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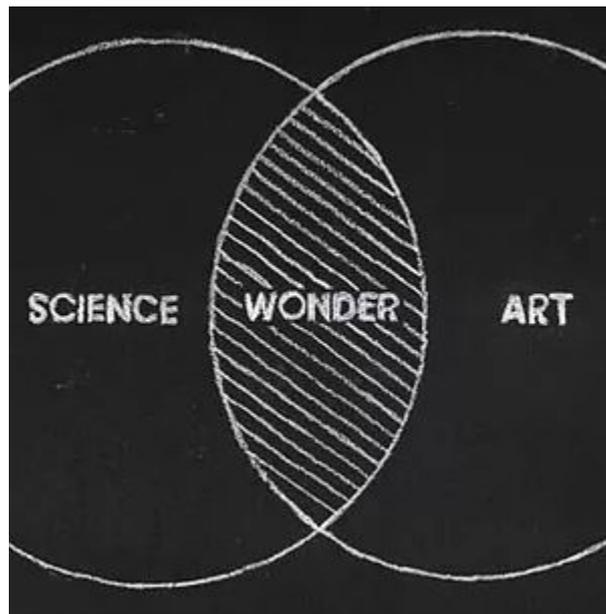


Figure 1: Imaginary Foundation, *Descience*. (2013)

This essay will discuss changes from Modernity through to Contemporary, exploring art pieces from the Modernist, Postmodernist and Contemporary era. The essay will open with a brief insight into modernity and how that led to modernist movements, such as symbolism, followed by a discussion on the development of photography and its use within the study of the human body. This will then lead to a more specific discussion on how artists explore the body and how they have considered the impact that cadavers have on the environment. These topics will then lead onto a more indepth discussion on how literature, specifically children's picture books address the notion of death to a child who may have experienced what death is.

These themes will be exemplified through the works of Robert Farren, Carlos Schwabe, Eadweard James Muybridge, Dr Gunther Von Hagens, Jae Rhim Lee, with a closer look into books by Margaret Wise Brown, Bryan Mellonie and Michael Rosen. The theories of the naturalist Charles Darwin and Fleming and Mills will be explored.

'Modernity is often characterized by comparing modern societies to premodern or postmodern ones, and the understanding of those non-modern social statuses is, again, far from a settled issue'. (Dallas Baptist University, 2014).

Modernity can be seen as a time where people were excited by progress, through the use of science and new technologies. Society was trying to overcome religious ways of thinking by developing and evolving into more rational ways of thinking (Burke, 2000).

Rapid discoveries and changes were happening like never before, for example the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries (History.com, 2016). Items were being manufactured for the masses on a substantial scale. Books for instance, no longer needed to be written by hand. The invention of the printing press made it much faster and cheaper to produce multiple printed books.

“The printing press spread quickly (for its time) from Gutenberg's first press in Mainz in 1450 throughout Europe by 1500. In that time, as many book copies were printed as had been produced in the previous millennium by scribes.” (Dewar, 2017).

Advertisements and newspapers, in addition to books, were made faster to produce, increasing efficiency of communication to the masses. However, printed materials were initially popular with lower classes, as hand-inked books were a indication of wealth (PsPrint 2017).

It was not until the development of the printing press in the 19th century that this method of creating books became popular. The invention of the steam-powered printing press replaced the need for someone to place the paper in by hand. This reduced production time, and as a consequence, more time could be spent on distribution, thus aiding with the advancement of mass-circulation of literature, which had a great impact upon the education of society. (Yu, 2013)

“In Scotland, literacy among adult males rose from approximately 25 percent in 1643 to 65 percent in the 1750s. Figures for England in the 1640s suggest a literacy rate for adult men around 30 percent; by the mid-eighteenth century this percentage had grown to 60 percent, with a corresponding rate for adult females at around 35-40 percent. Statistics for France point to a similar rise. In 1686, only about 29 percent of men and 14 percent of women were able to sign their names in parish marriage registers; by 1786-90, the percentage had grown to 48 percent of men and 27 percent of women”. (Melton, 2001)

