

"The Black Panther has died: or how Ceremonial Television hosted Public Mourning"

DRAFT

"The Black Panther has died: or how Ceremonial Television hosted Public Mourning" In Fox, Andrew (ed.), *Global Perspectives on Media Events in Contemporary Society*, London, 2016, pp.158-171; ISBN13: 9781466699670|ISBN10: 1466699671|EISBN13: 9781466699687| DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9967-0, 2016

Please do not quote without authorization.

Original paper published at:

<http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-black-panther-has-died/146622>

Fox, Andrew (ed.), *Global Perspectives on Media Events in Contemporary Society*, London, 2016, pp.158-171; ISBN13: 9781466699670|ISBN10: 1466699671|EISBN13: 9781466699687| DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9967-0, 2016

<http://www.igi-global.com/book/global-perspectives-media-events-contemporary/141913>

Draft

The Black Panther has died: or how Ceremonial Television hosted Public Mourning

"The Black Panther has died: or how Ceremonial Television hosted Public Mourning" In Fox, Andrew (ed.), *Global Perspectives on Media Events in Contemporary Society*, London, 2016, pp.158-171; ISBN13: 9781466699670|ISBN10: 1466699671|EISBN13: 9781466699687| DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9967-0, 2016

Samuel Mateus

Madeira University

samuelmateus@uma.pt

Abstract:

Media ecology is characterized today by the frequent airing of disruptive events. The shared experience of broadcasting is thus taken by disenchantment, fragmentation and individualization. Does this mean that integrative and ceremonial media events are condemned to disappear? What about media rituals and collective consensus?

In this chapter, we argue that the Media Events category is not just an invaluable frame to understand contemporary television but it is also a vital process on the way societies re-work their solidarities, negotiate collective belonging and publicly stage social rituals. Analysing the live coverage of the funerary ceremonies of Eusébio, the Portuguese world-wide football legend, we address this major social occurrence approaching it as a death media event, a public mourning ceremonial and a tele-ritual.

Media events are still a powerful example of how media plays a major role on social integration and national identity. The television broadcast of Eusébio's funeral - it is claimed - constitutes a key example, in the Portuguese society, of the integrative dimension of public events.

Keywords: Media Events; Ritual Communication; Media Rituals; Public Mourning; Television Studies; Publicity;

Introduction

The transformation of technological and institutional structures led to important changes on the television industry. The multiplication of channels, new modes of selecting broadcasts (*zapping*) and the ubiquitous presence of technical devices (multiple screens like computers, smartphones or tablets) have been key factors to the dispersion of audiences and the fragmented experience of broadcasting (Katz and Liebes, 2007: 159). Scolari (2009), in a paper comparing the hypertextual experience of Internet to contemporary viewing experience of television, draws attention to “hypertelevision”. In fact, the constant use of infographics, the rupture of linear narrative, the interactivity and the increasing of pace on editing pushes television into a new direction.

These variations on television’s gravity-centre were crucial on a major transformation: from *broadcasting* (an universal access to a set of channels) to *narrowcasting* (only those who pay subscription are given access), or even to *egocasting* (Rosen, 2005) associating television with Web 3.0 where spectators can create their own public channel (as is the case of *You Tube*). Contrasting to a massified, synchronized and uni-directional broadcast, there is a logic of segmentation and individualization based on customization, control and participation.

Seen together, these changes have socialized us to a norm of interruption rather than of schedule (Cui, 2013: 1221), to disruption rather than continuity, to diversity rather than unity, to desynchronization rather than synchronization.

In face of these upheavals one must ask about the destiny of the ceremonial television. Does the transition from a paleo-television to a neo-television (Eco, 1985), with its individualization and fragmentation (messages are multiple; contents are individually received; audiences are selective), signifies the destruction of a certain rituality associated with television? Do we no longer assist to a convergence of society? Do civic rituals loose importance in the era of consumer societies (Bauman, 2007: 52)? Where is the place for collective memory and national belonging? In other words, does individualization, (technical) fragmentation and (social) disenchantment leave space to the unifying dimension of Media Events?

Media do not simply *communicate and foster* social belonging; media also *communicate and create* social belonging. This means that the integrative role of media must not be assumed, it must also be investigated (Couldry, 2003: 37).

Television is not just a *medium* that represents a social existing harmony. In the celebration of collective memory, media such as television *re-presents* it and strengthens the social belonging. Thus, one must look to the ways mass communication articulates contingent and historical specific patterns of (symbolic) power (Couldry, 2003: 37). Hence, one needs to connect social rituals *enacted by* and *enacted through* media to symbolic power. Social integration does not exist *per se*. We should study the making of symbolic forms that media events put fourth, enabling them to reconnect the dispersed and disjointed society.

