses as their primary design feature: “Erecting an official memorial sign or a big cross or a shrine requires Church permission, and the Church blesses such [construction]. The Church does not consecrate ADMs because there is a cemetery, and church blesses the cemetery as a burial place” (Rev. Vasyl', August 12, 2005; file RevVasyl_05’);¹³³ “I was never

130 “От іде розширення дороги і він (хрест) там (заважає) – треба зносити. А як зносити хреста?! Це як святе. Там людина віддала душу.”

131 “Ну, як дорогу розширюють – це одне, а просто так (зносити хреста) – то не можна. Любий оце хрест, (це) пам'ять – не можна.”

132 “(С добра традиція) ставити в цьому місці (де загинула людина) хреста, щоби людина, йдучи чи їдучи, бачила, що це якесь особливе місце. І кожна людина, бачучи хрест, перехреститься і скаже: “Господи, упокой” або ще щось. І такий хрест (має бути), щоби його було видно, щоб кожний, хто бачив, розумів, що це знак, що може бути щось недобре, тому треба бути уважнішим.”

133 “Якщо офіційно ставиться якийсь пам'ятний знак чи великий хрест, чи каплиця – на це треба позволення церкви і церква освячує це. А придорожний хрест не освячує, бо є цвинтар – він є освячений, це місце погребіння, церква благославляє те місце для

asked to bless such a cross. If someone would ask me, I would talk a believer out of this idea because it is senseless and dangerous in terms of desecration. A blessed cross is a sacred thing, and I am responsible for protecting it from atrocities like being trampled or thrown into the garbage as a result of road construction” (Rev. O. from L'viv, private correspondence; December 21, 2005);¹³⁴ “There is nothing wrong [in blessing ADMs]” (Rev. Serhii, August 14, 2005; file “RevSerhii_05”);¹³⁵ “You can [bless an ADM], and after its blessing, we can speak about that place [of accident] as having elements of spiritual blessing, since it happens after a special ritual, and the place becomes sacred in a way” (Rev. Roman, July 24, 2009; file STE-048).¹³⁶

Yet not only ADMs designed as crosses tend to be viewed with reverence. There was an understanding that an ADM not religious in form – a pillar, wreath, ribbon, or flowers – was also a special, almost sacred place, a place subject to taboo. Vandalizing or ruining them is associated with sin and punishment in the Ukrainian consciousness: “For our people, places of death are always a sort of taboo not worth talking about. That is we do not say anything [bad] about the dead [here respondent alluded to a saying “De mortuis aut bene, aut nihil”]” (Vitalii K-погребіння.”

134 “Жодного разу мене не просили такий хрест освятити. Якщо подібна пропозиція буде - буду відмовляти віруючого греко-католика від цієї ідеї з огляду на безсенсовність і небезпеку святотатства. Освячений хрест являється священною річчю і я відповідальний за те, щоб якомога більше забезпечити від наруги - топтання ногами, наприклад, або, при ремонтах доріг, викинення на смітник.”

135 “Нічого в цьому поганого немає.”

136 “Можна (освячувати хрести). І після їхнього освячення можна говорити про те, що йдеться про місце, яке носить у собі елементи духовного освячення, тому що здійснюється відповідний обряд і тим самим це місце є до певної міри сакральним.”

i, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220015);¹³⁷ “No, it [ADM] should not be destroyed. This is the place where his [a deceased'] soul took off.” (SK: *What if hooligans deliberately ruined it?*) “It is bad for them. They should not do that. His [the deceased'] soul is there. That place is like sacred one” (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027);¹³⁸ “Well, this is true [ADMs are special places]. If you look at this, that place [where a person has died accidentally] has some mystic aura or something like that” (anonymous young man, Kyiv, June 24, 2007; file DS220009);¹³⁹ “A human being lost her soul (spirit) over there [at an ADM site]... on that exact spot..., not where [the person] is buried but over there. [And he who would ruin it] will take sin on himself” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220012);¹⁴⁰ “How they would [destroy an ADM]?! A person set up that ADM... How dare they to do something to it? Nobody would desecrate it, because [perpetrators] are afraid, for they are believers [themselves]” (anonymous bus driver with 17 years of experience, Kyiv, July 30, 2007, file DS220025);¹⁴¹ “Probably they [ADMs] are [special places]. They bear certain energy. A passerby would involuntarily think about another person's fate while passing such a place”

137 “Місця загибелі людей завжди для нашого народу - це якесь таке табу, про яке варто взагалі не говорити, тобто про метрвх нічого не говоримо.”

138 “Ні, руйнувати не можна - це ж душа його там злетіла, на тому місці. (СК: А як хулігани навмисно зруйнують, що їм за це?) Для них це погано. Не повинні так робити. Там душа його... те місце як святе місце.”

139 “Ну, це так (пам'яткики – особливі місця). Якщо так подивитися – там містична аура чи щось таке.”

140 “Людина дух там свій випустила... Саме там. Не там, де похований, а тут (де пам'ятник при дорозі). (А той, хто цей пам'ятник зруйнує) гріха на себе набере.”

141 “Ну, як вони можуть?! Це ж людина поставила пам'ятник... Як вони можуть щось там робить? Оскверняти – це ніхто (не наважиться) ... побоїться, бо (люди) набожні.”

(Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file STE-007);¹⁴² “It must be a sacred place for the survivors” (Larysa K-a, July 13, 2009; file STE-044).¹⁴³

The liminal status of ADMs is also evident in people's attitudes about the possibility of building anything at the place of a memorial that has been removed: “It's not preferable [to build anything at that place].... Someone has died at that place....” (Pavlo K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220028);¹⁴⁴ “No..., somehow it is not decent [to build something at the place of sudden death].... [Nothing] should [be built].... [H]is [a deceased's] soul is there” (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027).¹⁴⁵

Another reason for seeing ADMs as sacred places was the human soul issue. When it comes to questions of death, afterlife, and the soul, it is useful to compare the answers of ordinary Ukrainians with those of the clergy. Folk beliefs and formal religion answer different sets of questions when it comes to death. Formal religion explains where the dead (rather, their souls) have gone. Folk religion deals with questions of death that challenge the living: survivors must explain the cause of death in order to give it meaning and answer the questions of why the incident happened. Formal religion focuses on what happens to people after death. Folk religion creates ways to maintain relationships with the dead. Thus, simple

142 “Можливо, так (пам'ятник – це спеціальне місце). Якусь енергетику воно в собі несе. Все одно людина мимоволі, проминаючи таке місце, замислюється про чинить долю.”

143 “Для родичів загиблої людини це місце, мабуть, є святим.”

144 “Небажано (там щось будувати)... Там загинула людина, на том місці...”

145 “Ні, якось це неприємно (будувати на тому місці)... непотрібно там (будувати)... там душа його (загиблого).”

people attributed sudden death to *dolia*, or the fate of a person. Such respondents demonstrated fatalistic worldviews: “Every person has some destiny. If she is predestined to die in a car accident, she will die in a car rather than in a fire or during an earthquake” (Liubov D-o, Kyiv, July 30, 2007, file DS220026);¹⁴⁶ “The way a person dies is how God preplanned [for her]. It cannot be changed” (Varvara M-k, June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”);¹⁴⁷ “The night before Easter he [the person who was killed by a car] had a bad dream. He did not want to tell us what [he dreamt about], but the whole day he was depressed. He did not even go to Church with us... That was his destiny – after fighting in Afghanistan, after being a *liquidator* in Chornobyl' – to die by his own apartment building on Easter” (Shandovs'ka et al. 2009).¹⁴⁸ The latter case, with the case of the symbolic death and funeral of a young man whose photo was placed into the coffin of his dead fiance (see Chapter 3, pp. 132), demonstrate not the idea of destiny in terms of the Christian concept of God's will, but rather the “fatalistic worldview, in which there are no strictly defined boundaries between natural and supernatural levels of reality” (Badone 2004: 65).

Folk views on the souls of those who died tragically hold that these dead remain invisibly present at the site of death or near the place of accident: “The

146 “Для кожної людини предписане своє: якщо їй предписано загинути в машині – вона загине в машині, а не згорить чи загине при землетрусі.”

147 “Як людина гине – це так Бог дає, цього не можна було змінити.”