This advancement in the media, enabled the exchange of new ideas at an increased rate, allowing for developments within society to expand. Religious teachings started to be closely examined during this time. Science was being used as a method to investigate and challenge ideas, therefore there became a significant awareness of controversial opinions and ideas; such as those of Charles Darwin and his book, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859)



Figure 2: Robert Farren, *Life in the Jurassic Sea 'Duria Antiquior' An Earlier Dorset* (1850)

Artists that would traditionally create works of religious significance were now being challenged by works of those who depicted scientific ideas, such as Robert Farren and his painting of *Life in the Jurassic Sea 'Duria Antiquior' An Earlier Dorset* (Fig. 2). This new type of subject matter of a pre human world was quite exciting to the public. The reason why this work was considered to be so intriguing, was due to the fact that most Victorians would have believed in the

theory of creation at this time Adams (2008). If this is the case, then it appears that there is something to be learnt from the practice of rational thinking. It could be said that to question old as well as new ideas is to strengthen the quest for knowledge.



Figure 3: Carlos Schwabe, *La Mort et le Fossoyeur "Death and the gravedigger"* (1895)

However although there were artists who were exploring this new type of subject matters, there were still artists creating historical, religious and mythical works of art through the art movement of Symbolism. This work by Carlos Schwabe (Fig 3) is an example of Symbolism. Death is the main symbolic focus in this painting, suggested by quite a few different aspects within the piece. In the background there is a scene of a graveyard that is covered in snow. Graveyards already being heavily associated with death but the snow evokes a sense of

stillness and peace. The angel in the foreground is portrayed very similarly to how the “grim reaper” is often portrayed, in a black gown with large black wings. They surround the man in the grave, symbolising a sense of protection while also suggesting that Death is capturing him. The man’s expression is both of shock suggested by his right hand and acceptance of his own death through the calmness present in his facial expression. This idea is also reinforced by the man’s grasp of the shovel. It appears that the man is ‘holding on’ while equally ‘letting go’. Within the angel’s hand is a Green flame, Green is often associated with life force and energy (Bourn, 2011). It is implied that ‘his life is in her hands’ as she is holding it while interacting with him. However, whilst it is implied that she has control over his life with her right hand, she is also protecting it with her left arm, giving an impression of compassion as well as power. Schwabe depicts Death as something not to be feared but to be accepted. Instead of Death being portrayed as the usual frightening and intimidating male figure. Death is shown to be a kind and gentle woman in his painting, symbolising a different way of perceiving death may be needed. Many artists during this time started introducing new ideas into their works to challenge the way things were in art.

Artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munch and Salvador Dali were able to provide different modernised ways of representing the world through their paintings, as artists now had more freedom to experiment with the process of creating work. No longer were artists trying to depict completely accurate representations of what was around them due to the developments within photography.

The camera could now capture and document real life with precise detail, allowing the viewer of the image to feel as though they were viewing what was photographed 'in the flesh'. Artists had the liberty to fully explore and experiment with their materials, as well as creating pieces of work that the camera was not capable of producing. Producing work in this manner then had an influence on photography.

From the invention of photography in the 1830s (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016) multiple methods of capturing images were developed. Newly developed photographic processes such as: Woodburytype, and Platinum print Collotype (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017) gave artists further freedom to produce works of art.

