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# The Dramatisation of Death in the Second Half of the 19th Century. The Paris Morgue and Anatomy Painting

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## ABSTRACT

In 1895 Enrique Simonet, a Valencia-born painter presented a painting at the Paris Salon entitled “¿Y tenía corazón?” [And did she have a heart?]. The scene shows the room in a Morgue where a forensic scientist is looking at the heart of a young girl. Another artist, Ph. Deil took part in the same event, curiously with a very similar painting entitled “Dissection by Dr...” which depicts a forensic scientist examining the body of a corpse. Years later, Fernando Cabrera Cantó, another Valencia-born artist participated in the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris with the work “*Mors in vita*”: the painting depicts a moment when two orderlies are placing bodies wrapped in sheets on the cold white marble slab of a Morgue.

These examples are not just mere coincidence, and neither is the fact that all these paintings were displayed in Paris and some of them received artistic awards and prizes. These works show a new approach to death and pathology, characteristic of bourgeois society at the time and, in particular, the tendency to dramatise which was developing in the streets of Paris, from the Morgue to the Fine Arts Salon, from the Opera to the Boulevard.

This dramatisation turned public spaces into socialising spaces and can be appreciated in many other phenomena. Only from this viewpoint is it possible to understand the large audience that gathered at the sessions held by Dr. Charcot on Tuesdays at the *Salpêtrerie* Hospital. The lessons given by this doctor, who codified and classified hysteria attacks, were followed by a large audience which included artists, writers, politicians, advertisers and journalists. Dr. Charcot’s female patients obeyed the doctor’s orders and played out their hysteria attacks, and the episodes were immortalised for posterity in photographs taken by photographers Régnard and Londe, in a further example of the dramatisation and figuration of social custom, pathology and death.

Painting, photography, literature, in short, cultural practices, are steeped in, reproduce and express this contemplative sphere of the 19th- and early 20th-century mind. Bour-

geois society turns daily life into entertainment, modern life takes place in different acts before the eyes of the very society which constitutes and shapes it, thereby assuming the twofold role of leading actor and audience.

The visual expression of these habits which shaped the mentality of a period appears to us through pictorial, literary or graphic images. Therein lies the significance of these works which, as artistic statements, acquire a dual significance: their value is timeless, yet they are also witnesses to a particular era.

The main body of this chapter is divided into two main premises: the first refers to Paris as the epitome of the modern city where reality became the subject matter of contemporary life. This analysis focuses on modern society's response to death; morgues are presented here as something more than functional spaces: they echo the modern mentality. The second part tries to illustrate how these social spaces and *habits* were translated into the pictorial, conveying the embedded dialogue of cultural practices. The various art works presented in these pages reflect artistic tradition in representing death and pathology as well as foreshadowing new premises and new paths in modern art. But the purpose of revisiting this heritage is not to establish a complete repertoire of medical and artistic illustrations, but to show how painting with a Social Art perspective represents a world and a mentality.

*Este capítulo pretende abordar desde la metodología de la Historia Social del Arte la percepción de la muerte y la patología durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, tomando como referencia dos objetos de análisis: la Morgue de París y la pintura anatómica. Ambos elementos nos permiten aproximarnos al estrecho diálogo que establecen las prácticas culturales como parte de una cosmovisión mayor de la que forman parte las mentalidades. Un recorrido que nos llevará desde la práctica social de la teatralización de la vida moderna desarrollada en las calles de París, cuyo epitoma se halla en la morgue como espacio social, hasta las distintas maneras en que la pintura ha representado la muerte, desde la herencia de la tradición de la historia del arte hasta la nueva plasmación de los hábitos de dicha sociedad moderna.*

## PARIS: THE DRAMATISATION OF LIFE

*Paris did not merely host exhibitions, it had become one<sup>1</sup>.*

During the second half of the 19th century Paris became the quintessence of modernity, urban life and a cosmopolitan city. These characteristics, however, were not exclusive to Paris, but could be applied to other major capitals of the time such as London and New York. Modernity, urbanism and cosmopolitanism were the features determining the way the large metropolises of the modern world developed. There was, however, something particularly distinctive about Paris and that was, without doubt, the way in

which contemporary life developed right at its very core, in its boulevards, its streets, salons, restaurants..., in a sort of daily, ephemeral stage set, ready to be acted out and consumed by a public who were both spectator and protagonist, a performance of contemporary life which made the city into the theatre of modern life and modern life into the essence of *Paris Nouveau*.

Vanessa Schwartz relates this process to the birth of capitalist society and mass society and therefore to the consumer *habitus* of commercial society. A society greedy for events which succeed one another as rapidly as they are forgotten, which get muddled up in a human mass made up of a wide cross-section of human beings without distinction of class, sex or nationality. If, however, this model of behaviour had been based on the mentality and logic of capitalist society, then the practices which made 19th-century Paris unique and exceptional would have taken place in the other major modern capitals where commercial and capitalist development and finally mass society also underwent a similar process of development, but history shows that this was not so.

Perhaps it is rather that the qualities which gave Paris its specific character do not lie in a single direction, but in the confluence of many. Some of the characteristics which defined social practice in Paris in the second half of the 19th century are already noticeable a century before, such as the taste for performance and dramatisation of the French aristocracy; thus, more than stemming from a newborn society, which it is, such a behaviour pattern could also form part of the native cultural heritage.

In that case we can understand the dramatisation of modern Parisian life as reminiscent of practices which, while characteristic of other societies and social strata may have influenced the new 19th-century society which was coming onto the scene. We could even look in the other direction and bring the clock forward to the present: anyone who has ever visited Paris cannot have failed to notice the way café chairs and tables are always arranged facing the street as though they were stalls looking onto the urban stage. What else could that mean but the dramatisation of life?

The visual representation of reality as spectacle in late nineteenth century Paris created a common culture and a sense of shared experiences through which people might begin to imagine themselves as participating in a metropolitan culture because they had visual evidence that such a shared world, of which they were a part, existed<sup>2</sup>.

Effectively, as Schwartz notes, capitalist society caused society in the widest sense to participate actively in public life and although there continued to be spheres of participation which were still reserved for certain social classes, the truth is that there was a gradual democratisation of public and daily life. This made it possible for individuals of different classes, gender and nationality to participate on the same stage and in this sense Paris in the second half of the 19th century became an enormous space for socialising.