148 “На саму Пасху йому наснився поганий сон, що саме – він не хотів казати, але весь день був пригнічений, навіть до церкви з нами не пішов... Але така вже в нього доля: пройшовши Афган, прослуживши в Чорнобилі, загинути під самим будинком, та ще й на Великдень.”

soul of a person who died comes there [to ADM]. It is necessary to maintain them [ADMs]. If a [deceased] person was baptized, then [it is necessary] to set up [an ADM dedicated to that person], regardless of his age. If [he was] unbaptized, then it is a sin [to erect an ADM dedicated to an unbaptized person]” (Sofia, July 20, 2005; file “Sofia_05”);¹⁴⁹ “That is the place [an ADM] where a person fell down [and] gave her soul to God. The soul stays at that place” (Varvara M-k, June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”);¹⁵⁰ “People say that on a commemorative day, the soul of a deceased person starts its voyage toward the place of burial. And every time, it starts from the place of the [road] collision” (female surveyed in 2009, 31 y.o., WEOL).¹⁵¹

Priests in my research tried to disclaim such popular visions of the soul and its perils, although some of their answers seemed to be influenced by folk religion: “This [site] is the place where the body separated from the soul. If a priest sees a car accident, he can absolve the person from his sins. Even if it is after death... like two hours after death...he still can do it because the soul is still there, at that spot. One can always pray near a cross, whether we pass a cemetery or [a cross] by the road. If we pray for the soul of a person who tragically died, God will accept such a prayer” (Rev. Vasyl’, August 12, 2005; file

149 “Так, там (біля пам’ятника) душа загиблого буває. Треба їх (пам’ятники) підтримувати. Якщо чоловік був хрещений, то ставити (йому пам’ятник) треба, хоч був якого віку (загиблій). Якщо нехрещений – то гріх ставити.”

150 “То лиш місце, що людина там (де пам’ятник) впала... свою душу Богу віддала. Там та душа і перебуває.”

151 “Люди кажуть, що душа загиблого починає в поминальний день свій рух до місця поховання, і кожного разу він (рух) починається з місця катастрофи.”

“RevVasyl_05”);¹⁵² “Roadside memorials do not add to the salvation of soul. Only prayer and a proper burial do” (Rev. Roman, July 17, 2005; file “RevRoman_05”);¹⁵³ “No, people are wrong when they think that the soul is near the place [of tragic death]. Another destiny awaits the soul... It moves to the eternal world, and the Church encourages prayer for people who died tragically because they... left this world unprepared... The Church prepares people for death... and those souls [of people who died tragically] had no such preparation. There are church liturgical masses designated for those who died tragically. If people were baptized, then [we] should pray for them. [And those who were not], we do not know those last seconds. A person could repent for all her life and say 'God, forgive me,' and thus God may count this as a desire to be baptized” (Rev. Oleksii, July 11, 2005; file “RevOleksii_05”);¹⁵⁴ “It is not true [that the soul returns to the place of death]! It is not Orthodox canon. According to Orthodox teaching, the soul needs a burial, a church service; the survivors must pray and

152 “(Пам'ятник -) це місце, де відділилося тіло від душі, місце смерті цієї людини. Навіть якщо священик іде і бачить, що сталася автокатастрофа, він може зупинитися і розрішити від гріхів. Навіть якщо після смерті, дві години після смерті – все одно може розрішити, бо там ще є присутність душі. Біля хреста завжди можна молитися – чи то біля цвинтаря ми проходимо, чи просто хрест дорожній стоїть. Якщо ми помолимося за ту душу, яка там загинула, Бог прийме ту молитву.”

153 “Пам'ятник до спасіння душі нічого не додає. Додає, щоб людину поховали по-християнському, належно.”

154 “Те, що кажуть люди, є не завжди згідне з тим, що каже Церква. Ні, душа не блукає навколо того місця (де людина загинула), вона має іншу долю..., бо душа переселяється у вічний світ. І за таких людей, трагічно погинувших, Церква запрошує молитися, бо вони... неприготованими пішли на той світ. Церква до смерті приготує людину... і ти душі (людей, що загинули трагічно) – вони позбавлені були цього приготування. Є церковні упокойні служби, там позначка робиться – “За трагічно загиблих.” Якщо вони є хрищені, треба за них молитися... ми ж не знаємо тих останніх секунд. Людина могла глибоко розкаятися за все життя і сказати “Господи, прости” і вже Бог може їй це зачислити за бажання хрещення.”

give alms [for the sake of that soul]. Only the soul that is not prayed for, the one that needs help, flies around. The soul has special relations with God on the ninth and fortieth days [after death]. That's why those days are special for commemoration" (Rev. Serhii, August 14, 2005; file "RevSerhii_05");¹⁵⁵ "I do not think we can talk about the coexistence of the souls of the dead with us in 100% of cases, although there are cases when a [dead] person is in purgatory, and somehow reminds [survivors] about himself at that place [the ADM]" (Rev. Roman, July 24, 2009; file STE-048).¹⁵⁶

Another reason why Ukrainian interviewees – both those who drive and those who ride as passengers – believed ADMs to be special places is that they felt there was a concentration of negative energy at them. They occasionally would mention so-called "bad places" – such places seem to parallel the term "bad death" – or special places on roads or road segments. For them, such places mostly become the locations of ADMs for mystical reasons people explain in various ways: "Those are such devilish places... there are such places where... every year, [there appear] five, six [new] ADMs" (anonymous bus driver, 30 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007, file DS220022);¹⁵⁷ "There are places of extra

155 "Неправда (що душа повертається на місце загибелі)! Це – не Православне вчення. За Православним ученням, душа потребує погребіння, відпівання і щоби рідні молилися, давали милостиню (за спасіння душі). Літає лише та (душа), за яку не моляться, яка просить допомоги. Душа має спеціальні стосунки з Богом на 9-й і 40-й день. Тому ці дні відзначені, треба поминати."

156 "Не думаю, що ідеться про такий спосіб співіснування душ померлих із нами в усіх 100 процентах випадків. Хоча є такі випадки, коли людина є в чистилищі і якимось чином дає про себе пригадку в тім місці (загибелі)."

157 "Це такі диявольські місця... є такі місця, де кожен рік – кожен рік! - 5-6 (нових) пам'ятників (ставлять)."

danger on the roads. Where there was once a cemetery, [there] traffic collisions occur often. There was even a TV program about the crossroads as anomalous phenomena. Such “bad places” on the roads are those where lots of blood was shed” (anonymous bus driver, 17 years of experience, Kyiv, July 30, 2007, file DS220025);¹⁵⁸ “There is a road, near a cemetery. Every year, there are four-five new ADMs [on that section of the road]” (anonymous bus driver, 15 years of experience, Kyiv, July 22, 2007, file DS220004);¹⁵⁹ “There is a place on the road. Every day something [happens] there, and an ADM should be erected” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 22, 2007, file DS220005);¹⁶⁰ “There are such places where traffic collisions happen for some unknown technological reasons. For example, there is a small square in Usatovo (SK: a village near Odesa) where accidents of unclear nature happen. Also, a highway Odesa-Kyiv is considered the road of death” (Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file STE-008);¹⁶¹ “There is a village Hrem'iache, and there are many [ADMs near it]... There must be something about it [the place]. So many deaths at one place are not without a [mystical] reason” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015);¹⁶² “[They set up ADMs] possibly to

158 “Є такі міста на трасі, підвищеної небезпечності – там, де колись було кладбище. (Там) дуже часто аварії (стаються). Була навіть передача по телевізору, що перехрестки – це аномальні явлення. Де на трасі такі місця погані – там колись пролилось багато крові.”

159 “У нас там даже є така дорога біля кладбища. Так там кожного року по 4-5 нових пам'ятників.”

160 “От у нас там є одна (точка): кожен день там щось (трапляється) – треба пам'ятник ставити.”

161 “Є місця, де аварії стаються через незрозумілі техногенні фактори. Наприклад, є п'ятачок у районі Усатова, де відбуваються аварії нероз'ясненого характеру. І ще траса Одеса-Київ вважається дорогою смерті.”

162 “От у нас є село Грем'яче – там багато (пам'ятників біля доріг)... щось там є: марно стільки смертей в одному місці.”

warn about the concentration of the 'bad energy' [at that spot]" (female surveyed in 2009, 23 y.o., WEOL);¹⁶³ "[An ADM is set up to indicate] the 'evil' place" (female surveyed in 2009, 28 y.o., WEOL);¹⁶⁴ "It so happens that a priest is called to bless some dangerous section of the road. There are such places where strange things happen for no good reason" (Rev. Serhii, August 14, 2007; file "RevSerhii_05")¹⁶⁵.

Such ideas were not spread among my informants only but were reflected in the media publications even prior to 2009. The roads and ADMs in general seem to be another dimension of the broader cultural landscape: Ukrainians relate traffic fatalities and other misfortunes happening on the roads to destructive, devilish forces. They assign a special meaning to the number 13, and attribute car crashes on the 13th kilometers to its sinister nature (No author 2008). They also speak about invisible "black dots" – places of concentration of "bad energy" that reveal themselves mainly through ADMs (Kulyk 2007). "There exist so called 'geopathological zones.' They appear at places where there used to be cemeteries, bogs, where there are underground rivers. 'Geopathological zones' can appear near the prisons.... Other sources of negative energy are the crosses erected at places of the traffic collisions. The energy of death that should have been in a cemetery we transfer to the roads" (No author 2008).

¹⁶³ "(Пам'ятники встановлюють) можливо, щоби попередити про концентрацію поганої енергії."

¹⁶⁴ "(Пам'ятник позначає) "зле" місце."