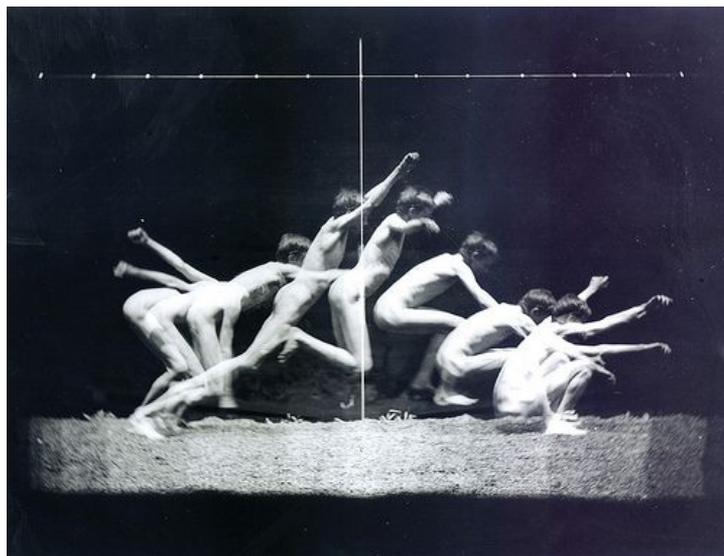


Figure 4: Eadweard James Muybridge, *Motion study: Male Nude, Standing Jump to Right* (1885).

This image by photographer Eadweard James Muybridge (Fig. 4) offers the viewer the opportunity to study the human body in a sequence of movements in a single image through the technique of Multiple Flash Photography. This enabled

the study of the body in relation to its movement, in a way that had not been observed before.

“Photography is ideally suited to catching a body at high speed, yet it too freezes movement onto the fixed surfaces of the photographic print. To remedy this, artists and scientists explored ways to create or replicate moving images. The British artist and inventor Eadweard James Muybridge (1830-1904) was the first to use stop-action photography to record bodies in motion in sequences of exposure.” (Comar and Baker, 1999:103).



Figure 5: Dr Gunther Von Hagens, *Body worlds 'pregnant woman'* (date unknown).

Dr. Gunther Von Hagens' discovery and development of the plastination process, has introduced a contemporary way for the public to study the body. He displays cadavers in a manner that reveals different aspects of the human body with a view of how the inside of the body looks. This may be seen as a controversial approach and some may argue that it is considered a form of capitalisation on the human body. The surgeon, (Gorski 'Orac', 2009), on visiting one of the *Body Worlds* exhibitions illustrates his experience;

“I couldn't help but feel that there was something exploitive about the whole endeavor; given the sold-out attendance and the not inexpensive price for tickets, plus all the merchandise on sale in the obligatory gift shop that the exhibit exited into, clearly this exhibit is raking in money hand over

fist. Even so, given the way that this exhibit sparked so much interest in anatomy in the children visiting it, perhaps it's worth a little exploitation"

The *Body Worlds* exhibitions gained particular interest from the people of Britain. It could be argued that this is because people are not used to facing the idea of death, as it's considered to be a taboo subject; particularly in the UK. In an interview conducted by Stuart Jeffries, Dr. Gunther Von Hagens gives his opinion;

"I think it is clearly to do with the scarcity of bodies," says Von Hagens. "In France and Germany, laws were adopted that any unclaimed bodies could be brought for anatomy. There was no such law in Great Britain, making bodies very scarce. This scarcity led to those terrible murders in Edinburgh and the whole Burke and Hare phenomenon. This made the British parliament pass the Anatomy Act, which made it hard for people to get bodies for scientific research. This hurt medical science and it hurt the general education of people. As a result, there is no public museum of anatomy, as there are in Switzerland, Germany and Italy. This has created an interest in such art as you are talking about that has become popular in Britain." (Jeffries 2002)

There are arguments about whether or not *The Body Worlds* collections are even considered to be an art form (the Guardian, 2001) due to them being so heavily entwined with science However, (Gorski 'Orac', 2009) continues to explain;

"Each of these were dissected in a unique way to show muscles, internal organs, etc. in a different light. To me it was clear that a lot of this was designed to be more art more than science or education".

Many consider the exhibition to be controversial, as they are authentic human bodies being displayed as art pieces. This could be seen as unethical, yet some may argue that the exhibition encourages a healthy attitude towards accepting the notion of one's own death, because they are authentic and not hand made sculptures (Bluett, 2007).

It is interesting to consider that this is very similar to the way in which people used to cope with death during the Victorian era. When a family member

was on their deathbed, the family would be with the ill person until they had passed away.

