Disease as the process of dying. Cultural images of AIDS at the turn of XXth and XXIst century

Abstract:

There is no doubt that AIDS – describing as the plague of XXI century – is perceived and regarded as one of the signs of our times. Images of AIDS that appear in media are interesting examples of the cultural perception of illness which is inextricably linked to a death. What is very characteristic, is the fact that in many cases AIDS is presented as the process of dying. In my thesis I analyzed social campaigns, TV miniseries Angels in America (by Mike Nichols) and Derek Jarman's documentary project – Blue. These are three ways of speaking about death – difficult and "forbidden" subject during the era of beauty and youth. My key questions are inter alia: Who is a person sick with AIDS or infected with HIV? What "signs" indicate disease and approaching death? And last but not least: How the metaphors of disease are intertwined with the metaphors of death?

Keywords: *AIDS, HIV, terminal disease, social campaign, documentary, TV-series.*