¹⁶⁵ "Буває, просять священика освятити якийсь небезпечний участок дороги. Бувають такі місця, де, ніби, на рівному місці відбуваються дивні речі."

Respondents who were, on average, pro-ADMs still could reject certain types of memorials. They seemed to have nothing against wreaths or fresh flowers serving as ADMs along the roads, but they demonstrated negative attitudes towards ADMs that were richly decorated, looked expensive, or were excessively large, i.e., ADMs that looked like grandiose, solid pieces of architecture: “Well, it is understandable to lay a wreath, but why they set up those granite [ADMs]? Those [ADMs] really look like [tombstones] in a cemetery [and] I do not get that. Those large [ADMs] – I think those are too much” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 29, 2007; file DS220024);¹⁶⁶ “Especially when they erect marble ADMs – what are those for? I do not like those. Those are just to show off your wealth, especially those with the photos [of the deceased]” (Tetiana K-k, July 4, 2009; file STE-015);¹⁶⁷ “[It is not a good idea] to make them [ADMs] monumental, grandiose, so that those would distract [the drivers] and turn the roads into cemeteries” (Nadiia K-a, July 5, 2009; file STE-022);¹⁶⁸ “[I would like those ADMs be] small crosses with wreaths that are not large” (female surveyed in 2009, 18 y.o., WEOL);¹⁶⁹ “The only thing to suggest – these ADMs should look modest, should not distract drivers' attention” (female surveyed in 2009, 33 y.o.,

166 “Ну, там ще понятно – вінка положити, а нащо вже там ті-во, гранітні стоять? То таке вже дійсно, як на цвинтарі – то я не розумію... такі великі (пам'ятники) – то я щітаю, що не нужно.”

167 “Особливо мармурові ставлять пам'ятники – для чого вони? Я вважаю, що таке непотрібно. Це просто похизуватися, що ти багатий. Іще й з портретами!”

168 “Просто не (треба) переводити це (встановлення придорожніх пам'ятників) до такого монументалізму, щоб це було грандіозно і дійсно відволікало і перетворювалося на кладовище на дорозі.”

169 “(Я за те,) щоби пам'ятники були у вигляді... хрестів невеликих розмірів із немасивними вінками.”

WEOL).¹⁷⁰ This ambiguous, or selective acceptance probably reflects one of the universal laws of traditional folk life - conformity and anonymity. By this tradition, an ADM should be anonymous and/or modest in design as if it commemorates a simple person who was “one of our own.” On the contrary, a fully personalized, grandiose ADM made of expensive materials elevates a person who has died tragically over the rest of the living and dead, produces an effect of “simulated heroization,” and speaks mainly about the financial standing of the survivors. Such “heroization,” in the eyes of ordinary people, is artificial, unsupported, and thus unacceptable. This probably explains the attitudes of respondents who refused to see an analogy between regular ADMs and the cenotaphs dedicated to the fallen Soviet soldiers of the WWII. The soldiers, according to them, consciously sacrificed their lives in the name of the future generations. Therefore, cenotaphs dedicated to them symbolize gratitude of the living and stir a different set of feelings than ADMs: “They [cenotaphs dedicated to the fallen soldiers] are very nice memorials, with some inner dynamics present. No, they [ADMs and cenotaphs dedicated to the soldiers] are not the same. An unknown soldier, he came through [our land]... Every stem of grass that has grown through [the soil] – this is blood of that unknown soldier. He [the soldier] reincarnated in those flowers, grass, and so on. A person was not indifferent toward his earth and motherland, he defended it. Therefore, those [cenotaphs] are memorials to the

¹⁷⁰ “Єдине застереження – ці пам'ятники мають бути скромними, не надто впадати в очі, відволікати водіїв.”

defenders. They are more positive in terms of emotions they stir” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).¹⁷¹

Those Ukrainians who did not mind ADMs were mainly against any design unification or standardization, i.e. they did not like the idea that all ADMs would be of a single defined design or would be substituted with a plaque containing a written message about the tragic death. They did not find it acceptable that someone would dictate how an ADM should look: “They should look different; there should be a diversity [in their designs]” (anonymous young man, Kyiv, June 24, 2007; file DS220009);¹⁷² “Everyone sets up [ADMs] depending on his vision [of how it should look] and [his financial] situation. What kind of a unified [design] can be here?!” (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027);¹⁷³ “People [survivors] are different. It is not right to impose somebody else's opinion in them. I want one [design], another person wants another one. A believer sets up a cross, another person [erects] a memorial sign, and yet another [person lays down] only flowers” (Nadiia K-a, July 5, 2009; file STE-022);¹⁷⁴ “I do not think that a single standard design is necessary. These memorials are different per se,

171 “Вони – дуже гарні пам'ятники, з такою динамікою внутрішньою. Це все ж таки не одне і те ж. Невідомий солдат – він пройшовся (цією землею)... Кожна травинка, що проросла – це ота кров невідомого солдата. Він проріс цими квітами, травами і так далі. Тому, якщо людина небайдужа до своєї землі, вічизни, захищає її – це пам'ятник захиснику... Вони – емоційно позитивніші.”

172 “Вони мають виглядати по-різному; різноманітність має бути.”

173 “Кожен як він розуміє, яку має можливість – так і встановлює. Який тут може бути єдиний (дазайн)?!”

174 “Люди різні, не можна нав'язати їм своє бачення. Я хочу одне, а хтось – інше. В когось одна віра – той ставить хрест, а інший – пам'ятний знак, а той – тільки квіти.”

and they [should] differ from one another” (Larysa K-a, July 13, 2009; file STE-044).¹⁷⁵

Answers to the interview and survey question “Why do people set up ADMs?” help reveal the meaning of such folk memorials in the eyes of Ukrainians. It appears that, in people's views, ADMs are erected for the sake of people who died tragically, their survivors, and a broader community. Phrases about the importance of memory and remembering (*щоб пам'ятали, увічнити пам'ять, щоб завжди пам'ятали*) dominated respondents' answers. Purpetuating the memory of someone tragically killed seemed to be an exceptional value in itself: [ADMs are erected] in order to remember the place of the tragedy” (Oleksandr P-i, July 6, 2009; file STE-030);¹⁷⁶ “I would not take off a wreath [from an ADM]. Never in my life would I do that. No matter what I feel about it [the ADM], I would not take [the wreath] off. God knows what it would mean – to smear away the memory [of a deceased person] or something” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053);¹⁷⁷ “Memory stays where he has died, so that people would see and know that here an accident happened, a tragic accident” (Oleksandra K-o; August 31, 2007; file DS220027);¹⁷⁸ “Probably it [setting an

175 “Думаю, ні (єдиний дизайн не потрібний). Ці пам'ятники різні самі по собі в відрізняються один від одного.”

176 “(Пам'ятники ставлять) щоби запам'ятати місце, де сталася трагедія.”

177 “Я би не зірвала навіть той вінок – ніколи в житті я би цього не зробила. Які б емоції він у мене не викликав, але я б його не зірвала. Бог його знає, що воно (значило би)... затерти пам'ять чи що...”

178 “Пам'ять остається, де він загинув. Щоб люди бачили і знали, що тут стався випадок, нещасний випадок.”

ADM] is very important for the survivors to continue his [the deceased person's] life in their memory” (female surveyed in 2009, 30 y.o., WEOL);¹⁷⁹ “When they erase MEMORY of a loved one [I] would like to pick up a machine gun and use it [against those who demolish ADMs]!”¹⁸⁰

When survey respondents answered that ADMs are set up “for the sake of the dead,” they probably alluded to the folk beliefs about the soul and the afterlife, meaning that the soul of someone who died tragically required help from the living. They also insisted that the soul of a dead person could be helped through remembering it by the living: “Such ADMs are necessary to honor a person's memory. To destroy them means disrespect toward the dead person” (female surveyed in 2009, 17 y.o., WEOL);¹⁸¹ “ADMs are special places where the survivors can freely express their grief about the deceased, and the soul of the deceased benefits from [the survivors saying] good words [about it. ADMs are set up” for never forgetting a [dead] person over time” (male surveyed in 2009, 29y.o., WEOL);¹⁸² “It is a tribute to the dead. It is a certain memorial sign, an additional reminder that we remember, and in this way to immortalize the memory about a dead person and the place where the person died” (Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file

179 “Можливо, це дуже потрібно рідним загиблого, щоб продовжувати його життя у пам'яті.”

180 “Когда убирают ПАМЯТЬ о бликом человеке, очень хочется взять в руки автомат. И воспользоваться им!” (A comment added on February 3, 2009 by “Сергей” under the article by Fedchenko (2009)).

181 “Такі пам'ятники необхідні для того, щоб вшанувати пам'ять про людину, демонтування їх – це неповага до загиблої людини.”

182 “Памятники – это особое место, где родным некая отдушина в скорби по погибшему и душе человека легче от того, что его вспоминают добрым словом. (Памятники ставят) для незабвения человека во времени.”

