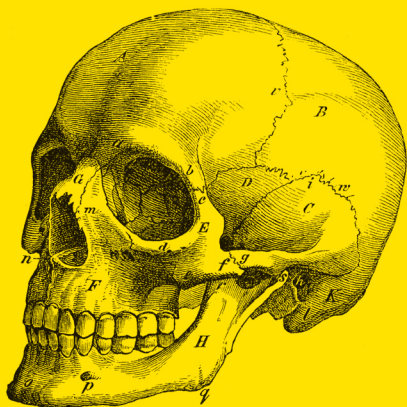
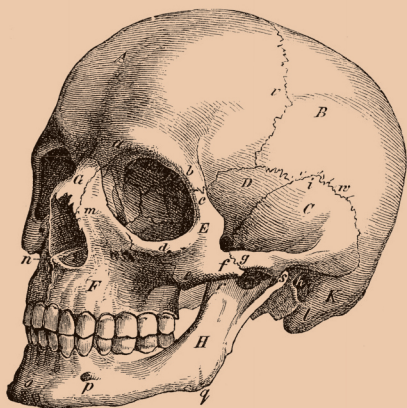
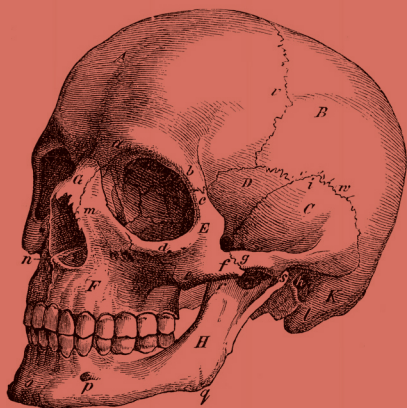


Death, The Dead and Popular Culture

Ruth Penfold-Mounce



EMERALD STUDIES IN DEATH AND CULTURE



DEATH, THE DEAD
AND POPULAR CULTURE

EMERALD STUDIES IN DEATH AND CULTURE

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DEATH, THE DEAD AND POPULAR CULTURE

BY

RUTH PENFOLD-MOUNCE

University of York, UK



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PREFACE

My fascination with death and the dead goes back to my doctoral studies (2001–2005) when I came across tales of doctors keeping body parts taken from famous dead criminals whom they had autopsied. Combining this macabre souvenir trade in the dead with popular culture was a remarkably easy step considering my wider interest in celebrity and popular culture. I have come to embrace the quote by JM Barrie's well-loved character Peter Pan (*Peter Pan*, 1911) who said that to die would be an awfully big adventure. Pan got it almost right but failed to mention that to research death is a big adventure, too, and this book is proof of that.

Death, The Dead and Popular Culture is part of the first wave of publications under the Emerald Series in Death and Culture which was inspired by the first biennial Death and Culture Conference held at the University of York, UK, in 2016. The book series is driven by the intention of providing an outlet for cross-disciplinary exploration of aspects of mortality. It seeks to provide a forum for research that approaches death from a cultural perspective and is fully supportive of new ideas and subjects, new theoretical applications, and new explorations of less conventional engagements with death and the dead. The *Emerald Series in Death and Culture* is run by myself, Dr Julie Rugg (University of York, UK), and Dr Jack Denham (York St John University, UK), and we

put out a call for book proposals in January 2017. So far, in these early stages, we have been successful to recruit passionate researchers working in fascinating fields of death research and we look forward to publishing many books in the future.

My contribution to death studies research extends beyond the book series and conference and has branched out to include the establishment of the Death and Culture Network (DaCNet) at the University of York, UK. This interdisciplinary network brings together scholars with an interest in death, provides support and training for doctoral researchers rooted in death studies, and actively pursues public engagement. The hope for DaCNet in the future is to provide leadership and a sense of unity to the international community of death scholars who examine the vibrant and diverse relationship between death and culture in all its varied forms.

Much gratitude goes to Philippa Grand and Emerald Publishing for not just being willing to publish this book but to support the Emerald Series on Death and Culture.

I presented versions of chapter two at the Centre for Death and Society Conference (CDAS) in 2016 and as a Keynote Speaker at Death and the Maiden Conference in Lodz, Poland, in 2017. Both of these conferences were crucial in refining my ideas, so thank you CDAS and Kasia Malecka for persuading me to renew my passport and visit her fabulous homeland.

Thanks are also due to Dave Beer for his support, endless encouragement and much-needed lunch breaks. This book has benefitted hugely from his insight and prevented chapter three from being scrapped in its entirety in a fit of pique and self-doubt as well as rescuing chapter four with an improved framework.

My love and thanks as ever go to Daniel for good-humouredly putting up with my macabre enthusiasm for death and corpses ('There's a mummified arm in Wiltshire!') and to Abi and Sam who know far more about death and the dead than the average children under eight.

Dr Ruth Penfold-Mounce
University of York