The Death of the Star. Social and Cultural Issues

Abstract:

One of the most popular products circulated by consumer society is the 'star'. Their paradoxical status – for we are dealing with a human being subject to the logic of objects – becomes even more problematic when the 'star' meets death. The present study reflects on the social and cultural issues engendered by the death of the star with a view to highlight some essential aspects defining the postmodern individual's attitude towards death. And in order to do this, it examines the temporal dynamics of the meanings attached to the star concept along the lines of mediatic production/construction and public reception. It analyses the mechanisms by which the collective imaginary – manifesting itself in relation to the death of the star, working it out socially and culturally – manages to surpass the death denial and generate a revival of death (Pierre-Alexandre Poirier). Among these mechanisms, the elaboration of a personal myth and of a particular figure of the body extreme, or the spectacular catharsis are essential. However, this return of death triggered by the death of the star is limited, as the star does not evade third person death (Vladimir Jankélévitch), and also problematic (its kitsch components).

Keywords: *star, death, media, personal myth, kitsch, death denial, death revival.*