STE-007),¹⁸³ “[ADMs are erected] according to a Christian custom – to make a memory [about the deceased] eternal” (male surveyed, 18 y.o., WEOL).¹⁸⁴

When speaking about ADMs being set up for the sake of the survivors, respondents considered them useful as psychotherapy helping cope with grief and as the visible foci of the uninterrupted connection with the dead loved ones. In the name of “cultural solidarity,” pro-ADM respondents acknowledged the importance of both these necessities and agreed that hypothetical survivors should be allowed to set up ADMs next to their, the respondents, homes: “Maybe this way, survivors cope with their grief, so we should not prevent them [from setting up ADMs]. If it helps them [to cope] with their grief, they should be allowed to [erect an ADM next to my house]” (Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file STE-007);¹⁸⁵ “Some of them [the survivors] come to that place [the ADM], look [at it and think about] why *that* exact place, why [that has happened] to *their* child... They do it first of all for themselves... I would allow people to set up such memorial next to my place” (Liubov D-o; July 30, 2007; file DS220026);¹⁸⁶ “Why not? Of course, I would allow that” (Pavlo K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220028);¹⁸⁷ “I would allow

183 “(Це) якась свого роду данина померлим, це якійсь пам'ятний знак, додаткове нагадування, що ми пам'ятаємо, і таким чином увічнити пам'ять (про людину), місце, де людина загинула.”

184 “За християнським звичаєм – щоб увіковічнити пам'ять (про людину).”

185 “Може, таким чином люди самі собі допомагають впоратися зі своїм горем і не можна їм у цьому заважати. Якщо це хоч якось допоможе їм витримати горе, то треба дозволити.”

186 “Вони приїжджають деякі на те місце, стоять дивляться (і думають), чому *саме там*, чому *саме з їхньою* дитиною... для себе це в першу чергу вони роблять. Я би дозволили встановити (такий пам'ятник) біля мого будинка.”

187 “А чого б ні? Звичайно, дозволив би.”

people to set up something small... [and lay down] flowers, but it [the ADM] should not be associated with any religious signs or rituals – just a memorial sign” (Ol'ha H-r, July 4, 2009; file STE-012).¹⁸⁸

This memory, however, could have a negative aspect, become a symbol of punishment for the survivors. As Glennys Howarth (2001) noted, sudden violent death often poses the question of blame and responsibility. When that question divides members of the same family, an ADM as the continuing reminder to the survivors becomes a means of punishment. An interviewee who lost her 12-year old niece and 35-year old sister-in-law in a traffic accident in 2006 told the story of an ADM that appeared on the place of accident. Her brother (the father and husband of those two who were killed in the accident) and her other niece survived the accident. According to the interviewee, what happened was a pure accident and her brother did not violate any driving rules. Yet the father of the deceased woman (and grandfather of a deceased girl) blamed his son-in-law. Neither my interviewee, her extended family, nor the deceased's in-laws wanted a memorial at the place of accident. Ironically, my interviewee and her sister-in-law once had a conversation about ADMs, and the latter said she would not like any ADMs at a site of her sudden death should that happen. Her father, however, decided otherwise and placed two wreaths: “He said he would place a wreath there, and my sister said: 'Well, the wreath will remind about the tragedy.' She did

¹⁸⁸ “Я би дозволила встановити щось таке маленьке (як) квіти, але щоб це ніяк не було пов'язане з якимись релігійними знаками, ритуалами. Просто пам'ятний знак.”

not say precisely it would remind my brother about his tragedy; she said in general, and did not say 'to someone.' And he [the father of the deceased] became very angry and said, 'If he is responsible for this tragedy, then may it [the wreath] remind him!' That is, this wreath – may it remind about the tragedy. You have done this tragedy, so may it remind you about it... Memory has a tendency to fade away. Of course, you will never forget about it [the tragedy], but it will fade” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053).¹⁸⁹

Respondents who thought ADMs were set specifically for the sake of the wider community mentioned their positive influence on drivers – ADMs called for extra caution and attention, and made drivers more aware of dangerous sections of the roads. Drivers, in their turn, said ADMs were beneficial for pedestrians as well. Therefore, they agreed that ADMs warned about death and reminded about the real value of life: “These ADMs have an effect of a social advertisement. The tougher it is, the more useful it is. In this sense, the effect of scaring works well. The same thing is with ADMs: they make [one] think about the consequences and serve as warning signs” (Oksana A-a, June 19, 2009; file STE-008).¹⁹⁰ “They have a certain educational meaning in our life when about seven thousand [Ukrainian]

189 “Він говорив, що поставить там вінок, а моя сестра каже: “Ну, вінок – це нагадуватиме про трагедію.” Вона не сказала конкретно про брата, що то йому нагадуватиме про цю трагедію, а взагалі сказала, не доказала слово “комусь.” А він (свекор) дуже розсердився на цю фразу і каже: “Якщо він винен у цій трагедії, то нехай він йому і нагадує!” - тобто цей вінок... нехай він нагадує про цю трагедію: сам зробив цю трагедію, нехай він тобі і нагадує. Бо пам'ять має таку якість – стиратися. Звичайно, ти про це ніколи не забудеш, але з часом воно так притирається.”

190 “Ці пам'ятники мають ефект соціальної реклами. Чим жорсткішою вона буде, тим ефективнішою. В цьому сенсі ефект залякування спрацьовує. Так само і пам'ятники: змушуючи замислитися про наслідки, вони виконують попереджувальну роль.”

people die on the roads annually” (Vitalii K-i, July 24, 2007; file DS220015);¹⁹¹ “On the one hand, it [an ADM] reminds a driver about paying more attention. On the other hand, pedestrians also would be more disciplined” (anonymous bus driver, July 29, 2007; file DS220023);¹⁹² “On the contrary, it creates a sense of unease on a soul that somebody had crashed [there], and you try to watch [the road more carefully]” (Kyiv, July 24, 2007, male driver, 15 years of driving experience; file DS220013);¹⁹³ “Upon seeing an ADM along the road, drivers become more attentive so that there will be no ADMs dedicated to them” (male surveyed, 17 y.o., WEOL);¹⁹⁴ “Let them [ADMs] stay. Do they bother [anyone]? Maybe they will help someone to pay more attention. They do not bother at all” (anonymous bus driver, July 24, 2007; file DS220010).¹⁹⁵ People who died accidentally on the roads did not really sacrifice their lives for the sake of their fellow countrymen, but probably their death indirectly “coincides with the pattern of 'heroic death'” (Rajkovic 1988: 173). Unintentional sacrifice of such deceased might be viewed as helping the living to be more careful and pay closer attention to the road.

191 “Вони мають певне виховне значення в наших умовах, коли у нас гине 7 тисяч людей на рік на дорогах.”

192 “З одной сторони, воно напминає водітелю, щоб він був трохи уважніший, а з другой сторони і пішоходи були б более сознательні.”

193 “Навпаки, воно якось на душі стає моторошно, що хтось розбився, і ти старася дитивися (уважніше на дорогу).”

194 “Водії, які бачать пам'ятник при дорозі, стають більш уважними, щоб їм самим не поставили пам'ятник.”

195 “Нехай стоять. Що вони, заважають? Може, комусь і допоможуть (бути уважнішим). Вони не мішають.”

Behavioral Component of the Attitudes

On a behavioral level, an indicator of attitudes would be how long memorials exist and how well they are looked after. Prior to 2009, I would argue that nobody touched up or censored ADMs in Ukraine, and they existed as long as survivors looked after them. In their responses, informants often mentioned that it was not only possible but even necessary for survivors to visit ADM sites from time to time and commemorate their loved ones. Survivors who choose to maintain ADMs have two equally important sites to visit – the ADMs themselves and the cemetery graves of the people who has died tragically. Each site has its special meaning: an ADM is a place where the soul and body parted, while a grave is the resting place of the body. Visits to ADMs occur not only when there are commemorative days, but whenever the survivors have an opportunity. As my interviewee said, “I cannot say I visit it [the ADM] often, maybe twice a year. But he [father-in-law] always comes to that place and bring flowers. [My brother] passes by [the ADM] before Easter and on the commemorative day, so he probably stops by there” (Halyna B-a, August 9, 2009; file STE-053);¹⁹⁶ “[My friends] visit the ADM very often. It is far [away from them], but once a month they visit. On holidays and always on Easter, they [parents] go first to the place of

¹⁹⁶ “Не можу сказати, що я часто там буваю... Може, два рази в рік. Але він (свекор) постійно ходить на те місце, він носить квіти... Він (брат) перед Великоднем і на поминальний день їздить обов'язково у село по тій дорозі, то, напевно, зупиняється (біля пам'ятника.”

the tragedy and then to the cemetery. [They always bring] fresh flowers as a symbol that he [the deceased son] is still alive with them [in their hearts]" (Liubov D-o, Kyiv, July 30, 2007, file DS220026);¹⁹⁷ "Yes, it is necessary [to visit ADMs], of course – at least once a year, but it's necessary... It is all right to leave an apple or candies there" (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027);¹⁹⁸ "It is not mandatory [to visit ADMs], but preferable" (Pavlo K-o, former driver with 20 years experience, August 31, 2007; file DS220028).¹⁹⁹ If memorials are a phase in the bereavement process of survivors, then the end of this phase would logically come when survivors stop visiting ADMs. An ADM with flowers that are always fresh, like in Figure 4-42, probably symbolizes the living memory of the survivors who bring them, an uninterrupted invisible connection between them and the deceased whom they commemorate.