“The bereaved can wash and dress the bodies of their loved ones in preparation for burial. This process brings a mourner closer to death, and breaks down unwarranted fears of the dead body. “It’s what everyone did 150 years ago,” Doughty says, “and it can be a beautiful way to mourn.” (Fitzharris, 2016)

This could be argued that the loved ones of the deceased being in the presence of death for longer periods of time, allowed them to fully accept death has happened. (Anderson et al., 2008)

“In Great Britain during the reign of Queen Victorian people usually died in their homes, surrounded by family and friends, and the corpse stayed in the home until burial. In the period before medical death certificates, viewing and touching the corpse was commonplace - to confirm identity and that the person was dead. Children were not spared from viewing the dead, and in poor homes would have shared the room and even bed with a dying sister or brother” (Angel, 1997).

While the exhibitions remind the viewer of their own nature, they also create an engaging way for people to consider other forms of tending to dead bodies. There is now a greater awareness of the polluting effects of traditional burials. “[...] buried in the ground, accompanied by pounds of steel, wood and toxic embalming fluid” (Plenke, 2016). Cremation also has a negative impact on the environment with all the chemicals used in the process “...due to its accompanying release of vaporized mercury, dioxins and furans, and greenhouse gas” (Sevenponds.com,

2017). These are just two factors that are encouraging people to consider other forms of what they want done with their body after death.

“The environmentally friendly funeral industry is booming, as people begin to consider the impacts their bodies might have once they’re dead. Each year, a million pounds of metal, wood, and concrete are put in the ground to shield dead bodies from the dirt that surrounds them. A single cremation requires about two SUV tanks worth of fuel. As people become increasingly concerned with the environment, many of them are starting to seek out ways to minimize the impact their body has once they’re done using it.” (Palus S., 2014)



Figure 6: Jae Rhim Lee, *Mushroom death suit*. (2008)

Artist Jae Rhim Lee is one artist who has been working on a new way to reduce the impact the body has on the environment after it's dead, through a project she calls the *'Infinity burial project'*. Some may argue that cemeteries have become landfills to simply store human bodies when they are no longer needed. (Garrett PhD, 2013)

“Traditionally, burying and cremation were sustainable. But with our urban lifestyles and density of populations, such practices are becoming unsustainable. In 2003 Mary Woodsen reported that we are turning cemeteries into toxic landfills by burying 827,060 gallons of embalming fluid—including formaldehyde; 180,544,000 pounds of steel; 5,400,000 pounds of copper and bronze; and 30 million board feet of hardwoods every year. We are polluting the living through our death and leaving behind a toxic legacy.” (Garrett PhD, 2013)

The aim of Lee's *Mushroom Death Suit* (Fig. 8) is to completely eliminate the toxins released once the body is buried by allowing mushrooms to grow and feed from the body. Lee noticed that over time the mushrooms consumed shredded hair, nails, skin she kept in petri dishes, watching pieces of her be consumed and decay allowed her to accept the notion of her inevitable death. (Lee, J.R., 2011) explains during a TED talk;

"As I watched the mushrooms grow and digest my body I imagine the infinity mushroom as a symbol of a new way of thinking about death and the relationship between my body and the environment see for me, cultivating the infinity mushroom is more than just scientific experimentation, or gardening, or raising a pet. It's a step towards accepting the fact that some day, I will die and decay. It's also a step towards taking responsibility for my own burden on the planet."

Astrophysicist Neil Degraesse Tyson also comments on the mushroom suite, during a public Q&A session with Richard Dawkins;

"I request that my body, in death, be buried and not cremated, so that the energy content contained within it can be returned to the earth so that flora and fauna can dine on it just as I have dined upon flora and fauna throughout my life." (Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science, 2010)

There is becoming a greater awareness among the younger generation, on all aspects of death, not only its impact on the environment but the impact it has on the individual. It is important for children to be taught about death early on as it can provide them with the ability to understand what has happened in the event of a death of someone they know, to prevent confusion and fear.