An incipient social group arose, determined by a sense of belonging and a sense of participation: *les parisiens*. Effectively, this new social group included people of different class-

es, gender, nationality and condition, a human melting pot which took part in daily life and thus made itself the protagonist of that life just as the city had become the stage.

The plot is the last point we shall refer to in this section. Paris was the stage, *les parisiens* the protagonists, and the plot: reality. Reality became the vehicle integrating the lives of the city's inhabitants from the second half of the 19th century, and the sense of forming part of that reality, as Schwartz noted, is what acts as the magnet in society. A reality which involves instantaneousness and literality.

Only after having gone down this conceptual route can we understand how a building such as the Morgue, a place which signified death, could become during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century "*l'un des établissements de Paris qui ont le privilège d'exciter le plus vivement la curiosité du public*"<sup>3</sup>. The Morgue offered a spectacle ready for consumption by a wide audience, it was a socialising space, a container for the reality of modern life, a focus of social attraction, a mirror in which society contemplated death and disgrace as part of the general spectacle of life. Other cities had Morgues and buildings which served as deposits for dead bodies, but only Paris made it into a genuine show.

## THE MORGUE

The modern Morgue itself represents the development of urbanism of the 19th-century metropolis, based on hygiene theories and the aspiration to provide cities with new healthy, functional spaces. It therefore combines three of the great maxims of urbanism in the second half of the 19th century: hygiene, modernity and functionality. Overcrowding and fear of the spread of recurrent disease and epidemics during the 19th century were very important in the fate of such an institution. It also represents the new scientific conception of death, a conception linked to the premises of positivism which saw in science a paradigm of social evolution. That is why the world's great capitals such as Paris, London, and New York were determined to fit out or create their Morgues to suit the needs of these great urban centres.

The creation of a specific space which functioned as a deposit for dead bodies speaks to us of modern society's need to urbanise death, taking 'urbanise' to mean the attempt to regulate and systematise, an urbanisation complemented by the regulations applying to cemeteries which proliferated in many 19th-century European legislations.

The Morgue represented [...] urban experience of anonymity with its potential for both increased freedom and alienation. After all, only in a city might a woman or man or child die alone and go unrecognised. [...] Alan Mitchell [...] described the Morgue as a "shrine of positivism" whose "social function was inseparable from the growing prestige of nineteenth century science"<sup>4</sup>.

Historically, the Paris Morgue was always linked to the function of identifying dead bodies: according to Adolphe Guillot the term derived from the archaic verb *morguer*:

Le mot avait eu une plus noble origine ... Littré, d'accord avec Grandgragnage, trouve la première origine du mot dans le languedocien morga qui veut dire museau, visage ... Les écrivains du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle employaient souvent le mot morgue pour exprimer une façon hautaine et dédaigneuse de dévisager les gens ... Comme l'homme qui a de la morgue doit avoir le regard fixe et interrogateur, on se mit à appeler morgueurs les géôliers chargés de prendre le signalement des prisonniers et Morgue l'endroit où on procédait à ces constatations<sup>5</sup>.

Over the centuries, the Paris Morgue changed its precarious, insalubrious appearance for more functional, rational spaces, in line with the city's political, economic and social development. The urban planning undertaken by Napoleon III in the 1860s which transformed Paris, involved another change of location for the Morgue. The construction of the new Morgue in 1864 meant that this space was modernised and rationalised. Its new site showed that Haussman and the competent authorities were not interested in taking the Morgue out of the city's nerve centre, as that guaranteed attendance by the public and consequently a greater possibility of positive identifications. The new institution was born, therefore, with a new spirit of improving the mechanisms for ordering and controlling society; these in turn were based on the positivist school of thought which put scientific study at the service of social utility, facilitating and improving clinical spaces.

I digress briefly to note an interesting aspect revealing the distant attitude of bourgeois society to death, and that is the location of the Morgues<sup>6</sup>. Haussman may well have been determined not to move the Morgue far outside the centre of Paris in order not to impede public access, but locating death in the centre of cities was a question of latent concern. The displacement of cemeteries was partly due to a hostile public attitude and partly an unavoidable issue considering the way major cities expanded in the 19th century. This phenomenon meant that spaces such as the Trinity Church cemetery in New York and the Père Lachaise cemetery originally on the outskirts became part of neighbourhoods gradually invaded and inhabited by the population. In smaller cities, some cemeteries were exhumed and moved to the city's new outskirts although in most cases these measures were determined by the need to remove the bodies of those who had died during epidemics. The idea of separating life and death is a symptom of the unease which this coexistence caused the bourgeois mentality. The areas which represented death, despite their social usefulness, were always subject to particular rejection by modest bourgeois society.

Historiography has often debated how death was considered by 19th-century bourgeois society. The debate obviously extends from the most conceptual and philosophical aspects to the most material, such as the establishments dedicated to housing death. Some historians have considered that the Morgue represents not only the functionalist hygiene criteria characteristic of 19th-century urbanism and scientific-clinical development but also the mentality of bourgeois society itself<sup>7</sup>. A mentality determined to conceal and hide death in Morgues or dead-houses as part of a habit which derives from the great taboos of bourgeois society: sex and scatology.

The Morgue in Paris is by no means exceptional in its development from a precarious unhealthy space to a functional, coordinated area conceived by 19th-century positivist hygiene logic. That also happened in other capitals around the world. In 1866 for example, the city of New York instituted the municipal Morgue in the grounds of Belleville together with a hospital of the same name. Once again, we must emphasise that the location of these buildings by the confluence of rivers, such as the Seine in Paris and East River in New York, is not due to mere whim or chance but because of the need to site them in an area where many dead bodies were found. On 7 April 1872 “The New York Times” published an article entitled: “Bellevue and Potter’s Field. Scenes in the dead-house and Morgue. How the dead are buried – interesting information”.

Paris has its Morgue; London has one and New York the Metropolis of the New World also has a Morgue. We pass out into the Twenty-sixth-street, through the dead house gate, take a few steps to the right and through a large window in a part of the same building we see the corpse of a man reclining upon a marble slab ... water continually drops upon a rubber sheet, covering the greater part of the body ... there are four slabs in the room and occasionally they are all occupied ... the room containing the bodies awaiting identification is separated from the passage by a glass partition and should the corpses not be recognised in seventy-two-hours a photograph is taken and hung up outside. A large frame filled with these ghastly pictures greets the observer, and furnishes him with subjects for reflection on dark nights and in lonesome localities<sup>8</sup>.