Many interviewees thought that an ADM should remain forever, or at least as long as the survivors would want it to: "There is no precise instruction [on how long to look after ADMs], but you can say many things about some family just looking at how they treat the graves of their parents and relatives. The roadside memorial is the personal business of each person" (Rev. Vasyl', August 12, 2005;

197 "(Мої друзі) відвідують пам'ятник дуже часто. Це далеко (від них), але раз на місяць вони приїжджають. А на свята, як-от Великдень, вони обов'язково їдуть спочатку на місце трагедії, а потім уже на могилу. Завжди (привозять) живі квіти як символ того, що він (їхній загиблий син) зостався живий із ними."

198 "Треба (відвідувати пам'ятник), а якже! Хоч раз на рік, а треба... Можна залишати яблуко, цукерки (на пам'ятникові)."

199 "Не обов'язково відвідувати (пам'ятник), але бажано."

file “RevVasyl_05”);²⁰⁰ “My distant in-law hit a pedestrian accidentally. There has been a marker on that place for seven years already. [They] do not take it away, in Fastiv” (Mariia F-o, July 23, 2007; file DS220007);²⁰¹ “It was not us who invented this [tradition]. Let them [ADMs] stay” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 24, 2007; file DS220012);²⁰² “There is an ADM on the road, beneath a bridge. [The survivors] have been bringing fresh flowers daily and changing the wreaths for five years already” (Liuba D-o, Kyiv, July 30, 2007, file DS220026);²⁰³ “[They should stay] forever... always... and [should be] renovated” (anonymous young man, Kyiv, June 24, 2007; file DS220009);²⁰⁴ “Survivors look after [an ADM] as long as they are alive” (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027);²⁰⁵ “[ADMs should stay] long, forever, not only today or tomorrow” (Pavlo K-o, former driver with 20 years experience, August 31, 2007; file DS220028);²⁰⁶ “Why only a year?! It can stay forever [if] nobody touches it” (Varvara M-k, June 2, 2005; file “Varvara_Mk_05”);²⁰⁷ “When there no relatives of the deceased left, it [the ADM] will disappear by itself, [but] as long as it is dear to someone, it will

200 “Тут немає певної інструкції (як довго доглядати за пам'ятником). По тому, як доглядає родина за могилами рідних, батьків і так далі, можна багато говорити (про родину). Це (пам'ятник) є персональна справа людини.”

201 “У моєї дочки – дак чоловікової сестри чоловік... збив жіночку. То там оце вже сім год стоїть наметка (пам'ятник), не приймається, у Фастові.”

202 “Це не нами придумане. Хай вони стоять.”

203 “У нас там є пам'ятник під мостом, на коружній (дорозі) – щодня живі квіти і міняються вінки (уже) років п'ять.”

204 “Вечно (мають стояти)... всегда... и реставрировать (їх треба).”

205 “Родичі доглядають (пам'ятника), поки вони живі.”

206 “Довго, вічно (мають стояти пам'ятники), а не так, що сьогодні-завтра (лише).”

207 “Чого тільки рік (стоїть пам'ятник)?! Може стояти віка, його ніхто не рушить.”

stay” (Nadiia K-a, July 5, 2009; file STE-022).²⁰⁸ Others suggested a definite term for their existence: “We have to be understanding with other people’s pain. Maybe the time will pass...some 20-30 years, and then the family can be approached and asked to make the memorial more modest and less outstanding” (Rev. Oleksii, July 11, 2005; file “RevOleksii_05”),²⁰⁹ “I would not like those roadside memorials to be permanent. I mean, let them stay for a year or two. [Their] demolition should happen in a natural way. Let these [ADMs] be the simple expression of human mourning, but they should not be long term ones. Otherwise we will soon have to drive among crosses” (Rev. Roman, July 17, 2007; file “RevRoman_05”).²¹⁰

The issue of the ADMs' location is also indicative of public attitudes. For example, people seem to have nothing against the public presence of the memorial in Figure 4-37. The fact that the building has had three owners running different types of business (night club, grocery store, and now electronics store) with three different customer bases speaks for itself. Probably neither the owners nor customers challenged the appropriateness of the memorial. The two young men in their early twentieth who were hired to wash the store window obviously would

208 “Як не буде родичів, він (пам'ятник) зникне сам. Доки він комусь дорогий – він буде стояти.”

209 “Ми маємо бути солідарні з чужим болем. Можливо, пройде якийсь час, десь 20-30 років, тоді можна з родиною полагодити, зробити (пам'ятник) скромнішим, менш помітним.”

210 “Я би не хотів, щоб ці хрести носили довготривалий характер, тобто рік чи два нехай цей хрест стоїть. Це (знесення) має відбуватися в природний спосіб. Нехай це будуть прості вияви людського смутку і щоби вони не були довговічними, інакше нам скоро доведеться їздити поміж хрестів.”

benefit from having more space for their work, yet they denied experiencing any inconvenience because of the memorial. It was not mere tolerance on their side; they seemed to really like and defend the idea of this particular memorial and other memorials in general: “No, we do not even notice it. But memorials should exist! While we were washing [the window], so many people came closer to have a look [at the ADM]! Probably, [they] were fascinated!” (July 24, 2007; file DS220009a).²¹¹ This example is not unique. The ADM in Figure 4-84 is deep within an arable field in Southern Ukraine. It is big and beautiful with a birch tree on both sides, and the soil around it is plowed carefully so that it is not damaged. Such care certainly required extra effort and understanding by those who looked after the land. Judging from the dates, the memorial was set up in 1986. Given that the picture of it was taken in 2007, it has been tolerated, to say the least, in that form for about two decades. Many other ADMs are located in public, often crowded, places and are easily noticeable, yet prior to 2009 they did not create any “conflicts of interests.”

There were, of course, respondents who were against ADMs. Their main arguments were that ADMs distracted drivers and could thus cause further accidents, and provoked a mood change in the onlookers: “They [ADMs] distract and create a negative atmosphere and negative energy” (male surveyed in 2009,

211 “Нет, мы его не замечаем вообще. Но памятники должны быть! Мы мыли – столько людей подошло посмотрело (на пам'ятник)! С восторгом, наверное, отнеслись.”

21 y.o., WEOL);²¹² “It happens that a passenger starts commenting: 'Oh, God, here so-and-so has died!' It somehow... distracts [me]. And those ADMs – they look bright nowadays. This also distracts. Willy-nilly, you would look [at ADMs] when you drive, and something in [your] soul moves down [then]” (Anatolii K-k, taxi driver, July 7, 2009; file STE-041).²¹³ Interestingly, even regular citizens who at first stated their opposition to ADMs also went on to express the same kind of conflicting or ambivalent attitudes uttered by government officials. Such respondents often quickly added that they understood the feelings of the survivors: “I would not say that this [an ADM] is something good to have been erected. (He continues with a tone of understanding and apology.) Of course, the survivors want to see where it happened. I understand the survivors” (anonymous bus driver, about 45 y.o., July 22, 2007; file DS220005).²¹⁴ Instead of the complete ban, they suggested some compromise: “I would probably prohibit memorials, yet [I would] maybe [allow] something like... a wreath [to stay]” (anonymous bus driver, 3 years of experience, Kyiv, July 29, 2007; file DS220024);²¹⁵ “Well, I think flowers [at the site of tragedy] are okay for some time after the accident, but

212 “Вони відволікають увагу, створюють неприємну атмосферу і негативну енергію.”

213 “Буває, сідає пасажир і починає ойкати, ахати: “Ой, Боже, тут загинув той-то той-то.” То воно... відволікає. Ну, і зараз ці пам'ятники – вони яскраві, це теж відволікає. Волі-неповолі їдеш, а в сторону подивився – і щось уже в душі перевернулося.”

214 “Я б не сказав, що це щось таке хороше, щоб ставить. Ну, канешно, рідні хочуть відіть, де це все сталося, де це все – я помімаю рідних.”