Picture books are an ideal way to explain difficult topics to children such as the concept of death. Picture book have images to assist with a story, making it

easier for children to comprehend a concept. Picture books usually have a minimal amount of text on the page and the images (often by separate artists and not the author) are sometimes considered more significant than the words on the pages. A picture book will often have an image on every page or at least somewhere on a double page spread, and (Kennedy, 2017) the standard format for a picture book is 32 pages long. (Rosoff and Newbery, 2008).



Figure 7: *Orbis sensualium pictus* by Johann Amos Comenius. (1658)

It is often said that the book *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658) created by Johann Amos Comenius, was the first picture book to be made for children. Comenius was a teacher and wanted reading to be more accessible to all learners. “He was concerned to provide children with an education based on the senses and to create a text-book which would be accessible to all levels of ability.” (British Library, 2017) This new perspective of visually explaining concepts to assist with text was revolutionary in assisting children with their ability to learn, It

was an attempt at communicating at their level of understanding the world (McNamara, 2014).

Modern through to Contemporary picture books now provide a more comprehensive way to teach children about the world. Picture books often have bright imagery created in a range of different mediums that may be visually exciting, with accompanying text which can vary from rhyming to repetitive and from humorous to factual. Picture books are a multi-sensory experience for a child, they not only have text and imagery, but the sound of the page turning, and the voice of the adult reader, along with the smell of the fresh new print of the book allows many of the senses to be involved in the reading experience for the child. These combined aspects help encourage a child's sense of imagination (Calabrese, 2010). Theorists Flemming and Mills (1992), suggest that there are five types of learners: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic, as well as Multimodal, which is broken into two groups and can be a blend of two or more of the main attributes (Vark-learn.com, 2017). The visual, tactile and auditory experience of physically turning a page of a picture book can allow the reader to have a more holistic experience than the process of reading an e-book. Therefore, the physical handling and reading of a book may be a more accessible process to a wider range of learners.

The presence of a physical book allows the reader to identify what part of the book they are in, because they can physically see the beginning, middle and ending of the book; while e-books make it more difficult to gauge how far into the book they are. (Flood, 2014). However, the developments in technology now allow children to read more interactively on tablets and e-readers. In books such as:

Amelia (2012) by Gilbert Ford and *Oh what a tangle* (2012) by Anita Pouroulis, children's books are transformed into a story with games, allowing children to interact with characters and progress through the story at a different pace to usual, enhancing the experience in a completely different way to a physical book.

Picture books are different to illustrated novels as picture books are mostly aimed at children due to the emphasis on the imagery; while illustrated novels mostly focus on the text with imagery every so often to enhance the stories, such as books by Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. These writers often address themes that are challenging by writing about them in an uplifting way using humour, allowing the reader to relate to the story, especially if they are experiencing similar scenarios in their own life. Strong examples of this are Roald Dahl's *The BFG* (1982) which highlights the main character being an orphan and Jacqueline *The story of Tracey Beaker* (1991) that addresses feelings of loneliness from living in a children's residential home, and the theme of neglect by her mother.

Picture books often serve the same purpose as they allow children to relate to the characters, this is often achieved by depicting the main character as a child or a small creature. Other characters in the book may be human beings, animals or creatures; main character and the immediate family or friends are often the same type of species, notably an animal that is considered friendly or endearing such as a dog, or teddy bear. While the antithesis is often portrayed as a figure or creature that is considered to be scary, such as a crocodile, monster or character that is presented as grotesque. These characters, while most often end up being overcome by the main character, they will occasionally have small victories and

prevail through some parts of a story. An example of this is the “*Harry Potter*” series, in particular the story *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007). A surprising amount of the heroic main characters get killed by the villain “*Voldemort and his army*” and each death is truly felt by the reader. After investing time into characters throughout a story, the death of one or more of these characters can leave the reader to feel a great sense of loss and sadness.