The nature of the article can lead us to reflect on the different perception of this space in cities such as Paris and New York. Despite the fact that in Paris the Morgue responded to scientific and legal criteria as can be seen from the 1882 regulations<sup>9</sup>, it is true that it gradually became a mass spectacle where death came to form part of the idiosyncrasy of the city itself.

But I shall let Zola’s pen reveal the magnitude of this phenomenon in what constitutes another example of the representation of death:

La Morgue est un spectacle à la portée de toutes les bourses, que se paient gratuitement les passants pauvres ou riches. La porte est ouverte, entre qui veut. Il y a des amateurs qui font un détour pour ne pas manquer une des ces représentations de la mort. Lorsque les dalles sont nues, les gens sortent désappointés, volés, murmurant entre leurs dents. Lorsque les dalles sont bien garnies, lorsqu’il y a un bel étalage de chair humaine, les visiteurs se pressent, se donnent des émotions à bon marché, s’épouvantent, plaisantent, applaudissent ou sifflent, comme au théâtre, et se retirent satisfaits, en déclarant que la Morgue est réussi, ce jour-là<sup>10</sup>.

The curtains, the right lighting, replacing bodies with wax figures to allow a greater period of contemplation, the city centre location, the affluence of hawkers outside the premises. All these careful exhibition criteria, the long-deliberated issue of the location, the growing expectation encouraged by the press, lead us to the starting point of this article: Paris had made death and the Morgue into a show, since Paris itself was the biggest and greatest show on earth.

... yet the exhibit room, its curtain, the lines outside the Morgue, wax masks, corpses dressed and seated on chairs, and newspaper illustration all guaranteed that the Morgue's reality was re-presented and mediated, orchestrated and spectacularized<sup>11</sup>.

And this is the point of intersection, the crossover between representation and reality, where the real and the true merge into the same imagery. When life is dramatised it irremediably becomes part of the show.

The next section in this chapter takes us therefore into the world of representation and offers the final clue to understanding how an artist, a painting, a style, a city, a habit, and a society establish an internal dialogue, how a set of unrelated brush strokes form the colours of a canvas and only reveal themselves to our eyes when we look from a distance and in a reflex act our retina groups the pigments until they form a shape, a shape which always existed in the painting and which is the product of the fusion of each particle composing it. That is how the world works, that is how it is represented.

## PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF DEATH AND ANATOMY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Throughout history death has never been elusive in art; on the contrary, it has been the source of inspiration for numerous artists, a subject of inexhaustible moral, ethical, social and cultural undertones. What has varied, though, has been the way in which each society and each individual has represented death. From the funeral masks of antiquity, to the great mausoleums and cenotaphs, medieval *Danses Macabres* and the baroque *Vanitas* paintings, artistic creativity has always accompanied the ritual of death and its figuration.

We cannot go back to antiquity in our attempt to illustrate death in Western art, as that would take us too far away from the period referred to in this work; however, we shall note some aspects which we think are representative and useful for our purposes. Each society, as we have said, experienced a different attitude towards death, and this is particularly clear in artistic representations. The iconographer Emile Mâle considered that the tomb of the physician Guillaume de Harcigny (c.1394) which shows an effigy in the process of decaying from a mummy to a skeleton is one of the first examples in Europe of the horrific realism which would accompany representations of death. During the 13th century artists had represented death with serenity and even sweetness, as demonstrated by the reliefs on tomb stones which show the deceased with hands together and eyes open as though they were already participating in eternal life. The new century, however, brought with it a series of dramatic changes; the plague which devastated the whole of Europe altered the perception of death in the mediaeval mind. Death was a recurring theme throughout the 14th century and its omnipresence was due in part to the work of the mendicant orders who were responsible for undertaking good works with plague victims. Figuration of *the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* representing



famine, war, pestilence and death proliferated in the iconography of the period. But the most popular iconographic model in that century was undoubtedly the figuration of the *Danses Macabres*. *Danse Macabre* iconography owed its inspiration to the 13th century French poem *Dit des trois vifs et trois morts*. The story is essentially a dialogue between three young aristocrats – a count, a duke and a prince – and the corpses of three high ranking ecclesiastical characters: a pope, a cardinal and an apostolic notary. While they are out hunting, the young men meet three skeletons near a cemetery. The skeletons reveal who they are and try to convince the young men of the inanity of this world. Innumerable *Danses Macabres* and *Triumph of Death* cycles proliferated during the 14th century, one of the most impressively beautiful examples being in the *Camposanto* of Pisa.

As we have seen, representation of death has been subject to determining factors emanating from the mentality of the period. These determining factors meant that during the 16th century we would again witness a new relationship with the idea of death from which a new formal typology would emerge. This change in mentality was due largely to the counter-reformist crusade which Catholic countries undertook against reform in Protestant countries. The counter-reformation had a very powerful weapon in the iconography and in particular the message and moralising power of *Vanitas* paintings. This genre takes its inspiration from the passage from *Ecclesiastes* (1:2) “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” and the representations depicted numerous objects<sup>12</sup> whose iconographic meaning always referred to the message that earthly life was meaningless, given the ephemeral nature of life: death makes us all equals, a message inspired in *Genesis* (3:19): “for dust you are and to dust you will return”. The iconographic programme of *Vanitas* paintings is inspired mainly by the Bible and the numerous emblems of the period which reproduce the same credo under different appearances. Beyond ideological, moral or iconological interpretations of *Vanitas* paintings, it is clear that in these works the iconographic codification of the *Cinquecento* and Baroque period inspired the representation of death under another formal programme.

However, *Vanitas* paintings were not the only representations of death during the 16th and 17th centuries. One parallel development was the entire iconographic school of thought which shaped another variant on the representation of death: I am referring to anatomies. These representations draw on iconography which is half way between medical scientific research and artistic production. In this sense a distinction must be made between what is known as “*anatomia sensibile*” and “moralising anatomies”. *Anatomia sensibile* are all the representations of the human body painted as the result of observation and anatomic study, a concern which was not exclusive to science but was one of the great concerns of Renaissance painters. Thus many works by Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo and Guido Reni among others are considered to be excellent examples of *anatomia sensibile*<sup>13</sup>. In contrast, moralising anatomies are representations with a moral and contemplative theme in addition to the scientific and artistic content.