In this chapter we will take on these interrogations and ask whether the Media Events genre is still a major theory for understanding contemporary forms of social integration attained through mediated communication. We will claim Media Events are well alive (Cui, 2013: 1231), and are among the (few) television genres that may consolidate society’s public dimension. Despite the

disruption and individualization of media reception, the Media Event, seen as a ceremonial happening, is not in jeopardy. Ritual communication (Rothenbuhler, 2010) still flows in society even if it occurs through new modes of symbolic (and mediated) structuring¹.

We will ponder on the rallying effect of society permitted by Media Events, through the analysis of symbolic *production* and *reproduction* on the national broadcasting of Eusebio's funeral, a Portuguese football legend popularly known as the Black Panther. Eusebio's exequies may be seen, in the context of Portuguese society, as a key media event and a public ritual carefully fashioned around a national pride and a historic collective memory narrative.

Employing a theoretical-informed methodology based on ceremonial media, we will explore the integrative power of social meaning involved Eusébio's demise by a descriptive analysis of the social rituals enacted by media. We do not analyse symbolic forms such as images or discourses of social agents involved in this commemorative script. So one should not expect a critical discourse analysis or a multimodal focus. What we try is to discuss the broadcasting's cultural performance having in mind it was designed, since the beginning, as a death media event, a public mourning ceremonial and a tele-ritual.

The Demise of Eusébio - the upholding definition of the Media Event

On January, 5th 2014 the world knew of the departure of Eusébio da Silva Ferreira, aged 71, one of the great football players (often compared to Pelé) and one of the first personalities (along with Amália) to give an international dimension to Portugal. More than an icon, he was also a symbol of strength, perseverance and humility. He represented its country's soul by its capacity of struggle against the odds and an exceptional sensibility. It is famous the image of Eusébio on 1966 World Cup crying after the semi-finals loss of Portugal against England.

As a player, he was known for his speed, technique, athleticism and his ferocious right-footed shot, making him an exceptionally prolific goal scorer. He is still today considered S.L. Benfica's and the Portugal national team's most renowned player and one of the first world-class African strikers. Although born in Mozambique, Eusébio played for the Portugal national team since, at the time, African countries were overseas territories and their inhabitants were considered Portuguese. In 1966, he helped Portugal reach third place at the World Cup, being the top goal scorer of the tournament with nine goals (including four in one match against North Korea) and received the Bronze Ball award. He won the *Ballon d'Or* award for European footballer of the year in 1965 and was runner-up in 1962 and 1966. And in 1968, he was the first ever player to win the European Golden Boot, a feat he replicated in 1973.

Eusébio's media event was noticeably scripted by institutional agents, media and audience as a coronation, that is, "the recognition and glorification of a hero" (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 29). We

¹ We are not claiming that this reconciliatory and ritualistic dimension is the only symbolic configuration of Media Events. Although we focus on the festive viewing of television we need not to forget about Media Events based upon "disaster marathons" (Liebes, 1998: 71), war and terror (Katz and Liebes, 2007: 157) or episodes on collective shame (Carey, 1998: 42-70). In fact, working upon the renewal of loyalty (Conquests, Contests and Coronations) (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 25) should not make us disregard other types of Media Events on a mediatized world.

will see the death of the “black panther” also reminded Portuguese society of their cultural and historical heritage providing social reassurance in a time of financial and economic crisis. History remembers a time when the shadow of Portugal reached Africa and saw one of its humble children rise and become the first international personality taking the small nation’s name abroad. According to journalist Duarte Mendonça, “during the period when Eusébio burst onto the scene, Portugal was going through a rough stage under the decades-long dictatorship of Antonio Salazar. Only what was known as the “three F’s:” Fado, Football and Fátima (the Virgin Mary) would cheer the masses”². And continues: “His success on the pitch, however, took on massive proportions, as it was not a mere sporting achievement. It was proof that Portugal was able to produce great talent and conquer new and different horizons. It gave people hope, happiness and some comfort, which was all much needed at the time”³.

According to the journalist Duarte Mendonça, “the level of success that Portugal enjoyed under the leadership of Eusébio was crucial as a distraction that kept the population together. It is therefore no surprise that many people from all over the country admired Eusébio, regardless of the club they supported”. Taking this statement into his death, one could possibly say that the unifying role Eusébio had in the past was carried into the present day. Historical times were of course different but they share the same environment of political contestation. In the 1960’s, Portuguese people were building a severe plea to the colonial policies. In 2014, people were developing a strong opposition to Troika’s austerity program. In 2014, Portuguese economy experienced a severe financial and macroeconomic crisis, with serious social consequences, especially because of the strict austerity program imposed by the Troika and strictly enforced by a conservative government led by Pedro Passos Coelho. Note that in May 2011, a loan of 78 billion euros was agreed to Portugal in order to save the country from a financial deficit. However, this had emphasized a set of social trends related to the crisis: the decline of the labor force, the raise of taxes and the impoverishment of the majority of the Portuguese population, accompanied by shrinkage of employment. All this contributed to divisions and social tensions in the country that were implicitly suspended during the national symbol funeral.

