Recalling Devices: From Ossuaries to Virtual Memorials

Abstract:

Man is the only being preserving their dead (Edgar Morin). Over time, man has created different devices able to keep alive the memory of the deceased. The real trace (remains), the symbolic trace (photos, films, objects that belonged to the departed) and the virtual trace (the Facebook wall turned into a memorial) are attempts, characterising specific periods of time, to keep the absent present, by preserving something of the identity of those who have passed away. If in the past ossuaries were a kind of museum of worldly remains (often with a moralising purpose), today social media tend to become vast virtual cemeteries (frequently playing a consolatory role for those who are left behind). Statistics show that in 2010 there were, on Facebook, over 5 million pages of dead people, many of them transformed in genuine memorials. How the Romanian, Orthodox world is dealing in the long run with the need to store the other's traces is the question that the present paper tries to answer.

Keywords: *memory, remains, ossuary, virtual trace, virtual memorials.*