One of the first examples of moralising anatomy is the *De humani corporis fabrica* by Vesalius (1543) a scientific and artistic work showing a skeleton leaning on a marble table and mediating before a skull. However, it was during the Baroque period that this type of representation would acquire a more moralising character coinciding with the proliferation of *Vanitas* paintings. The *Leiden Anatomical Theatre* (1609) and the *Anatomia humani corporis* by Professor G. Bidloo (1685) are two examples of the moralising anatomies we are referring to here. Evidently these works are more characteristic of the history of science and have had a smaller audience than others with more visual impact such as *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) by Rembrandt.

We have paid special attention to the typology of anatomies as the works we analyse here largely reflect the artistic, medical-scientific and philosophical conception characteristic of the *anatomia sensibile* and moralising anatomies.

From the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century death was represented by new figurative models. With neoclassicism came a substantial variation in the representation of death. *The Death of Marat* by David is perhaps one of the first models to give our collective image store a new idea of death where the individual perishes as the result of moral and ethical ideals. Sacrifice, heroism and the dignity of death are observed in a thematic repertoire which includes other examples of sacrifice inspired by the Graeco-Roman tradition such as the *Death of Lucretia*. Nevertheless anatomic representations continued to be portrayed during this century as we can see in paintings like *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Willem Roëll* by Cornelis Troost or *Giving an anatomical demonstration to six spectators in the anatomy-theatre of the Barber-Surgeons' Company* c.1730/1740 by William Cheselden, among other examples.

Romantic scenes referring to death, however, stand in clear counterpoint to the enlightened spirit of neoclassicism. The obscurantism which tinges romantic ideas appears to snuff out neoclassical praise for the self-sacrificing heroes of Graeco-Roman history; the decadence which permeated romantic thought was fuelled by an attraction for death, as an unexplored universe, fantastic, ethereal, grandiose, and that may be why one of the favourite motives among romantics was “romantic suicide”.

However, during the second half of the 19th century another formal representation of death was developed, a stereotype in which the same scenes are reproduced with almost pinpoint accuracy: a table in some morgue or clinic, the body of a woman lying, an anatomist musing.

In 1864 the German painter J.H. Hasselhorst (1825-1904) conceived the canvas *Lucae und die Sektion der schönen Frankfurterin* (Fig. 1). The painting depicts the dissection of the body of an eighteen year-old woman who had committed suicide. The model, selected for its attractive proportions, served to determine the ideal measurements of the female body. The anatomist and anthropologist Johann Christian Gustave Lucae leans over the head of the cadaver. The results of this study were published by Lucae

with plates by Hermann Junker in 1864 under the title *Zur Anatomie der schönen weiblichen Form*. This was aimed both at artists and anatomists and Lucae later lectured on anatomy at the Frankfurt art academy for several years. In the foreground there is an instrument case and, to the left, an inverted cranium. Further skulls are visible on the shelves of the back wall. Next to the articulated female skeleton in the left background and in front of an illustration of the same subject attached to the wall are two figures who are identified as the artists Hasselhorst and Jacob Becker. One of them holds a cigar and its smoke hangs in the light of the lamp. The surgeon, J.P. Sälzer is seated below the lamp and pulls back a flap of skin from the right thorax of the body.

Not the slightest detail of this work will escape other artists' attention and we will discover reminiscences of it in future compositions.

Four years later in 1869 the Prague born Austrian painter Gabriel Von Max (Prague 1840 - Munich 1915) painted the work entitled *The Anatomist* (Fig. 2). The scene represents a dead woman lying on a marble bench and the anatomist looking at her meditatively uncovers part of her anatomy in a reflective gesture.



Fig. 1  
J.H. Hasselhorst, *Lucae und die Sektion der schönen Frankfurterin* (1864), oil on canvas.  
From: Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Horst Ziegenfusz.



Fig. 2

Gabriel Von Max, *The anatomist* (1869), oil on canvas, 136.5 x 189.5 cm.

From: Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich. © bpk/ Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. 2008.

In both scenes the presence of the woman on the dissection table, the anatomist's meditative character, the action of uncovering the body and the woman's anatomy have moral and ethical undertones beyond mere formal representations. As Ludmila Jordanova noted in her excellent work<sup>14</sup>.

The representation of a woman's body in the process of being dissected appears to be a historically specific theme. It bears directly on the idea of unveiling, which has, at any one time, both a mythical dimension and a socio-cultural rooted one. [...] The obsession with the female corpse in particular, seems to be a late eighteenth century and nineteenth century phenomenon. In a sense this is not surprising, since the erotic was an integral part of the fascination with death characteristic of, for want of a better word, Romanticism<sup>15</sup>.

The fact that a woman's body is about to be dissected in most examples of this type of art is not mere accident. There is a devotion and an erotic content fired by romanticism which saw in the recumbent, naked body of a woman a poetic element of the first order, as is clear from the words of one of the most famous romantic poets Edgar Allan Poe: the death of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world<sup>16</sup>.

In addition to the evocative overtones, however, there is a philosophical undercurrent linking women to nature and both of these with the idea of truth. Science personified in the figure of the anatomist reveals nature and truth represented in the body of a woman, a body which entails mystery and ignorance. Anatomical dissection is represented as the act of unveiling layer by layer nature's hidden truths in a action resembling dissection of the organic layers of a woman's body, as we can clearly see in Hasselhorst's work. Far from being simply realistic and formal, these anatomical representations entail a gender component with an unquestionable philosophical and moral background.

We should note en passant that all Von Max's pictorial work enshrines a disturbing mystery, the fruit of his interest in the then booming trends of parapsychology and occultism, aspects which have been studied in depth by Elisabeth Bronfen<sup>17</sup>. He also had ideological connections with Darwinism, Schopenhauer's work and the mysticism characteristic of pictorial culture in Germany and central Europe at that time. As Ludmila Jordanova points out, Gabriel Von Max himself introduces a clear element of denunciation in *The Anatomist* by representing in the anatomist's gesture the doubts assailing him over the action he is about to take. The same painter had been an activist in anti-vivisection campaigns. But, as we have noted, these works by Hasselhorst and Von Max can be classified within an artistic tradition which transcends the authors' particular interests and connections to become an example of a widespread typological model during the second half of the 19th century.

Perhaps more clearly than in Hasselhorst's painting, Von Max's work still preserves the pictorial tradition of *Vanitas* paintings, as shown by the series of objects arranged on the table in the background: skulls, bones, the unlit lamp, books, even the presence of a moth<sup>18</sup> on the dissection table refer us to the iconographic reading of *Vanitas* representations. It is maybe the most clarifying example of a link between tradition and the new representation that will be produced in the coming decades.