The coronation was negotiated towards the suspension of social conflict in favour of common symbols of tradition and unity. We saw rival team supporters joining in the funerary homages and at the same time, during the three days of national grieving, political dissension and social divergences were apparently interrupted.

In the semantic level, the reverence showed during the live coverage suggests the importance of this death. Eusébio was a national idol and his disappearance left a sense of loss difficult to overcome. We can attest the reverence in three agents: institutional actors, media and audiences.

The institutional reverence came through different instances: the lap of honour in the stadium made by car (accompanied by six bodyguards), the Benfica’s flag covering the coffin or the display of the corpse on Estádio da Luz, to name just a few. A special funerary car was also brought to Portugal and numerous police cars escorted the procession across Lisbon’s streets.

² Mendonça, Duarte, “People we lost in 2014: Portuguese football legend Eusébio” - I a series of articles, CNN journalists shared stories of deaths in 2014 that affected them personally. It can be consulted at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/24/sport/football/football-eusebio-remembered/>

³ Mendonça, Duarte, “People we lost in 2014: Portuguese football legend Eusébio” - I a series of articles, CNN journalists shared stories of deaths in 2014 that affected them personally. It can be consulted at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/24/sport/football/football-eusebio-remembered/>

By the other hand, the political institutions also played a role in the reverence of the media event. In an official statement, Portugal's Prime-Minister remembered that Eusébio "took the national flag and our pride to the entire world" and that with him "the sport, our history and our collective ambition mix together. That memory shall never be obliterated"⁴. The Portuguese President told, in an extraordinary press conference, "*Portugal is officially in grief*" and announced three days of national mourning⁵. Stressing the engaging personality of Eusébio, the President declared that "*Portugal had lost one of its dearest sons*".

The president of the National Assembly was also present at the funeral and throughout Lisbon one could read in several outdoor posters "*Thank you Eusébio*". Only one month after its death, the city council decided to give the name of Eusébio to a street. One of the most popular political partys in Portugal, CDS-PP, expresses its condolences and remembered Eusébio as one of the great national symbols.

UEFA President Michel Platini has paid tribute to "one of the greatest players ever and a true ambassador for Portuguese football" after learning of the death of Eusébio⁶. Even international brands, such as the Watch manufacturer Tissot have honoured the Black Panther by issuing a limited edition of 1942 (it was in this year that Eusébio was born) wrist watches named "Tissot Eusébio".

The media respect was proven not just in the reporter's low-voice commentaries and profuse adjectivation, but also in the narration tone: circumspect, respectful and laudatory. Here is a comment by a Portuguese journalist: "Soon after, I was called by CNN to travel to Lisbon in order to cover the story. I remember having mixed feelings at the time. On one hand I was saddened by the news, but on the other hand I felt incredibly privileged to have the opportunity to cover the story by attending his funeral from a journalistic standpoint. This had a very special meaning, as it allowed me to also pay my respects as a long-time admirer"⁷.

The narration proposed instant expertise on protocol and ceremonial program enabling a better participation by those listening to it. The cameras selected many symbolic details conveying a ritualistic experience: the eagle emblem of Benfica on the background image, the sad gazes of the mourners, the smile of the Black Panther in television infographics, the blessing, the position of head-down while mourning, or the focusing on Portugal's national flag. The selection of camera images contributed to present the ceremony as a ritual performance, far from a realistic, informative approach. Having in mind Dayan and Katz (1992: 91), we could state television emphasis in the ritual stems from the fact that it is not reporting an event, but energetically performing it. Journalists were not just reporters. They were a kind of acolytes. More than commenting upon it, they were bringing it to existence. Media broadcasters were apostles of a collective faith.

⁴ The official note can be read at <http://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/os-ministerios/primeiro-ministro/mantenha-se-atualizado/20140105-pm-eusebio.aspx>

⁵ Media coverage of the press conference can be found, for example, in <http://www.maisfutebol.iol.pt/morreu-eusebio-o-pais-esta-oficialmente-de-luto-anuncia-presidente-da-republica>.

⁶ It can be consulted at <http://www.uefa.org/about-uefa/president/news/newsid=2041746.html>

⁷ Mendonça, Duarte, "People we lost in 2014: Portuguese football legend Eusébio". It can be consulted at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/24/sport/football/football-eusebio-remembered/>

Symbols (like the national flag) stimulated people's feeling of social solidarity and rituals conferred them a sacred power (Durkheim, 2001). For instance, television's live coverage focused in those symbols and gestures adjusting the collective perception to what was occurring: not just another death of a public figure, but the loss of an undeniable national icon. Hence, the ritual dimension of the ceremony was worked by media rituals that constructed the event as something "sacred" and of uttermost (national) importance.