215 “(Я) пам'ятники, напевно, заборонив. Може, хіба, там щось таке як вінок (дозволив би).”

there is no place for the memorials along the roads” (anonymous bus driver, 37 years of experience, July 30, 2007; file DS220025b).²¹⁶

Personal interviews, unlike the survey questions, allowed me to find out the emotional component of attitudes, although informants often avoided speaking about their emotions. I interviewed 21 professional drivers who regularly passed by ADMs. For them, this topic was quite unpleasant, and they tried to finish the interviews as soon as possible. One of the possible reasons was magical thinking: according to the law of similarity, discussing bad things may summon those bad things or bad luck in general. Following this reasoning, ADMs symbolized an unwanted end of a driver's career, which one tried to avoid at all costs by collecting and carrying various religious symbols and folk amulets for protection. Drivers' attitudes towards ADMs did not seem to depend on the number of years of the driving experience, but rather on personal disposition. I did not find a connection between how many objects of religious protection (icons, crosses, rosaries, etc.) drivers used in their buses and how much they advocated ADMs. In one case, a driver who had no religious symbols in his bus had erected an ADM to his younger brother killed in a recent car crash (Kyiv, July 22, 2007, 30 years driving experience; file DS220006). Generally, drivers, like other interviews and survey respondents, demonstrated ambiguous attitudes towards ADMs.

²¹⁶ “Ну, квіти – да: перше врем'я як загинув, я щітаю, що можна. А там оце пам'ятникам на дорозі не місце.”

Attitudes of 31 people who posted comments in online publications about ADMs (Fedchenko 2009; No author 2009; Hribiniuk 2009) tended to be polarized. They clearly stated whether they were in favor or against ADMs along the roads; no comment was neutral. Those who defended ADMs (51.6%) stated that advertisement banners posed a much more serious threat for drivers' safety than ADMs. In fact, the overall tone and the choice of words of the pro-ADM online commentators demonstrated negative attitudes toward the authorities who implemented the 2009 Group Decision and questioned their real motives. For example, "There would be no questions asked if they [the authorities] decided to clean the roads of all the garbage, but for some reason they have ascribed a negative impact only to ritual objects. This irritates and makes [me] think unpleasant things about the conscientiousness and adequacy of the road police",²¹⁷ "Those are not ADMs or wreaths that distract drivers, but the bloody advertisements on banners and billboards. Those should be destroyed, for they often cover the road signs!"²¹⁸

The responses from the unstructured interviews and those provided on the structured surveys are not easy to match. Therefore, I chose only the main

217 "Вирішили би очистити шляхи від усього мотлоху одразу, не було би питань, але чомусь весь негатив побачили лише в ритуальних предметах. А це не може не дратувати й не наводити на неприємні думки про добросовісність і адекватність даїшників." A comment added by "**Вася** (Ukraine, Kyiv)" under the article by no author (2009): <http://www.unian.net/ukr/comments/300290> (last consulted on August 25, 2010).

218 "Не памятники с венками отвлекают водителей, а осточертевшая реклама в виде растяжек и бигбордов. Вот их и нужно убирать, а то и знаков из-за них иногда не видно." A comment added on February 3, 2009 by "Ишка" under the article by Fedchenko (2009).

question of attitudes towards ADMs to be compared. The chart below reflects the overall positive, negative, and undetermined “unofficial” attitudes reported by the 248 Ukrainians used in this research (173 survey participants, 44 personal interviews, and 31 comments to the online publications).

Chart 5-3. Public Unofficial Attitudes towards ADMs, %

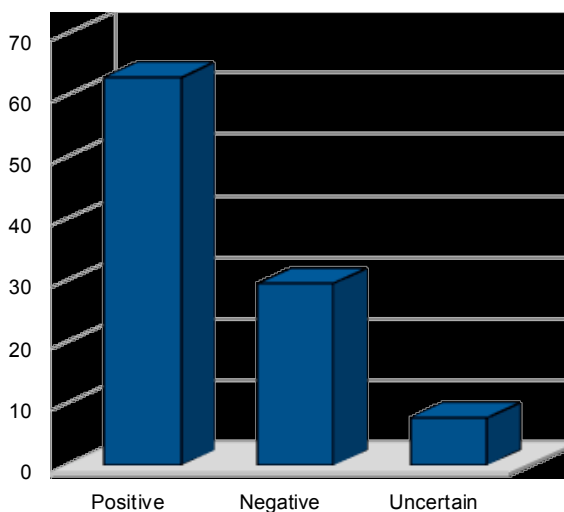


Chart 5-3 shows that more than half of the informants (62.9%) had positive attitudes towards ADMs. It means they defended ADMs and those people who set them up. They acknowledged the memorials' right to exist and ascribed positive functions to them. They rejected regulations preventing future ADMs or mandating destruction of existing ones. Nearly a third of the respondents (29.4%) demonstrated negative attitudes, meaning they disliked ADMs, ascribed negative

functions to them, would not like to see them around, and approved of regulations to eradicate them. Only 7.7% of the Ukrainians in my research held uncertain attitudes toward ADMs. They had no definite opinion because either they related to both sides of the debate and wanted to stay neutral (like most of the clergymen), thought the issue was irrelevant and unimportant compared to other problems in the country, or simply did not care.

Contemporary Attitudes toward ADMs and Traditional Folk Beliefs

Much traditional belief about death, afterlife, and soul is reflected in attitudes of modern Ukrainians toward ADMs. For example, the division into “good” and “bad” is present in their attitudes. People still speak about death on the road, by suicide, away from one's home, and other types of sudden unnatural deaths as “bad death.” “They say that a sudden death is bad” (Oleksandra K-o, August 31, 2007; file DS220027).²¹⁹ They speak about the places of tragic death as “bad places” and about bad energy that radiates from them. Ukrainians, therefore, find it necessary to mark such “bad places” by ADMs. Traditionally, people avoided talking about bad topics like the devil or misfortune fearing they thus would summon them. Contemporary Ukrainian drivers seem to keep the same attitude. They believe that speaking about ADMs may magically inflict road collisions on them. They, therefore, did not like the topic and tried to end the conversation quickly. There is overall respect toward other people's grief, a

²¹⁹ “Кажуть, що нагла смерть – погана.”

general understanding that people in grief have the right to express their sadness in the form of ADMs, and the widespread view that it is “bad” to prohibit them from doing that.

Just like 19th century Ukrainians, contemporary informants are concerned with the souls of those who died tragically, believing that souls are connected with the sites of the tragic death and require special help from the living. Survivors view ADMs as important as graves in cemeteries and treat them equally, commemorating the dead at both places the same way: “Honor the memory [of the deceased].... Stop, sit, or stand [by an ADM], or drink 100 grams [of alcohol]” (anonymous bus driver, Kyiv, July 22, 2007; file DS220006).²²⁰ Survivors leave the same objects at ADMs that they deposit at graves, such as religious artifacts (Figures 4-3 and 4-8). They also demonstrate traditional beliefs about the physical needs of the souls of the dead and bring food, drink, and cigarettes to ADMs to please the souls (Figure 4-74).

In the 19th century, people sprinkled houses of the survivors with the grains of rye to counteract the death effect because the root of this word in Ukrainian is identical to the root of the Ukrainian word for life. Nowadays, informants demonstrate another example of folk etymology and metaphorical thinking when they speak about laying down fresh, or, as they say in Ukrainian, *живі* (live) flowers at the ADM as a symbol of the living memory and continuing life.

220 “Остановись, почти память. Посиди или постой, или выпей 100 грамм.”

Conclusion

Most of my Ukrainian respondents supported the use of ADMs and perceived them as a phenomenon that has value on its own and should be continued. Respondents who said ADMs follow “fashion” or a convention whose origin is unclear provided an interesting insight into the nature of Ukrainian ADMs: They seem to be a part of a longstanding folk tradition transmitted by custom and imitation, just like any other folklore form. The fact that ADMs started to be dismantled in 2009 does not reflect the real public attitudes of Ukrainians. That was the result of the initiative by authorities. The media tried to influence public attitudes, but their messages did not seem effective and often caused the opposite reaction. It is possible that the decision to get rid of ADMs did not become popular because it was out of the cultural context: It contradicted the folk tradition of memorializing the dead in general and caring for those who died tragically in particular. It rejected traditional beliefs regarding bad death and intangible relations between the worlds of the living and dead. Respondents demonstrated ambiguous attitudes toward ADMs, seeing them as more than mere physical sites or reminders about a tragic event. Instead, they saw ADMs as places saturated with potentially dangerous energy.

Even though different categories of respondents (clergymen and secular citizens, those with and without personal experience of tragic loss, private

individuals and functionaries, drivers and pedestrians, Internet users) had different opinions on the meanings and appropriateness of the ADMs, most seemed sensitive to memorials. There was a general acceptance of public grief, and informants seemed to empathize with survivors. Furthermore, survivors were considered to have a moral right – even if they had no legal right – to set up ADMs. The idea of authorities regulating expressions of private grief seemed unthinkable to many.