And with that we come to the point where our works begin to take on a new essence: around the mid 19th century another artistic style, realism, appeared in contrast to romantic decadence.

Realism stands as a representation of reality and it is not surprising that this movement should appear on the scene when positivism has created expectations of progress in contemporary society, a progress which rests on science and sees in the society which it represents a source of continuous analysis.

However, it must be clarified that realism, according to Linda Nochlin in her masterly study of the subject, surpasses the limits of style, transcends Winkelmanian classification and the frontiers of formalism, to penetrate the areas of philosophy and the world of ideas. That is why it can only be approached from a global perspective integrated in the world of mentalities. Whatever the case, the truth is that realism transcends formal

frontiers and itself constitutes a model of the world derived from contemporary society in the second half of the 19th century.

Realism therefore, is a view of the world which takes its inspiration from objective observation of real life, a movement which aspires to represent reality as merely that which exists in itself. And that idea is what leads us to a representation of death based on objective study, truthful representation, careful anatomical description and the absence of the moralising message from other periods. However, certain themes, by their very transcendent nature, have been unable to escape from their own underlying message and in this sense it is difficult for us to refer to a representation of death in which some philosophical content does not seep through the pores. Realism eschews moralising but does not turn its back on the transcendent significance of death. Works such as Manet's *Dead Toreador* (1864), Gustave Courbet's *The Trout* (1872) and François Rude's sculpture, *Tomb of Godefroi de Cavaignac* (1845-1847) can be understood in this perspective, suggests Linda Nochlin.

In 1876 the French painter Henri Gervex presented his work *Une Autopsie à l'Hôtel de Dieux* at the *Salon des artistes français*. The scene shows an autopsy being performed at the Hôtel de Dieu hospital in Paris. The canvas depicts the anatomist, his assistant and an orderly who is helping to move and handle the body. Perhaps the most striking thing about the painting is the fact that the assistant standing between the other two figures is rolling a cigarette while his colleague dissects the body. We can appreciate in this motif a sharp coincidence with Hasselhorst's painting and even though we cannot assert that Gervex would have known this work, it is distinct evidence of the parallelism that occurs in this sort of representation. In contrast with Hasselhorst's painting where the smoking figure suggests the reflective attitude surrounding the scene, Gervex probably used the gesture to portray more simply how the routine of work strips away the drama and seriousness of such places, reproducing the workaday details which were characteristic of the popular anecdotal genre painting of the period. This aspect leads us to understand how realistic painting established a new approach: the moralising of former representations of death gives place to a more quotidian manner. The similarities between the two paintings, however, do not end here. The pyramidal composition reinforced in Hasselhorst's work by the shadow of the lamp that groups the foreground figures in the same pictorial space will be accurately repeated by Gervex. Though this aspect could be understood as a mere application of pictorial technique to focus the attention on the core of the action, it is symptomatic that two works by different authors belonging to different artistic traditions contain so many similarities. This shows quite neatly how this kind of painting constituted a new pictorial type. Formal connections existed, but the difference lay in the way the works were conceived: from romanticism or realism.

Whereas romantic paintings emphasized the mystery of nature and the power of Science to discover the unknown contrasting light and darkness – knowledge and ignorance,

life and death –, realistic paintings tried to capture the instant of the action where the features of modern society and the advances of clinical and medical science were literally shown, in other words, evocation in front narration (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3  
Photograph with the painting by Henri Gervex, *Autopsie à l'Hôtel de Dieu*.  
From: Document conservé aux Archives nationales, Paris, Cote F/21/ 7646 folio 22 (photos de salons).  
Cliché Atelier photographique des Archives nationales.

When this canvas won Gervex a medal at the Paris competition, a French critic said of Gervex's work:

Mais où nous devons saluer un bel avenir, et une voie nouvelle remplie de succès pour M. Gervex, c'est dans "l'Autopsie à l'Hôtel de Dieu". Dans cette œuvre importante M. Gervex s'est surpassé. Les carabins vivent, dissèquent, écoutent la leçon ... et semblent en profiter avec l'amour pour la science qui caractérise ces utiles chercheurs. Rien de plus vrai que cette scène arrosée d'une belle lumière d'en haut ... la vérité locale y est, je reconnais la nature prise et peinte directement dans une salle de la clinique, où devrait rentrer et s'accrocher cette œuvre importante. Honneur a son auteur qui ne peut manquer ... d'obtenir une véritable triomphe<sup>19</sup>.

The critic remarked the truth of the painting and the author's ability to reproduce the action naturalistically and realistically, with an almost photographic regard: "*la nature prise et peinte directement dans une salle de la clinique*". The most celebrated aspect of the painting was without any doubt the reality that emanates from it; far from being rejected for the unconventional subject, the painting was considered a clipping from modern



Fig. 4  
Henri Gervex, *Avant l'opération, le Docteur Péan enseignant à l'Hôpital Saint Louis sa découverte du pincement des vaisseaux* (1887), oil on canvas, 242 x 188 cm.  
From: Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



life. Is it perhaps the Parisian attraction to realistic events which made the painting deserve its success with the critics?

A few years later, in 1887, Gervex presented another scene of similar kind at the Salon des artistes Français, in this case *Avant l'opération, le Docteur Péan enseignant à l'Hôpital Saint Louis sa découverte du pincement des vaisseaux* [Before the Operation, also called Dr Péan Teaching His Discovery of the Compression of Blood Vessels at St Louis Hospital].

Critics of the time referred to this painting as a modern version of the *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) by Rembrandt. Gervex's canvas shows the doctor teaching his disciples who are gathered around a woman's body. Once more the woman appears, as in the works by Hasselhorst's and Von Max, semi-veiled and with her breast uncovered. The reproduction of the female body forcefully suggests that this representation had become a stereotype, with artists repeating the same formal model again and again. The foreground shows utensils for dissection and jars for conserving viscera; which here share the limelight together with the action. Doctor Pean<sup>20</sup> was a renowned surgeon in Paris, and Gervex's work attempted a realistic depiction of the doctor's contribution to scientific progress (Fig. 4).

We have to travel abroad to find another source for Gervex' inspiration that will give us the clue of how reality looked through a different prism.

On the other side of the ocean, the North American artist Thomas Eakins undertook two similar paintings in a period of fifteen years. In 1875 when he was 31 years old Eakins offered to make a scientific portrait of the renowned North American surgeon Samuel Gross while he was working on one of this acclaimed anatomic operations (Fig. 5).