Clearly there was a deep commitment to report every detail of the event. We could see some journalists filming from the car's luggage as the funerary wagon was doing the triumphal course around Lisbon. A helicopter and even cameras on motorcycles were present to film the funerary procession.

Major sports newspapers filled the first page with Eusébio's death during almost a week. Newsmagazines articles were published with the life of the legend: his childhood, his marriage, his most important goals, and everything about this popular personality. Each in their own way, and across several days, media were all paying respects to the Black Panther.

People's reverence came on the commentaries made through social networks, television and radio-interviews. But the respect, admiration and veneration came from the profuse ovations and applauses. People acted as if they were facing a monarch. *King Eusébio* was there, even if dead. His memory would never be forgotten.

Moving to the syntactic level of the media event, on the day of his death alone, the word "Eusébio" was searched over 100.000 times in Google. At the time of the announcement of its death, Eusébio's name was the word that appeared the most in Google Australia, Belgium, Holland, Nigeria, and Sweden. And it was the second most sought in Germany, South Africa, Canada, France, Mexico or England. FIFA offer him a deserved tribute and all over the world football stadiums paid homage with a minute of silence.

On January, 6th, the day of Eusébio's funeral, more than one and a half million spectators followed the exequies in generalist and national television channels. At the end of the day TVI had registered 8.4% rating and 29.2% sharing and was the broadcaster with most viewers⁸. SIC was the national channel who dedicated most time to the ceremony (more than 8 hours) and CMTV has the leading channel in hours of live broadcasting, among the cable channels (almost 14h). On the cable market, SIC Notícias was the most seen channel followed by TVI24 and RTP Informação. SIC Notícias' "Jornal das 7" reached an audience of 1.8% and a 4.1% share corresponding to an average of 173.800 spectators. Within a week, more than 1/5 of all informative subjects were devoted to the death and funeral of Eusébio⁹. In January 5th, Eusébio's death appeared in 88% of the total number of news and filled 91% of its duration. 26% of all news broadcasted by SIC Notícias related to the football legend. Between January 5th and 12th this was the main theme of the news programs of the major Portuguese television broadcasters. More than 451 single news, with a total number of 23 hours of length (almost a full day), were dedicated to the passing of the Black Panther¹⁰.

The occurrence was promptly configured as a media event at a global scale. The death of Eusébio was noticed in major international news channels such as CNN, BBC, Euronews, France 24 or Sky Sports. To *The New York Times*, the Black Panther (as was fondly called by media) "represented

⁸ Marktest. It can be consulted at <http://www.marktest.com/wap/a/n/id~1c99.aspx>

⁹ Telenews, MediaMonitor

¹⁰ Telenews, MediaMonitor

the best of soccer". The *Wall Street Journal* considered him "a star" and *The Australian* called him the king of this sport. All news bulletins portrayed the idea that a prodigious football legend had died. CNN's journalist, Duarte Mendonça, for example, wrote that "*Eusébio da Silva Ferreira is synonymous with greatness*"¹¹.

At the pragmatic level, we saw a highly committed audience, as almost two millions followed the event live in television. More than 10.000 people paid homage to Eusébio and many more flocked to Eusebio's statue to lay Benfica's and Portugal's scarves and flowers. Several thousand people (among public and anonymous figures) were on *Praça do Município*, in Lisbon's downtown, and some thousands formed a human cord along the city's avenues where the funeral cortege was passing¹². Benfica's supporters and also a large number of other clubs enthusiasts were present in mass, near the stadium, on the streets and at the cemetery to bid their last farewell.

The scripting of the Media Event can be seen as an investment by institutional actors, media broadcasters and audience in the ratification of Eusébio as a mythical figure, not only of football but also of Portugal as a nation. Many times, reporters and pivots referred to the Black Panther as "*the Great Eusébio*". His death was treated with deference and esteem as the symbolic structuring pointed to a ritual ceremony where people shared the grief of having lost an extraordinary sportsman and human being.

In short, the organizers were putting on a ritual ceremony; people attended to it humbly; the priest was commenting upon it and television was leading the *amens* (cf. Dayan and Katz, 1992: 84).

A Death Media Event

One thing we have learned with ancient civilizations is that an individual's celebrity and admiration is certainly measured by their death ceremonies. The main difference between ancient and modern exequies is that now we rely on electronic media such as television and internet to give us the news and transmit the public ceremony live, giving instantly a trans-national dimension and augmenting the celebrity status, even upon the decease.