Picture books can also have this overwhelming power to affect the reader in this way, for example *Michael Rossen’s Sad Book* (2011) which focuses more on the emotions related to a death rather than the death itself. This book will be discussed in more depth later on in this essay. Picture books are a great way for assisting children with understanding different aspects of life such as their emotions, children may be introduced to complex emotions that they may not have experience which can be confusing if presented to them while reading alone. Reading a picture book with a parent or guardian, allows both parties to build a “*safe space*” together for them both to talk about their emotions after reading about these topics in a place where they feel protected emotionally as well as physically, this can be beneficial to building bonds in their relationship (The Huffington Post, 2013).

The way in which children process the news of a death is similar to how adults process it. Some of the feelings both adults and children can experience will be of shock, denial, anger, guilt, sadness and fear, but children will often see-saw in and out of these grieving emotions (Barnados, 2006). Children need to be informed about death and the emotions that are attached with the death of a loved one. That way they are prepared before they experience it and are able to

understand what has happened to them if they lose someone. This helps limit any confusion and frustration a child may experience if they are not sure what death is or why their loved one is no longer present. It is important for children to learn about death and to understand what happens, so that both the child and adult can help to manage their feelings of bereavement (Barnados, 2006).

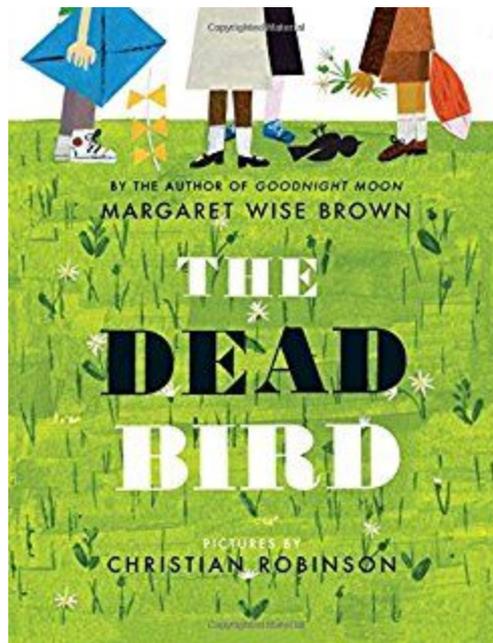


Figure 8: *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown (2016)

The book *The Dead Bird* was written by Margaret Wise Brown and originally copyrighted in 1938. It was not until 1958 when her book was published. Originally it was illustrated by Remy Charlip in 1958 and then was later illustrated by Christian Robinson in 2016. Brown's writing in this book are very factual, considering it is a children's book. It is written in the third person and the text is cold and blunt, yet informative in the way that death is explained. Brown writes about what happens to the body of an animal after it has died, it is educational which allows the child to understand what happens after a death. However, it does not go into a lot of detail about how the children feel about the death of the bird,

until after they have buried and then sung a song to commemorate the dead bird. *“Then they cried because they’re singing was so beautiful and the ferns smelt so sweetly and the bird was dead”* (Brown, 2016). There is a constant reminder of the dead bird throughout the story, which some could argue could be monotonous to an adult when reading; However, this can help reinforce the key topic of the death to a child as children respond well to repetition (A Mother Far from Home, 2017).

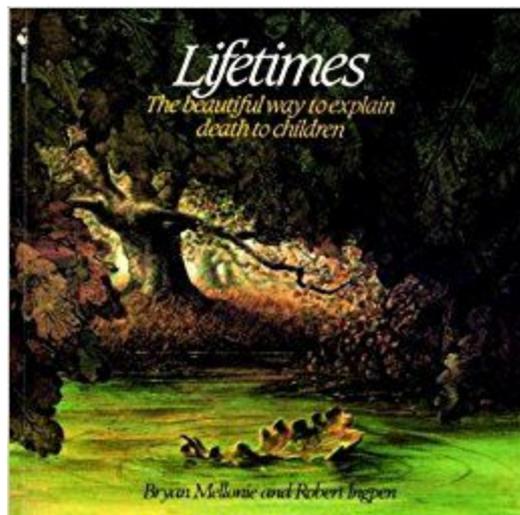


Figure 9: *Lifetimes The beautiful way to explain death to children* by Bryan Mellonie (1998)