The strong emphasis of respondents on the importance of memory as part of their explanation of the meaning of ADMs could possibly result from two sources. It could represent either the remnants of Soviet rhetoric regarding the obligation to remember soldiers who sacrificed their lives in WWII or an older folk tradition requiring that ended lives continue through the memory and prayers of the living – a tradition that seeks to preserve the souls of ancestors until the Second Coming. In both cases, commemoration through active caring for both the last resting places of the human remains at the cemetery and places of tragic deaths located elsewhere is perceived as beneficial and important not only for the dead, but for the living as well.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of abnormal death memorials in Ukraine shares many common features with its counterparts in other countries and cultures. Namely, the majority of Ukrainian ADMs are located aside the roads and symbolize places of tragic death resulting from the traffic collisions. Many of those roadside ADMs in Ukraine are designed as crosses and are adorned with flowers and/or wreaths. Such sites appear spontaneously, without official sanctions. They often reveal information about those who have been commemorated in that way. Certainly, not every place of abnormal death is marked by ADMs. Also, as in many other countries, Ukrainian ADMs at certain point have become objects of restrictive policies.

At the same time Ukrainian ADMs have their unique features. Contemporary Ukraine is a future oriented society, but it has much regard for its own past. The Ukrainian cultural landscape is meant to remember and to keep traces of the tragic past. It is a “memorious landscape,” to use the Simon Harrison’s (2004) definition. In this respect ADMs stand as important elements of this emotional landscape, of landscape as an archive of tragic individual deaths.

Physical ADM sites can tell much about the culture in which they appear. In Ukrainian culture, ADMs appear as metaphors which tend to shift their meanings with the passing of time. Documented evidence suggests that ADMs in Ukraine

have been in existence since time immemorial. They were mounds with or without crosses, places of ritual accumulation of either stones or branches and straw. In the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century marking places of “bad” (i.e. sudden, tragic, untimely, wrong, not one's own, violent) death was still strictly observed. This fact testifies to the stability of this folk custom, its deep roots and common nature. Prior to the changes introduced by the Soviet system and through the first half of the 20th century the cultural context of ADMs were the folk beliefs in “bad death” and unquiet dead associated with such a death. Places of “bad death” marked on the roads were places to be avoided, places haunted by (dangerous) ghosts of those who died tragically, places that required sacrifices on behalf of passersby to pacify those ghosts. Burning the accumulated debris at the ADM sites was viewed as beneficial for the souls of the unfortunate deceased and their afterlife, and was therefore performed on regular basis as a moral obligation of the Christians for their dead.

Many features of ADM sites seem to be “borrowed” from the traditional funeral ritual, which still preserves in Ukraine much of its ancient form and content. Those features are also indicative of beliefs that surround abnormal death and commemoration of victims of such death in Ukrainian folk culture. The very practice of setting up ADMs appears as the following of a conventional pattern – that of marking places of “bad deaths” and burials. Such markers most often appeared along the roads and crossroads, and presupposed a certain type of

behavior on part of the passersby. That behavior demonstrated their concerns for both their own safety and the souls of those who died in a bad way. It seems that in the second half of the 20th century places of tragic death completely ceased to be burial sites; instead they persisted as cenotaphs and as locally known toponyms.

Designs of ADMs seem to be patterned after the cemetery grave stones, i.e. Ukrainian ADMs acquire forms that bear strong association with cemetery architecture. As cemetery architecture changes over time so do the designs of ADMs. Although trends in that architecture vary across the regions of the country, there are still certain all-country commonalities observed for Ukrainian ADMs. For example, the cross is not their primary feature. During the most of the Soviet times, star-topped obelisks replaced crosses. Nowadays, monumental compositions and pillars made out of expensive materials have become popular as ADM designs. Wreaths made of artificial flowers serve as the primary feature of many ADMs. ADM sites can be often physically separated by small fences from the rest of the landscape, and in this way appear as symbolic graves. Although erecting metal fences at the gravesides is common throughout the country I found more fenced ADMs in Western Ukraine. Leaving offerings such as flowers, food and drinks, or votive candles and so on at the ADMs was most certainly derived from the funerary ritual. It is customary to leave such offerings at graves. This particular tradition of leaving goods at ADM sites demonstrates a transformation

and dispersion of the folk custom: all the accessible ethnographic descriptions of Ukrainian ADMs hold that passersby had to toss anything available at hand – mostly straw, hay, or something else potentially suitable for burning – as a sacrificial offering. At the graves, on the contrary, people would share and leave food and things, especially those the deceased liked. Therefore, Ukrainians transferred the custom related to the cult of the (good) dead into those historically “bad” dead to whom ADMs were dedicated. All this, plus names, dates of life and photographs that are present on many contemporary ADMs make them appear to be a twin copy of the cemetery grave sites.

My research shows that abnormal death eventually stopped being the primary reason behind ADMs construction: contemporary ADMs are distanced in people's minds from the traditional custom of marking the precise places of “bad death.” Instead, they have become yet another expression of the cult of the dead. The traditional obligation to honor and commemorate the dead through ritual actions seems to stretch from the traditionally “good” dead to any dead. This shift was provoked by many reasons. One of them, probably, was the Soviet changes to the traditional funeral when the secular ritual took over the religious one, and when a cemetery became a “democratic” place of burial. Another possible reason was the cult of the fallen Soviet soldiers that was much promoted in the aftermath of the WWII. The war itself was officially called “sacred” from its very beginning, and death of millions of people during 1941-1945 was thus sanctified

in the eyes of regular citizens. Soldiers, partizans, and civilians who died for their sacred motherland, USSR, were to never be forgotten, were to invisibly stay alive and present. Their deaths had to inspire the living for building the better future as the only possible way to “pay back” to those millions of slain. Numerous cenotaphs to the fallen soldiers were treated with reverence, as sacred and were covered with flowers and wreaths on Victory Day (May 9) which turned into an all-country commemoration day. Although there are many temporary ADMs like wreaths, flowers, ribbons, or photographs of the deceased tied to trees or light posts, there are also many ADMs that are called to preserve memory of the deceased as long as possible. Those are made of very durable and often expensive materials. Personalization of ADMs that seems to be a recent trend still might reflect a folk belief in keeping memory of a deceased person alive.

Just as cemeteries have become the last resting places for all the dead regardless of the nature of their deaths, so the rituals related to the cemetery graves were extended to the ADMs. From sites indicating spots that were dangerous for the living many ADMs turned into the sites of mourning, and some of the contemporary ones into the sites of the death celebration, or rather life celebration of those whom they commemorate. The double commemorative practice seems to be common, i.e., Ukrainians visit grave sites as well as ADM sites and commemorate their dead on both. On the one hand, this ritual reflects the belief that death is not a break, a disruption and life continues after by acquiring

other forms. On the other hand, this practice also reflects the duality of folk beliefs about body and soul, both of which are subjects of care by the living.

Denis Thalson (2006) argues that setting up a memorial serves symbolic cleansing of a place of death (p. 29). I argue that Ukrainian ADMs remain liminal, contaminated places associated with some supernatural fear of touching. There exists a differentiation in people's answers: they mention ADMs being special and almost sacred, since many are marked by the sacred symbol of a cross, contain other religious symbols, or are designed as shrines. They, therefore, should not be ruined: ruining sacred objects is believed to summon punishment from above. At the same time, informants mentioned that sites of abnormal death (or rather ground under or around ADMs) were special places on the road, and were induced with powerful negative energy that could be deadly for the living. Such evil places were to be avoided. This duality (sacred/protective – dangerous/punishing) is at the heart of liminality.

Many contemporary Ukrainians demonstrate traditional beliefs regarding roads and crossroads as dangerous, evil places. In order to avoid the most undesirable, "bad death" and protect themselves from the road-related evil people still employ the magico-religious means such as prayers and icons or amulets while on the roads and driving. Ukrainians seem to possess a magical worldview that relates bad consequences to negligence of certain important rules (failure to read or interpret omens, violation of taboos, etc.) Besides, there is a recognized

“spirit culture” (Grainger's term 1998: 36) in Ukraine, and seeing ghosts there is culturally acceptable. As Grainger (1998) noted, “[i]n... cultures, where the spirits of the dead are taken into intellectual and emotional account, ... visitations from beyond the grave are not so greatly feared as they are in ghost-denying societies” (p. 36).