While death has always been present to the point that one can say there is a media death culture (Gibson, 2007: 416), in the last decades we have been testifying to the expansion of death and grief from a private experience to a public one. Therefore, the presence of death in media is not just in terms of violence on news (war, conflict, political protests) or in fiction¹³. There is also a more harmonious presence: the decease of public figures whose death resonates on the social experience of individuals. Not only there is a vast archive of grief blogs, condolence Facebook messages or imagistic memorial on the Internet, contributing to new rites of mourning and memorialization (Sanderson and Cheong, 2010), but also *television has become a chief actor of mortuary ceremonies*. The opening up towards the public display on television of grief to strangers results not only on the expansion of a shared collective experience but also on the

¹¹ It can be consulted at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/24/sport/football/football-eusebio-remembered/>

¹² Diário Digital/Lusa. It can be consulted at http://diariodigital.sapo.pt/news.asp?id_news=678037

¹³ *Spartacus* (CBS), *CSI* (CBS), *Hannibal* (NBC), *Nikita* (CW), *Banshee* (Cinemax), *Criminal Minds* (CBS), *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO), just to name a few.

expansion of public attributes of media which now features a peculiar and intimate communications to take place at a distance and between total strangers.

Television in particular, is recording and exposing death rituals to public viewing. This fascination with death (turning something private into something public and sharable) seems to try to render the privacy of the demise into something sharable. Media are not only channels of desire and seduction: they assume themselves as a portal for grief and collective emotions. In fact, “celebrity deaths have increasingly gained significance as the means through which collective and public forms of mourning are ritualized” (Gibson, 2007: 420). Eusébio’s demise is surely an example of how ceremonial television can have a rallying effect. Indeed, it represents an urge of people to identify themselves as belonging to the same “community of mourning” (Wouters, 2002: 21). The enormous queues to sign Diana’s book of condolences in London or the White March in Brussels, are other collective manifestations of collective grief that we see updated in the Black Panther’s exequies. In this case, the death of a Portuguese symbol took an impressive amount of people to feel it simultaneously as a personal and a collective loss. The funerary ceremonies triggered a mass expression of grief. This was an opportunity to publicly express sadness and to fulfil the need for a common experience of sorrow in an individualized and fragmented society.

In another way, the mere presence of the corpse near the stadium and the possibility of being seen imprinted a sense of taking part in a historical date. The gatherings inside and outside the *Estádio da Luz*, and also in the streets of Lisbon, provided a sense of union. Television broadcasts¹⁴ secured the public’s feeling of instant commitment to something beyond them, to something, socially speaking, sacred. The mass gatherings simulated a kind of fraternity, uniting all the participants (*in presentia* or *in absentia* via television) in ritual expressions giving them a new sense of community.

The Media Event demonstrated, in Turner’s terms, the formation of a large symbolic *communitas* felt to be lacking in the everyday course of our life. “We are presented in such rites with a moment in and out of time, and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (...) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties” (Turner, 1969: 96). More than an area of common living, the *communitas*, and in this case the community of mourning, distinguishes a modality of social relationship, the acknowledgment of an essential and generic human bond.

Communitas fits very well in the kind of social association to which the media event have given rise: truly, the social and media construction of Eusébio’s exequies was about being, not only side by side in the long queues and gathering of homage, but with one another, in a shared multitude of persons following the events at home and at work.

¹⁴ While there were many different broadcasters transmitting the event live from the stadium, the images were all the same since it was Benfica TV that was providing them. Only the images in Lisbon and the Cemetery were different across different channels.

Public Mourning

The funeral of Eusébio seemed to be negotiated through the creation of what Myerhoff (1986 : 266) calls “*definitional ceremonies*” serving the dual purpose of honouring the dead person as a key member of their community and, at the same time, contributing to strengthen the survivors sense of belonging to that community. In many public gatherings and comments following the death of the Black Panther, we observe a kind of remembering that is also a *re-membering* (Myerhoff, 1986: 262): a strong feeling of membership renovation, involvement with a sports community (Benfica’s supporters), a national society (Portugal) and even with a worldwide community of football fans. Individuals taking part in the mediated death of Eusébio seemed to be inscribed in a social order that went way beyond them. The remembering rites were also ceremonies of appreciation of members of a common society. The *re-membering*¹⁵ is much more than recalling a glorious past. It involves the reincorporation of the attributes of Eusébio in the ongoing community of the living, namely, its effort to take Portugal’s name to the top, his commitment, and his human qualities. As if this *re-membering* meant also a transposition between the dead body and the living community, an action of transference of Eusébio’s qualities to the whole Portugal.

In its constant recallings, television not only contributed deeply to this *re-membering* but also anchored the death media event to a true *public mourning*. Through this labour on the collective grief, television broadcasters directed the focus of mourning toward maintaining a sort of ongoing collective relationship with the football legend. It was as if in the replaying of the old games of Portugal’s National Team where Eusébio so many times scored, or in the remembering of its private and public life, television was providing a way for viewers to seek comfort to their pain.