Lifetimes The beautiful way to explain death to children (1998) by Bryan Mellonie and illustrated Robert Ingpen. The way in which this book is written offers the reader the opportunity to learn about death in a positive way. It explains that every living thing has a lifetime and each species has different lengths of time in which they are alive. The text is truthful but compassionate, explaining that death is just apart of life, just like how being born is. The book explains how there are beginnings and endings to everything and that death is just a type of ending. The accompanying illustrations used in the book are tasteful and traditional, with muted colours and appear to be presented in such a way that they are not tailored towards visually stimulating the child like picture books often do with their use of

vibrant colours. They appear to be suitable to adults as well as the child and seem to be tailored to the purpose of education, for example paintings like those within a national art gallery or museum (Roth, 2015). There are no main characters throughout the book, yet it does comment on different species of animals and their specific life times with a build up to people and how they also have a specific life time, but no one specific character is introduced within the book.

It could be argued that this is not the best way to captivate a child's attention while learning about such a difficult topic, as the child does not have anyone in particular that they can relate to.

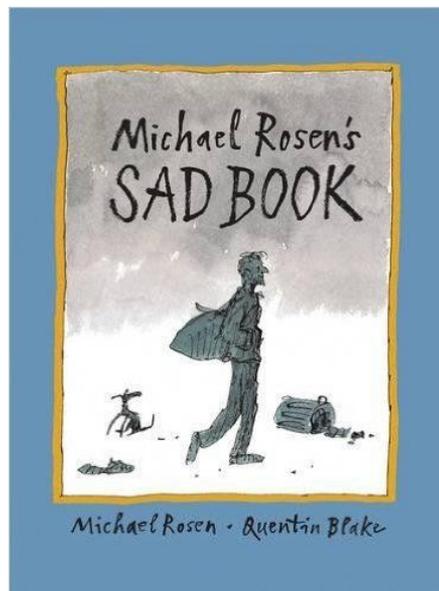


Figure 10: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen. (2011)

This book by Michael Rosen (Fig 10) is an example of a character that a child can relate to. The story offers an outside perspective on a death and the grieving process that follows. It does not tell a story about the death itself, instead it explores the emotions that Michael Rosen is faced with and how he addresses those emotions. The reason why this book could be considered to be so powerful

is due to not only the honesty within text but in addition to the remarkably emotional illustrations. (Perring, 2005) The book allows the reader to fully empathise with Rosen, it is evident through his illustrations, that Blake has empathised with Rosen's sadness by conveying such heavy illustrations to the viewer. It could be said that this book changes the expectations of the reader in relation to the styles of both the author and illustrator, as they more commonly known for their work with upbeat narratives. *"Rosen and Blake feeling sad? To know that it's these two in such misery adds special poignance. These two are bringers of joy. And not just any joy: they make children laugh."*(Jordison, 2012). Possibly adding another layer of grief for the reader to empathise with.



This is me being sad.
Maybe you think I'm happy in this picture.
Really I'm sad but pretending I'm happy.
I'm doing that because I think people won't
like me if I look sad.

Figure 11: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen. (2011)

"[...] he had to depict the writer Michael Rosen grinning, even though he was really feeling very sad. "I did it 15 times, but I just couldn't get it right," he says. "It

wasn't so much that he was sad. I could have done that. It was that he was sad, but trying to look happy.[...]" (Jefferies, 2007)



Sometimes sad is very big.
It's everywhere. All over me.

Then I look like this.
And there's nothing I can do about it.



What makes me most sad is when I think
about my son Eddie. He died. I loved him
very, very much but he died anyway.