Roger Bastide (1970) noted that traditional religions externalize their dead and can, therefore, live with them. Although Ukrainian culture is not pure or homogeneous, this idea is not foreign to it: the world of the dead there is closely related with that of the living, and there is a continuous communication between the two. The living do not mind being close to their dead in general, and to the markers of tragic death in everyday landscape (parks, streets, roads etc.) in particular. There are two specific characteristics of ADMs in Ukraine: their number and the degree of tolerance towards them among the people. One senses a sort of spiritual appreciation in people's attitudes that surfaces in answers about ADMs being places where the soul departed from the body. In previous times, when ADMs were fewer in number, and mobility in life was lower, crosses at the places of tragic death symbolized death of a Christian and invited the passersby to pray for the souls of those ill-fated. Contemporary ADMs hardly serve this function of reminding the faithful about their spiritual obligations. Neither their designs nor rhythm of life allow for this. Besides, many contemporary Ukrainians – and especially in the cities – are areligious or at least passively religious. They

set up ADMs not because they believe in communication with the dead but probably because they unconsciously follow a version of the tradition that has been observed for centuries. By marking spots of bad death contemporary Ukrainians “speak the language of the tradition” that is based on their active memory (Petrov 1989: 79). Krinka Petrov (1989) argued for the role of memory in preserving oral traditions, but it certainly is responsible for preserving rituals as well. She pointed out that memory can be of two types: 1) passive that is responsible for “the preservation of a given message in order to have it reproduced fairly accurately” and 2) active, or creative memory that “involves the utilization of the ‘grammar’ one must know in order to reproduce and change messages” (p. 79). Despite their changing designs and somewhat changed function ADMs remain symbols understood by all Ukrainians because ADMs take on meaning through association and due to the active memory. ADMs to traffic accidents victims and to those who lost their lives due to other types of abnormal death are not a new phenomenon, not a new folk religious (in contrast to sacramental) belief-based practice. As Rajkovic (1998) put it, “[t]his is a current continuation of death customs... a new response to an old, eternal question, in a new garb” (p. 172). ADMs actively reflect cultural beliefs surrounding death in traditional Ukrainian culture. Insofar as rituals tend to reflect reality as people see it and upon which they act, rituals of setting up ADMs in Ukraine testify that the

reality of people is very much associated with beliefs in the afterlife, communication with the dead, caring for them, and staying connected to them.

The tradition of marking places of tragic death sustains itself, and seems to be more important than any official regulations or prohibitions. I dare to state that in Ukrainian culture, unlike in the West, death was never hidden, mourning was never eliminated, while expression of grief in public was treated with respect and understanding. This maybe a reason why public protests against ADMs in Ukraine were unheard of. Prior to February 2009 there existed no restrictions on abnormal death memorials in Ukraine and on how those were maintained. The fact that ADMs started disappearing in 2009 due to the semi-official regulation (the notorious Group Decision) does not mean that the state became an effective manager of public sentiment and memory. Although the situation with physical ADM sites did change after February 2009, people's attitudes remained largely intact. Ukrainians view ADMs as important objects which have a certain spiritual connotation, are important for the survivors and, therefore, should not be destroyed. How much resistance – whether active or passive - the Group Decision will provoke will testify to the persistence of the tradition. If there is going to be a major change in people's attitudes toward ADMs in the near future then it would follow a major change in Ukrainian culture.

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APPENDIX A

Photographs of ADM Sites

Please refer to digital images of the photographs on:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/~spk2/Memorials/>

Figure 3-1



Figure 3-2



Figure 3-3



Figure 3-4



Figure 3-5



Figure 3-6



Figure 3-7



Figure 3-8



Figure 3-9



Figure 3-10



Figure 3-11

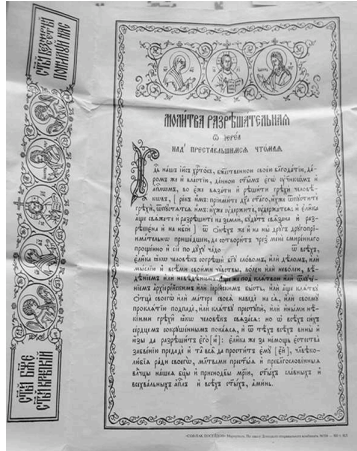


Figure 4-1



Figure 4-2



Figure 4-3



Figure 4-4



Figure 4-5



Figure 4-6



Figure 4-7



Figure 4-8



Figure 4-9



Figure 4-10



Figure 4-11



Figure 4-12



Figure 4-13



Figure 4-14



Figure 4-15



Figure 4-16



Figure 4-17



Figure 4-18



Figure 4-19



Figure 4-20



Figure 4-21



Figure 4-22



Figure 4-23



Figure 4-24



Figure 4-25



Figure 4-26



Figure 4-27



Figure 4-28



Figure 4-29



Figure 4-30



Figure 4-31



Figure 4-32



Figure 4-33



Figure 4-34



Figure 4-35



Figure 4-36



Figure 4-37



Figure 4-38



Figure 4-39



Figure 4-40



Figure 4-41



Figure 4-42



Figure 4-43



Figure 4-44



Figure 4-45



Figure 4-46



Figure 4-47



Figure 4-48



Figure 4-49



Figure 4-50



Figure 4-51



Figure 4-52



Figure 4-53



Figure 4-54



Figure 4-55



Figure 4-56



Figure 4-57



Figure 4-58



Figure 4-59

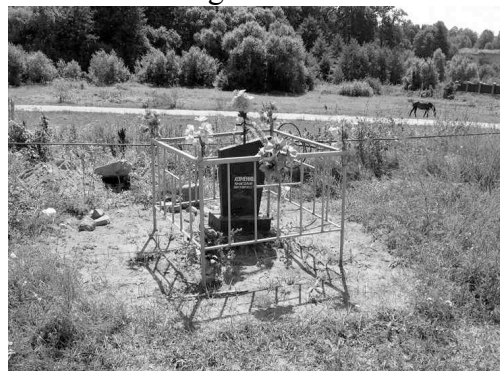


Figure 4-60



Figure 4-61



Figure 4-62

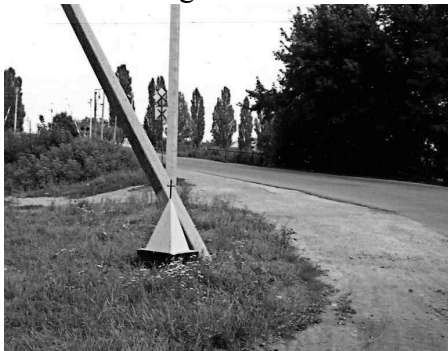


Figure 4-63



Figure 4-64



Figure 4-65



Figure 4-66



Figure 4-67



Figure 4-68



Figure 4-69



Figure 4-70



Figure 4-71



Figure 4-72



Figure 4-73



Figure 4-74



Figure 4-75



Figure 4-76



Figure 4-77



Figure 4-78



Figure 4-79



Figure 4-80



Figure 4-81



Figure 4-82



Figure 4-83



Figure 4-84



Figure 4-85



Figure 4-86



APPENDIX B

Survey Questions:

- 1) Your age: _____
- 2) Gender: Female Male
- 3) Education level: _____
- 4) City/region you are currently residing in:

- 5) Are places of unnatural death marked in your area? Yes No
- 6) How do you call them?

- 7) Is it a part of Christian tradition to erect memorials where people died accidentally or violently? Yes No
- 8) Are such memorials special (sacred) in any sense? Yes No
- 9) Have you ever lost someone in a tragic occurrence? Yes No
- 10) Did you erect an ADM at the place of tragic death? Yes No
- 11) Why do people erect ADMs?

- 12) Do ADMs distract drivers? Yes No
- 13) Do you approve of roadside memorials along the highways? Yes No

14) Do you approve of roadside memorials in the streets? Yes No

15) Would it be better to erect ADMs of the same, standardized design only?

Yes No

16) Would it be better to have a road sign “Here a human has died” instead of
ADMs along the roads? Yes No

17) Do you support the Group Decision 2009 that bans ADMs? Yes No

18) Is it necessary to have ADMs regulations in Ukraine? Yes No

19) Please leave any comments your have on ADMs here:

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

- 1) Are there ADMs in your neighborhood?
- 2) Who usually erects them? How soon after the tragedy?
- 3) Is it important to erect them?
- 4) What are the local/state laws and regulations on such memorials?
- 5) Are regulations necessary with such memorials?
- 6) Who looks after them? For how long?
- 7) If no one looks after a memorial, how long should it stay?
- 8) What is your attitude towards such memorials?
 - a. Are they sacred in some way?
 - b. Are they a part of the Christian tradition?
 - c. Are those places dangerous?
 - d. Do they bother you?
 - e. Would you let people erect such an ADM in front of your house?
 - f. Do you approve of them along the highways?
 - g. Do you approve of them in the streets?
 - h. Would you ban them altogether?
- 9) Do you know people who erected such ADMs? Why, in your opinion, they did it?
- 10) How beautiful an ADM should be? Should it contain a picture of the deceased, dates of life?

- 11) What materials may be used for ADMs? (Plastic? Glass? Wood? Iron?
Stone? Parts of the crashed automobile?)
- 12) In your opinion, which design of ADMs is most acceptable? Should they
all be of the same, unified design?
- 13) If a memorial is removed, is it possible to use that space afterwards? Is it
OK to build something there?
- 14) What happens to a soul of a person who dies accidentally or violently? Is
such a death “bad”? What can other people do to help such a soul?
- 15) If somebody vandalizes ADMs what can happen?
- 16) Can (should) relatives and friends visit the memorial? How often? On
which days?
- 17) Is it OK to leave food or some objects at ADMs? Which ones?
- 18) Is there something special that people should do when they pass by such
memorials?