Therefore, public remembering had an effect of “bringing to life” the legend of the player. One could suppose media broadcasters were resisting reality trying to recall and evoke Eusébio’s life and creating, through its own memories and images, a kind of mediated, deferred ongoing relation with the deceased. The three days of national mourning, and also the entire week of the exequies, were days where everyday reality was postponed; a time of transition where Eusébio was, more than ever, brought to life from the collective imaginary.

Sigmund Freud (1917), in a small classic paper, described mourning as a response to a literal death or a symbolic loss during which the mourner relinquishes emotional ties to the lost object. The work of mourning envisaged by the Psychoanalysis’ father entails a hyperremembering (Clewell, 2004: 44) or a process of almost obsessive recollection during which the mourner resuscitates the existence of the loss in the psyche, replacing a definite absence with an imaginary presence. Thus, the subject’s libido is attached to the lost person.

Television was decisive to remembering but also to this hyperremembering: the persistence of Eusébio’s goals, of Eusébio’s smile, of his face scattered across the city are examples of this mourning work that tried to restore the lost person to the collective conscience. Ultimately, the constitution of a media event that covered live each single minute of the exequies, since the exhibition of the corpse in the stadium until the burial in the cemetery, calls our attention to the symbolic attempt to magically recover the lost object described by Freud. As if television had invested its attachment to the defunct Eusébio.

¹⁵ The exposure to constant television spots with images of Eusébio at his best form and words of thanks was one of the forms from which the idea of national hero emerged.

In the media event's broadcasting, the social construction of the role of media made the medium itself to mourn. And in doing so, made its viewers mourn with it and feel the grief for the lost object of collective esteem.

Sometimes, cultural objects serve as a substitutive function of attachment, outlasting death, at least for a while¹⁶. So it was the case with Eusébio's Media Event. A few days later of his death, Arcadia republished a comics book of the 1990's called "*Eusébio, the Black Panther*" where his biography was fictionally told. This is an example of how cultural forms can help to comfort mourners. By invoking "the King", as Eusébio was also known, memory tried to outlive death.

But television influenced public mourning in more other ways than *re-membering* and *hyperremembering*.

The media event also offered an example of how to understand Eusébio's death, by helping shaping and reinforcing (through public display) the appropriate mourning behaviours. As we know, mourning consists in culturally patterned ways in which grief and other collective emotions are expressed. Durkheim (1912: 292) himself suggested that mourning is above all a duty imposed by the group. But in this case, given its nationwide contours, the general public was ill informed about the specific expectations for a national funeral, relying greatly in media sources (their narratives, their images, their broadcasts) for information.

Therefore, grief management was, since the beginning, prone to media discourse. It was without surprise that one could observe people reacting to the death of Eusébio in a media-determined way: showing images (and *selfies* taken with the idol) and also taking pictures and videos of everything occurring in the stadium, in the streets and in the cemetery. *You Tube* is full of homemade videos confirming the urgency people felt to pay homage through media devices. Ultimately, the crowd was not trying to see the ceremonial and media rituals; they were not trying to be *present* in the funerary rites. Instead, they were trying to *represent it; or* recording exequies to future visualization and memorialization. As if the lost Eusébio could not be forgotten because each of the participants themselves involved had a piece of the Media Event. It was, then, a committed attempt to collectively gather a remembrance beyond the (formal) memoirs institutional media transmitted.

Although to join in the public display of grief was to many something of bad taste, media had an active role in modelling the accepted mourning behaviours. Media had not only mobilized collective attention; they determined also a *synchronization of experience* and produced a *common structure of feeling*. In the absence of a socially prescribed mourning behaviour, people received instruction by television, perceiving what was proper through the public display of others' conduct and learning to feel as television images flooded the unexpected loss of a national symbol. People somewhat learned how to express their grief and pay homage by watching in television what the appropriate conduct was. It was because they had seen it in television that many persons decided to make an offer to the statue of Eusébio in Benfica's stadium. Since the first news of his disappearance and live coverage near the statue, the number of flower bouquets had rapidly grown, from some dozens into some thousands. Spectators watched other people mourning through those biddings and it was by watching these examples in television that the behaviour was socially propagated, even to rival club's fans. In one of the many images taken from the live coverage it was possible to see Sporting scarves mixed together

¹⁶ Take for instance Diana's Cinderella story (cf. Bennett and Rowbottom, 2009).

with Benfica's¹⁷. As stated by a Portuguese journalist: "You could say that on that day, even the biggest soccer fanatic was colour-blind. There was no Benfica, Sporting or Porto -- there was only a unified country"¹⁸.

The idea of laying flowers was probably disseminated by the television coverage of the Hillsborough stadium disaster, in 1989, when camera footage showed a carpet of flowers being laid for dead fans (Bennett and Rowbottom, 2009: 277). Although they may carry any number of meanings, the laying of flowers and scarves may be seen primarily as love and thanks-tokens. These are expressions of affection, sentimental objects representing the importance to the mourners. In the case of Eusébio's death, camera footage repeatedly showed posters and messages of affection saying "*Eusébio, our King*", "*Eusébio belongs to us all; friend, rest in peace, we will never forget you*" or "*Farewell King*"¹⁹. A city wall was spontaneously painted with the face of the Black Panther having on its background the Portuguese armillary sphere (a national flag symbol) and Benfica's emblem.