Eakins' work is marked by the narrative of the scene, an effect which he achieved using various pictorial techniques: the gesticulation of the patient's mother covering her face, the contorted figure of the patient and the tension of those attending as the operation proceeds. The artist's further contributes to this effect by giving the composition an enclosed, narrow frame to enhance the dramatic effect. The chiaroscuro which predominates in the work, leaving the amphitheatre in shadow to focus on the action taking place on the operating table, is a clear reference to the baroque in works such as *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* by Rembrandt and in particular the light studies by Velazquez and the dramatic quality of Ribera, masters of Spanish baroque for whom Eakins felt a real predilection after becoming familiar with their work during his trip to Spain in the 1860s. All these effects contrast with the serenity of Professor Gross who remains apart from the agitation surrounding him, perhaps representing wisdom, rationalisation and the domestication of the very nature of science. We should point out that Eakins conceived this painting in 1875 one year before Gervex accomplished his first anatomy composition. Evidently we are in front of one of the first examples of realistic anatomy painting. Eakins' artistic references for this work were the old masters of European baroque art; Gervex received the European artistic tradition through the



Fig. 5

Thomas Eakins, *The Gross Clinic* (1875). oil on canvas. 240 x 200 cm.

From: Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University of Philadelphia.

filter of an American artist in a process of dissemination and re-appropriation, which characterized 19th century Western art.

*The Gross Clinic* was presented at the Centennial Art Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, but the jury rejected it for being “unsightly”. In 1878 the Jefferson Medical College acquired the painting for the ridiculous sum of 200 dollars. This, however, did not deter Eakins from patenting his work and making several graphic reproductions using new photomechanical techniques, and these finally became a good source of income for the artist when the work subsequently became successful. Whereas in Paris, one year later, Gervex’s painting was flattered by critics for its realism and truth and awarded a medal at the Paris Salon, the Eakins’s *Gross Clinic* was censured by the Philadelphia Exhibition jury who called the work “unsightly”.

The setback with the *The Gross Clinic* did not deter Eakins who repeated the same subject matter in 1889 with *The Agnew Clinic*. The work depicts an operation performed by Professor Hayes Agnew, but there are major differences from its predecessor, *The Gross Clinic*. The fact that the doctors are wearing work overalls, using sterilised clinical utensils and are assisted by nurses helps to underline the hygienist trend of the period,

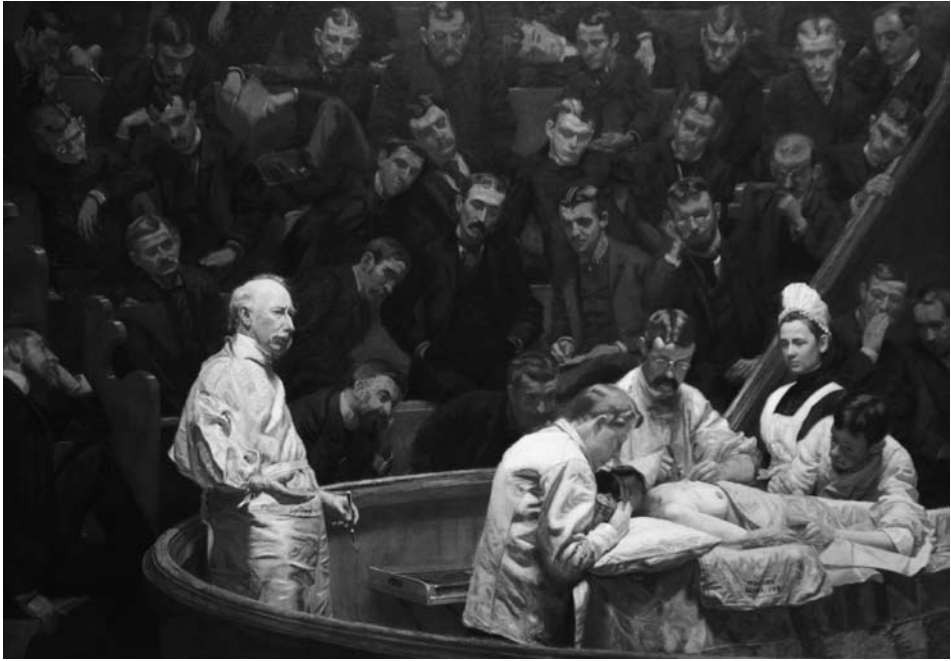


Fig. 6  
Thomas Eakins. *The Agnew Clinic* (1889), oil on canvas, 214 x 300 cm.  
From: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Art Collection.

the result of progress in surgical and anatomical medicine with the application of antiseptics. The vertical framing of *The Gross Clinic* is tempered in *The Agnew Clinic* by a horizontal focus, which plays down some of the dramatic quality of the scene. Perhaps the experience with *The Gross Clinic* forced Eakins to make a less dramatic work.

Professor Hayes Agnew's pose reproduced Doctor Pean's gesture in Gervex' 1887 painting; the doctors were arranged in the same composition structure as in the previous Gervex work *Une Autopsie à l'Hôtel de Dieux* 1876, highlighting the constant dialogue that influenced artists (Fig. 6).

The last stop in this essay places us in Europe again with a view to analysing how symbolism builds this topic into a new feature. To this end we will analyse the work of two local Valencian painters who turned to Paris and Gervex's work as their main source of inspiration.

Enrique Simonet went to Paris in 1889, moving there from the Fine Arts Academy of Spain in Rome on a three-year art scholarship. One year later in 1890, Enrique Simonet's brush would produce the work *¿Y tenía corazón?* [And did she have a heart?] a painting that would bring him international recognition and which won him several prizes. Without doubt Paris influenced Enrique Simonet's artistic career and his work

cannot be understood without taking into account the importance of his stay in the city and his contact with the sources of realist painting.

