An Introductory Bibliography on Cultural Studies Relating to Death and Dying in Canada

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What follows is an introductory and obviously incomplete bibliography of English-language works dealing with death and dying in Canada. To be more specific, these works are concerned primarily with the cultural practices and physical artifacts that relate to death and dying in this country. I have omitted works dealing with native peoples; there is an enormous literature—often based on archaeological samples of actual burials—on this topic, and it merits a bibliography of its own. I have omitted strictly demographic studies of mortuary trends and the enormous amount of sociological material that is aimed at helping the bereaved cope with death in modern society. Finally, I have not included the numerous accounts of supernatural narratives that often have an obvious connection with the death phenomenon.


BOWDEN, Bruce, and Roger Hall. “The Impact of Death: An Historical and Archival Reconnaissance into Victorian Ontario.” *Arhisartia* 14 (1982): 93-105. A survey of some of the thematic issues that provide possible directions for research on the Victorian attitudes in Ontario toward death, using various archival materials as the basis for suggestions. The wide range of primary source material detailed by the authors maps out a number of research areas as yet uninvestigated.

BUCKLEY, Anna-Kaye, with Christine Cartwright. “The Good Wake: A Newfoundland Case Study.” *Culture & Tradition* 7 (1983): 6-16. A discussion of the functions of the typical Newfoundland wake and funeral, based largely on archival sources. Describes the activities that take place during the wake and funeral, relating them to the general community social pattern. Ritual activities lessen the disruptive nature of death, while social pressures ensure that all community members participate in providing what is considered an appropriate wake and burial.

BUTLER, Gary R. “Sacred and Profane Space: Ritual Interaction and Process in the Newfoundland House Wake.” *Material History Bulletin* 15 (Fall 1982): 27-32. An examination of the spatial relationships that develop within the context of the traditional Newfoundland wake, including both the physical deployment of space during the wake and the practice of ritual separation during the symbolic “distancing” of the dead. These features are examined through a comparative analysis of wakes.
in both Catholic and Protestant communities.


KLYMASZ, Robert B. "Speaking At/About/With the Dead: Funerary Rhetoric Among Ukrainians in Western Canada." Canadian Ethnic Studies 7, no. 2 (1975): 50-56. A discussion of three verbal genres used by Ukrainian-Canadians to communicate and maintain contact with the deceased: the traditional, oral funeral lament; the obituary and/or commemorative piece found in the pages of the press; the funeral sermon delivered by the priest officiating at the funeral service.

KNIGHT, David B. Cemeteries as Living Landscapes. Ottawa: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1973. One of the few studies that examines the cemetery as a cultural artifact, addressing issues such as cemetery status and layout, and burial location as indicators of cultural values. Based primarily on Ontario materials.


POCIUS, Gerald L. "Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland Gravestones: Self-Sufficiency, Economic Specialization, and the Creation of Artifacts." *Material History Bulletin* 12 (Fall 1981): 1-16. A discussion of the origins of Newfoundland gravestones, an artifact tradition originally dominated by imported markers, but gradually replaced by locally made varieties by the mid-nineteenth century. The earliest gravestones used in Newfoundland came from England and Ireland; when the economic base shifted to St. John’s in the early 1800s, many trades, including gravestone carving, developed locally. Far from being an artifactually self-sufficient culture in earlier times, Newfoundland was marked by a high degree of division of labour.

RUSSELL, Lynn, and Patricia Stone. "Gravestone Carvers of Early Ontario." *Material History Bulletin* 18 (Fall 1983): 37-39. A discussion of the photographic survey of the province’s gravestones which the authors are conducting. General comments on the initial findings dealing with symbols and style chronology are given, as well as some details on several carvers.