At the stadium, the statue of Eusébio, erected in 1992, was transformed into a site of devotion. A golden crown was set in the statue's head (with popular initiative, institutional consent and media involvement). In order to be preserved in the middle of thousands and thousands of love tokens (flowers and scarves in its majority), a round glass was put in place. The statue was soon to be a little shrine devoted to the memory of the king. It even had a QR code on the glass to be read by smartphones containing images of Eusébio's life. Still today, we see a pilgrimage towards the statue placed inside a round glass and tenderly renamed as "*Eusébio's Memorial*".

The manifestation of sorrow and grief for someone who the majority of mourners had never met in person is maybe explained by the need to renew the community-wide rituals of mourning. The mass public mourning induced by media (and particularly by television) set the trend to expand towards publicity what were private feelings and in this way television managed to extend mourning rituals to a vast portion of society: some mourn semi-privately at their homes, others publicly gathering at Estádio da Luz stadium and along the streets of Lisbon where the funeral procession was passing.

After the rupture Eusébio's death meant to national pride, and in a time of a Troika's financial intervention on Portugal, there was a need to blend the glorious past, the painful present and the arduous future. "The living embody material memories in and by the fact of their existence; so as long as this or that person is alive in the world the past can seem alive or continuous with the present. However, when someone from childhood history and memory dies, something of that childhood dies too and the past seem somehow closed and divided from present and future" (Gibson, 2007: 421). The death of Eusébio, as media ceremony, tried to redeem a bright Portugal. Though the death of this significant figure could introduce a rupture, the public mourning hosted by television seemed to prevent the estrangement between past and future.

¹⁷ This fact was even reported in the news and object of controversy.

¹⁸ Mendonça, Duarte, "People we lost in 2014: Portuguese football legend Eusébio". It can be consulted at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/24/sport/football/football-eusebio-remembered/>

¹⁹ Many of them were distributed by a national newspaper.

Conclusion- A Tele-Ritual

The link between rituals and communication is patent on the ceremonial television related to the exequies of Eusébio. Rituals, by one hand, provide examples of how communication can produce effects by processes different than persuasion, argumentation or imitation. Rituals exist by symbolic implication providing example of how communication creates realities and, thus, is part of the foundation of the social world (Rothenbuhler, 2010: 65). Eusébio's Media Event was featured as tele-ritual summoning the entire society to pay homage to the national icon.

Television was a space of social frenzy open to the exterior, to a community worshipping a hero, connecting the multitude, source of elegies, homages and events that bonded individuals erasing their differences. "*Eusébio is ours*" or "*Goodbye Eusébio, universal heritage*" was the messages sent in unison by institutional, media and popular actors. The screen became sacralised, the man transformed in myth. Television has converted in an emphatic tie, networking spectators and participants in a joint grief. Television imposed itself as a publicity medium, giving collective emphasis to a social myth that had recently died. So, Television was the main reference of society, signalling the rhythm, the tone and the appropriate behaviour. Sociality was supported by the media sacralising construction of the event. "One can think the television phenomenon as an avatar of religious rite in the sense it organises the experience of men around repetitive manifestations, invisible powers through codified behaviours (...) inserted in valorised and protected spaces" (Wunenburger, 2001: 85). The constant laying of flowers, the permanent applause, the several marches and processions as well as the reiterate live incursion on the stadium, streets and cemetery, were all decisive in the instauration of a special time-space for the media event.

The tele-ritual has not just fed from a common need to public mourn as it regenerated, through an intense emotional exposure, a common world. A world where controversies were suspended in favour of admiration of an unavoidable Portuguese symbol. The Black Panther's funeral fostered a re-sacralization characterized by media rituals that raised the feeling of solidarity and enhanced a sense of being connected to a larger community. The way television intensified the public mourning of Eusébio has led the trend to individualization in contemporary societies, balanced by the emphasis on the "We". The I-We balance (Elias, 1991) was, hence, (temporarily) tilted towards the "we". Tele-rituals' social configuration gave rise to instant mutuality, each person fully experiencing the mourning and grief that others were simultaneously feeling.

To summarize, Eusebio's exequies, as covered live on television, were designed as a full-scale coronation where a national (and international) symbol was translated into myth. The ceremonial television was built as a ritual tribute to what the Black Panther represented: an effortful nation who found in the football legend a mirror where the Portuguese could see themselves as a proud, successful and respected nation. The time of the death coinciding with the economic recession, financial problems and international intervention by the Troika (FMI, EU, ECB) deepened the national need to found a kind of international recognition and self-respect. The media event, even if unconsciously, operated as counter-balance to the problem of low national pride. It made Portugal, even if in a transient way, to rise from the ashes and regain a little of their self-esteem and dignity. After all, the world bowed to a Portuguese, an extraordinary football player that took Portugal's national confidence and self-worth to where no one, until Eusébio, had succeeded.