The work that Simonet painted in 1890 *¿Y tenía corazón?* represents the dead body of a drowned young woman being dissected by the anatomist. The anatomist is holding the young woman's heart in his hand and the scene captures the instant at which the anatomist is staring at the heart and wondering about life's fundamentals. The work's significance is emphasised by the dearth of objects in the bare dissection room: a couple of knives, a sponge, a bucket of water, a series of glass jars with preserving liquids help to transmit that cold, soulless atmosphere which the death of the young woman represents. A lamp illuminates the action, symbolising the light of science despite the fact that through the window day is breaking. As we can note, there are numerous formal and iconographic references to Henri Gervex's *Avant l'opération*: the framing of the scene from high up, the position of the hands and gesture of the anatomist, the presence of glass jars against the window and the table set to one side of the painting, suggest that Simonet had seen Gevex's work while he was in Paris. Undeniably he had the French painter in mind. However realistic influences did not prevent Enrique Simonet from becoming steeped in the new issues of symbolism in Parisian art in the late 1880s and early 1890s. This work is a clear example of how symbolism reinterpreted the anatomical subject (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7  
Enrique Simonet Lombardo, *¿Y tenía corazón?* (1895), oil of canvas, 177 x 291 cm.  
From: Museo del Prado, Museo de Málaga deposit. © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

During the last decades of the 19th century Symbolism was an art movement representing the changes that *fin de siècle* society was witnessing. The style coexisted with realism and naturalism. Symbolism had its roots in the depths of the romantic *credo* and inherited the latter's predilection for the vast universes of the irrational and unknown, and its penchant for mysticism and decadence. Death reappeared in artistic imagery as the most appealing subject for representation. As a constant leit motif the representation of death formed a mirror in which society's virtues and vices were reflected; the antinomy of a society in which life and death, perdition and redemption defined the contradictions of the positivist crisis.

Among the various ways in which death was represented by symbolism, the myth of the young woman drowned and recovered from the waters of a river becomes one of the most recurrent topics for literature and art. As Bachelard pointed out:

L' image synthétique de l'eau, de la femme et de la mort ne peut pas se disperser, un mot des eaux, un seul suffit pour designer l'image profonde d'Ophélie. Les yeux clos et les lèvres qui ont "l'air de sourire et de souffrir"<sup>21</sup>.

Indeed Ophelia was born again as a muse of inspiration, her romanticism blending with the decadence that characterized *fin de siècle* art. Hundreds of Modern Ophelias brought dismay at the cruel reality of modern life that convulsed the already tottering beliefs of society.

A mystification of Ophelia also underlay the popular story of *L'inconnue de la Seine* [the unknown woman of the Seine], which became a popular subject of the collective imagery during the last years of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The story is that of a young woman whose drowned body was found in the waters of the Seine and taken to the Paris Morgue for identification. The beauty of her smile was so compelling to a medical assistant at the morgue that he took an impression of her face. Her smile was compared to the Mona Lisa's and great numbers of plaster casts were produced and sold from this unknown young woman's death mask and decorated many a bourgeois parlour in France and Germany during the period.

It is of little moment if the *Inconnue* really existed, nor is it known if the story of her mask was true or invented. What is relevant about this story from our point of view is the way art looked at the real, and how this death, far from producing abjection, was allowed to penetrate the privacy of bourgeois society life.

There is surely a reference to the story of *L'inconnue de la Seine* in the gallery of representations of drowned women depicted by symbolism during the last decades of the nineteenth century, among which Simonet's work has particular distinction.

Sander L. Gilman added an extra detail by analysing the woman represented in Simonet's painting as a prostitute

Death seems to purge the dead prostitute of her pollution....The touching of the dead body is not merely a piteous gesture toward the "fallen", it is a permitted touching of the female, a

control over the dead woman's body.....For one of the favourite images late nineteenth century medical art is the unequal couple transmogrified into the image of the aged pathologist contemplating the exquisite body of the dead prostitute before he opens it. In the striking image by Enrique Simonet we are present the moment when the body has been opened and the pathologist stares at the heart of the whore. What will be found in the body of these drowned women? Will it be the hidden truths of the nature of the woman...<sup>22</sup>

Simonet's painting not only alluded to all the myths and topics that formed the imagery of symbolism: the eroticism of the naked body of a young woman, the allegory of suicide, redemption of the prostitute, who can only find pardon for her soul by sacrificing her life, the sacralization of death; it also reflects all the themes which we have traced throughout this chapter. The canvas reflects the entire artistic tradition going back to the Renaissance and its *anatomia sensibile* and moralising anatomies, it offers a correct study of the human body but it also has a moralising and philosophical content which, in this case, is not limited just to the metaphor of woman as the source of nature and the discovery of truth represented by the female body, but also humanity's concern for the major issues of life and death. That is why Enrique Simonet depicts the anatomist holding the young woman's heart, reproducing Hamlet's gesture of staring at a skull and pronouncing the famous phrase "to be or not to be, that is the question".

The case of Fernando Cabrera Cantó, a painter of a later generation than Simonet, illustrates a similar experience. In 1900 Fernando presented his work *Mors in Vita* (Fig. 8) at the Universal Exhibition in Paris, a painting which he had already presented at the National Exhibition in Madrid in 1899. At the Paris exhibition, he won a gold medal. Cabrera Cantó's participation in Parisian contests is limited to this triumph at the Universal Exhibition, but it is obvious that the schools of artistic thinking which emanated from Paris were already, in the first decade of the 20th century, part of the international pictorial universe which was developing beyond the borders of the French capital.

Fernando Cabrera Canto's work *Mors in vita* depicts a scene in which some workers are depositing a covered body on one of the Morgue benches and on the next bench is the body of a young woman whose anatomy is uncovered so that we can observe half her body and her naked torso. As we can see, the figuration reproduces the same model, the woman's flowing hair, her nakedness, the partially veiled body; it refers us to a feature characteristic of romantic, realist and symbolist anatomies which we have mentioned in which erotic content is mixed with philosophical and moral content. The work benefits from the philosophical conception of death which characterised painting in the second half of the 19th century as it dramatised the morgue scenario. The veiled anatomy of one of the bodies allows us to intuit the anonymous character of death, a metaphor which is projected through some almond trees in blossom which appear through the window, a metaphor for the terminated life of some young body which like the trees through the glass had just blossomed.



Fig. 8  
Fernando Cabrera Cantó, *Mors in vita* (1899).  
From: Reproduced in "La Ilustracion Artistica", 10 July 1899. p. 441. Hemeroteca Municipal Valenciana.

All these issues bring us back to the starting point, the representation of death and pathology in scenes where a body appears on the dissection bench in a morgue or on stretchers in a clinic, where the exaltation or negation of scientific positivism and the mythology of death fuse to create scenes of a poetic, scientific, moral and ethical content. The reflection of a society which questions the foundations of progress and science in the modern world.

