




ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES





- funerals do not just mark the end of a life. They are, rather, rites of passage, transitions into another state or status. (Strong, 32)



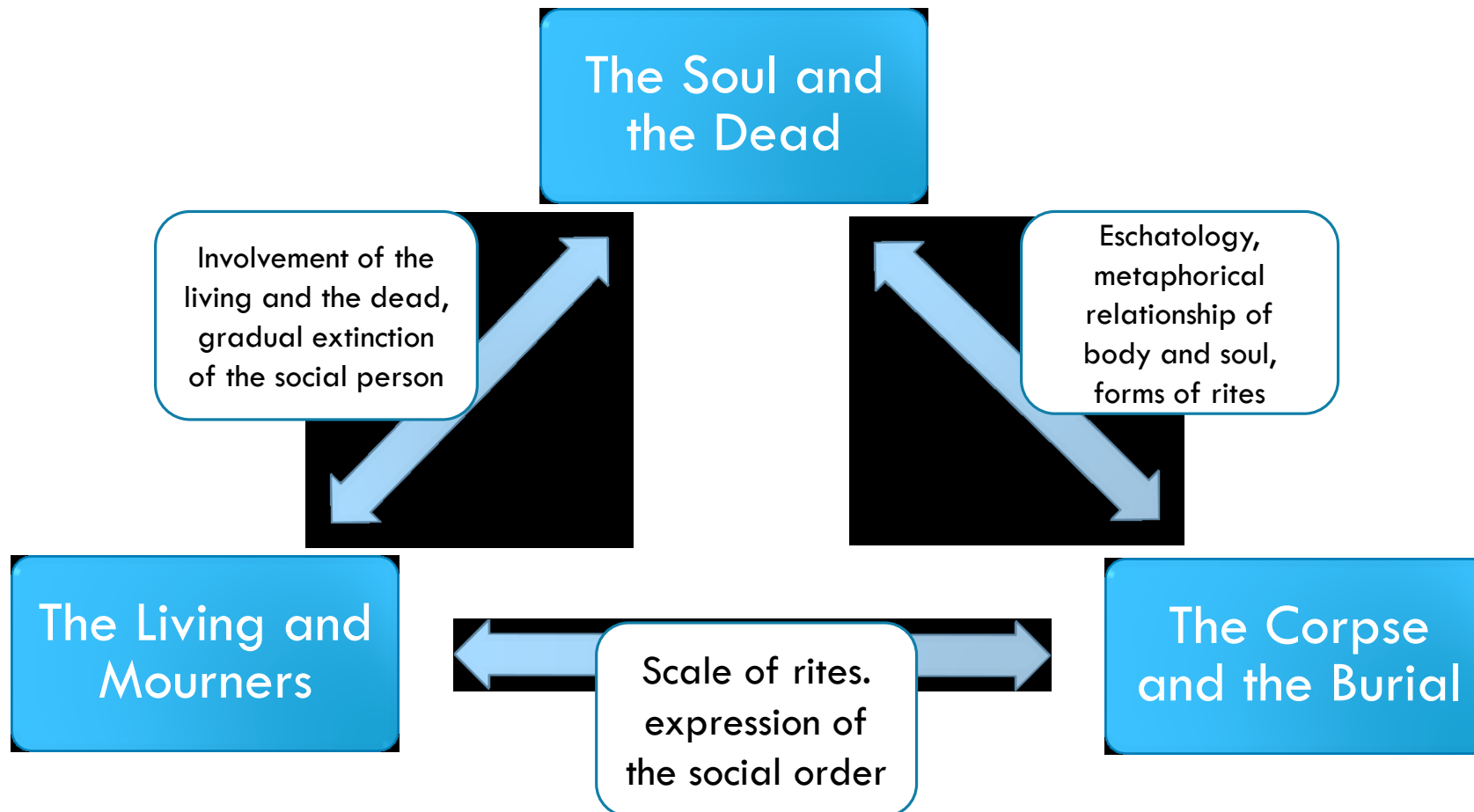
DEATH AS PROCESS

Robert Hertz (22 June 1881 – 13 April 1915)

Death is not a moment, but a process

Rent in social fabric

HERTZ'S ARGUMENTS – SCHEME



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BURIAL (HERTZ)

Primary – decomposition of the body, drying of bones

Secondary – disposal of bones

Cremation

Air burial

Embalming

Endocannibalism

INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

Impurity of the body

Mourning

Impurity of the relatives

Soul/spirit in intermediate state – potentially dangerous

Leaving after the secondary burial – the dead → ancestor, protecting spirit

Secondary burial – collective character

Symbolic secondary burial



FUNERAL AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

Arnold van Gennep (23 April 1873 – 7 May 1957)

VAN GENNEP'S THREE-FOLD STRUCTURE

preliminal:
separation



liminal:
transition



postliminal:
incorporation

BUDDHA'S FUNERAL

Do we see the double funeral structure?

Do they deal with 'moisture' somehow?

Bones/relics?

Mourning period?

Impurity?

End of the process?

Do we see the three-fold scheme? Are the three stages clearly expressed?

ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL DEATH

Unpredictable death vs. order

Ritual – order and sense

Sometimes rituals of death performed alive

Hazard games – ritualization of arbitrarily character of death

Good death vs. bad death

Suicide vs. self-sacrifice



SYMBOLIC PARALLELS

Sacrifice

Birth

Initiation

Marriage

War/aggressivity

PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS

Kübler-Ross model (On Death and Dying, 1969)



Emotions – controlled in/through ritual

Reweaving of a rent in social fabric

Reinforcement or redefinition of social ties