So, the Media Event represented an encomium to national identity and to the acclamation of Portugal's image abroad. In a difficult time where an identity crisis slowly appeared, the symbolic community and feeling of connectedness was fostered by a tele-ritual. In a certain way, Eusébio's exequies live coverage comprehends a reinforcing of what Billig (1995) called "banal nationalism". Media build the event in such a way that reinforced the everyday representations of nationhood helping to promote a national solidarity and belonging. The profusion and repetition images of the Portuguese national flag and colours, the burial at the sound of the national anthem, the patriotic sentences such as "*Let the King pass*" and "*Long live the King*", or the use of the We (ex: *our* symbol, *our* king, etc), all exemplify how nationalism was endemic to the media event. Eusébio's funeral, as tele-ritual, reminds us that established nations are always in need to affirm and renewal its continuity and nationhood.

Answering the questions posed on the introduction, we argue civic rituals has not lost its importance in complex societies as ours. Individualization, fragmentation or social disenchantment, even if they central aspects of today's societies, do no subsume the social unifying role played by media events. In effect, the Black Panther Media Ceremony offered a particular mode for people to mark this particular moment of transition in the Portuguese society. The ritualistic dimension of media events is, then, well alive. Media events continue to be relevant processes in contemporary (European) societies and essential factors on the communicational and social environment.

Long live the Television.

References

- Bauman, Z. (2007). *Consuming Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bennett, G. & Rowbottom, A. (2009). "Born a Lady, Married a Prince, Died a Saint": The Deification of Diana in the Press and Popular Opinion in Britain, In Kõiva, Mare (ed.) *Media & Folklore. Contemporary Folklore IV*, Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, pp. 271–287.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Carey, J. (1998). "Political Ritual on Television- episodes in the history of shame, degradation and excommunication" In T. Liebes and J. Curran (eds). *Media, Ritual and Identity*, London: Routledge, pp. 42-70.
- Clewell, T. (2004). "Mourning beyond melancholia: Freud's psychoanalysis of loss", *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, pp. 52: 43–67.
- Couldry, N. (2003), *Media Rituals*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Cui, X. (2013). "Media Events are Still Alive: the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics as a Media Ritual", *International Journal of Communication*, 7, pp.1220-1235.
- Dayan, D. & Katz, E. (1992). *Media Events – the live broadcasting of history*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.
- Durkheim, É. (2001). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eco, U. (1985). "Tv: la transparence perdue" In *La Guerre du Faux*, Paris, Grasset&Fasquelle.
- Elias, N. (1991). *The Society of Individuals*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Freud, S. (1917). "Mourning and Melancholia". *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, pp.237-258.
- Gibson, Margaret. (2007). "Death and Mourning in Technologically Mediated Culture", *Health Sociology Review*, Volume 16, Issue 5, pp. 415-424.
- Katz, E., & Liebes, T. (2007). "No More Peace: how disaster, terror and war have upstaged media events". *International Journal of Communication*, 1(2), 157–166.
- Liebes, T. (1998). "Television Disaster Marathons – a danger of democratic processes?" In T. Liebes and J. Curran (eds), *Media, Ritual and Identity*, London: Routledge, pp. 71-84.
- Myerhoff, B. (1986). "Life not death in Venice: its second life " In Turner & Bruner (eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience*. Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, pp. 261-286.
- Rosen, C. (2005). "The Age of Egocasting", *The New Atlantis*, Number 7, 2005, pp. 51-72.
- Rothenbuhler, E. W (2010). "From Media Events to Ritual to Communicative Form" In Couldry N, Hepp A, Krotz F (ed.), *Media Events in a Global Age*, London and New York, Routledge, pp.61-75.
- Sanderson, J. & Cheong, P.H. (2010). "Tweeting Prayers and Communicating Grief over Michael Jackson Online". *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*. 30 (5), pp.328-340.

Scolari, C.A. (2009). "The Grammar of Hypertelevision: an Identikit of Convergence-Age Fiction Television (or, how television simulates new interactive media)", *Journal of Visual Literacy*, Vol.28, n°1, pp.28-49.

Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Process – structure and anti-structure*, New Brunswick and London: AldineTransaction [2008].

Wouters, C. (2002). "The Quest for New Rituals in Dying and Mourning: Changes in the We-I balance", *Body&Society*, 8(1), pp.1-27.

Wunenburger, JJ. (2011). "Les Écrans du Sacré ou l'imaginaire religieux de la télévision", *Journal for Communication Studies*, vol.4, n.2 (8), pp.81-92.