Figure 12: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen. (2011)

Blake's water colour illustrations, allow the reader to empathise with the character on a deep level. The first page in the book (Fig 11) followed by the double page spread (Fig 12) is an example of this. It is honest and explains how a person can feel sad even if they appear to be happy on the outside, while they are among other people. It then follows with an explanation, that when people are then alone the sadness can consume them as illustrated in the left hand side of the double page spread in (Fig 12). The right hand side (Fig 12) then explains why Rosen feels this sadness. The illustration is made much less detailed than in the first page (Fig 11). This could be argued that due to the nature of the way Blake illustrates his characters, they are not detailed enough to have their own attributes.

He leaves gaps in the lines to create a sense of fluidity that allows any of his readers to identify with his characters as they are not set in stone.

“He draws daily, working alone and not wanting to be observed [...] He has been told – on the rare occasions that a spectator was present – that when he concentrates, he makes the faces of the characters he is drawing. [...] Blake does not draw from life. “I make it all up, and you do that by feeling that in yourself.” (BBC, 2016)

It could be said that this leaves the reader to fill in the blanks, inspiring their imagination as they have more freedom to complete the depictions of the characters for themselves, instead of being told that this is exactly how they should look. Blake does this throughout the majority of the books he illustrates, However, in *Michael Rosen’s Sad Book* his illustrations depicting Rosen’s feelings of sadness, are even more fluid than usual. This could be due to the combination of his use of the colour grey depicting Rosen, representing his sadness rather than focusing on Rosen’s identity. This allows the reader, who may or may not also be feeling sad, to connect to the main character as it is left open to interpretation. It could be representing just Rosen, or it could also be representing the reader as well.



Figure 13: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen. (2011)



Figure 14: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen. (2011)

The last two double page spreads of the book (Fig 13) and (Fig 14) reiterates the two contrasting emotions that can be felt after the event of a death, similarly to how it is portrayed in the first two double page spreads (Fig 11) and (Fig 12). The jump from feeling or appearing happy can suddenly lead to an overwhelming feeling of sadness, especially when alone. This is represented mostly by the use of candles, the large amount of candles representing happiness and people around Rosen (Fig 13) and then just the single candle representing isolation as well as acting as a memorial to the death of his son (Fig 14). This book undoubtedly emphasises that it is okay to feel sad, yet there is no explanation on how to feel better within the book. It does however, explain how Rosen tries to do at least one thing a day that make him happy or proud, so that he can focus on those things when he is alone at night. It could be argued that the main 'message' of this book is that, people never get over the death of a loved one, but people do learn to cope.

In summary, analysing the works of Dr Gunther Von Hagens and Jae Rhim Lee it has become evident that throughout Modernism, Post-Modernism through to the contemporary that attitudes towards death have evolved and are still evolving from traditional and religious ways of death and how it is managed. The way in which people accept death could be due to the amount they are exposed to not only the presence of a death, but how often it is discussed and how it is approached.

This essay has explored how society has changed its way of thinking from modernism through to the contemporary. Changes within society has enabled the advancements within research, allowing for greater understandings of different

topics, one of them being death and how it is handled. As further research has taken place, the knowledge of the environmental impact our bodies have had on the planet has inspired artists such as Jae Rhim Lee to explore alternative methods of tending to the deceased. This essay has argued that for some, death has become a 'taboo' and people are trying to develop healthier relationships with it. This argument was expanded on by the three authors discussed within the essay. Bryan Mellonie's book addresses the notion of death being a part of life, and that all living things have their own lifetimes, allowing the book to be educational and truthful in a compassionate way. Margaret Wise Brown's book remains also educational and truthful but in a way that allows children to learn about what happens after the event of a death, in regards to the body, burials and traditions such as memorials. Michael Rosen's book then focused on the emotions that follow a death. It could be argued that no book is more important than any other as all three books offer valuable information to a child. However a book has presented the concept of death, it is evident that the act of reading a physical book with a child creates a safe space for them to learn about death and the emotions surrounding it. This provides them with a greater ability to deal with difficult emotions. Books have formed a prominent part in the journey from modernity to now with the development of technology influencing the format they are presented in but the research by Fleming and Mills suggests there still is no true replacement for a physical paper book. This suggests that fundamentally people do not really change and need the comfort of familiarity of a book.

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