Paintings reproduced, represented, the scientific practice of anatomic dissection which during the second half of the 19th century, placed death and pathology within the parameters of science and betokened a new attitude towards death and its dramatisation, the corollary of which we can find in the Paris Morgue. That dramatisation prompted artists to look for inspiration in subjects which might have offended public morals had it not been for the fact that society was familiar with these social phenomena of the Parisian streets, had indeed created a taste for scenes and representations of that urbanised, anonymous, modern dramatised death that city life afforded.

One by one, all these works from romanticism to realism and to symbolism bear witness to the rise of a new archetypal representation of death and pathology, which tran-

scends the boundaries of artistic styles and sends back echoes of modern society onto the canvas. This new topos reminds us how slight a line separated art from real life during the second half of the 19th century.

## CONCLUSION

A painting involves a message, a formal content, a meaning, and in order to clarify the secrets it hides, our analysis cannot be reduced to mere formal study; just as we cannot make an exclusive correspondence between a work's meaning and the society in which it was produced or concentrate exclusively on the author's personal vocation. Formal representation is a system of language which is heir to an artistic tradition and subliminally reveals itself in the author's creative mind whatever the period he or she may belong to. That is why I do not think that a work of art can be analysed without taking into account the diachronic nature of Art History and therefore we must look back and plan our studies taking the long distance route. But the work of art acquires a synchronic dimension in that it is the creation of an individual who is not isolated but lives in society: it is that coexistence which conditions his or her way of thinking and understanding the world, a world model which is expressed in the form that the representation takes.

I have attempted to focus this analysis of the idea of death in late 19th-century society through two examples which are part of the same world view: a social practice, that of the dramatisation of death in the Paris Morgue, and an artistic manifestation, anatomy painting. Two examples with the same underlying mentality in which representation and reality are interwoven, bordering on the same frontier.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> V. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris*, Berkeley 1999, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>3</sup> E. Cherbuliez, *La Morgue*, in "Revue des deux mondes", January 1891, p. 344.
- <sup>4</sup> Schwartz, *Spectacular* cit., pp. 46-47.
- <sup>5</sup> A. Guillot, *Paris qui souffre: la basse-géologie du Grand Châtelet et les Morgues modernes*, Paris 1888, pp. 32-33. "The word had had a nobler origin...Littré, in agreement with Grandgragnage, found the first origin of the word in the 'morga' of the Langue d'Oc, which means face .... The writers of the 16th century often used the word 'morgue' to express a haughty and disdainful way of looking at people. ... Since the man who 'has morgue' had to have a fixed and interrogative look, people began to call 'morgueurs' the jailers in charge of registering the description of prisoners and Morgue the place where the descriptions were being made".
- <sup>6</sup> On the controversy surrounding the location of these spaces see the example of the Morgue in the city by A. Brown-May, S. Cooke, *Death, Decency and the Dead House: The city Morgue in Colonial Melbourne*, in "The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria", November 2004, 3.
- <sup>7</sup> P. Ariès, *Western attitudes toward death: from the Middle Ages to the present*, London 1976.
- <sup>8</sup> "The New York Times", 7 April 1872.



- <sup>9</sup> “*La Morgue, dit le première article du règlement de 1882, est l’un des établissements destinés spécialement à recevoir les corps des personnes décédées dans le ressort de la Préfecture de police, soit lorsqu’il doit y avoir lieu à une expertise médico-légale ou à une confrontation, soit lorsque l’identité du cadavre n’a pas été constatée. A ces services sont joints, depuis 1880, des conférences de médecine légale et un laboratoire d’enseignement médico-légal installé dans les dépendances de la Préfecture de police*”. Cherbuliez, *La Morgue* cit., p. 347.
- <sup>10</sup> É. Zola. *Thérèse Raquin*. ed. R. Abirached, Paris, 1996, p. 103. “The Morgue is a spectacle within the reach of all pockets, free for all, the poor and the rich. The door is open, anyone who wishes enters. There are fans who make detours so as not to miss a single representation of death. When the slabs are empty, people leave disappointed, robbed, mumbling under their breath. When the slabs are well furnished, when there is a good display of human flesh, the visitors crowd each other, they provide cheap emotions, they scare one another, they chat, applaud or sniffle, as at the theatre, and then they leave satisfied, declaring that the Morgue was a success, that day”.
- <sup>11</sup> Schwartz, *Spectacular* cit., p. 83.
- <sup>12</sup> Art historian Bialostocki classified *Vanitas* symbols in different groups, symbols of life on earth (referring to the contemplative life: books, scientific instruments and materials, literature, science and plastic arts), symbols of mortality (referring to practical life: jewels, emblems of power, crowns, sceptres, weapons and all kinds of valuables) and symbols of eternal resurrection (referring to voluptuous life: vessels, fifes, playing cards and musical instruments).
- <sup>13</sup> The *Lezione d’anatomia* also known as “The artist’s anatomy lesson” (Galleria Borghese, Rome) attributed by Roberto Longhi to Bartolomeo Pessarotti (1529-1592) depicts a group of artists, among whom we can identify Michelangelo Buonarroti taking sketches around a dead body. This work is an excellent example of how artists were involved with anatomical studies.
- <sup>14</sup> L. Jordanova, *Sexual visions. Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth century*, Wisconsin 1989.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.98.
- <sup>16</sup> E. Allan Poe, *Selected prose and poetry of Edgar Allan Poe*, T.O. Mabbot (ed.), New York 1951, p. 369.
- <sup>17</sup> E. Bonfren, *Over her dead body. Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Manchester 1992.
- <sup>18</sup> Alciato has an emblem which alludes to the symbolic character of moths which are attracted by the light but perish when they reach it and which, once again, symbolise the transitory nature of life. The undertones of the work of an activist opposed to the scientific practice of dissection – as was Von Max – could lead us to interpret the insect’s presence as a metaphor for life which perishes before the light, in this case before science and hence before the discoveries brought about by this scientific practice.
- <sup>19</sup> T. Veron, *Le salon de 1876*, Paris 1876, p. 43. “But where we must greet a fine future and a new path taken with success by M.Gervex, is in the ‘Autopsy at the Hôtel de Dieu’. In this important work M.Gervex has surpassed himself. The medical students live, dissect, listen to the lesson... and seem to profit from it with the love for science that characterizes these useful researchers. Nothing can be truer than that scene lit by a beautiful light from above. ...The place is depicted truly, I recognise nature taken and painted directly in the clinic room, where this important work will have to return and be hung. Honour to its author will surely ... obtain a real triumph”.
- <sup>20</sup> In 1892, Toulouse Lautrec also depicted Doctor Peán performing surgery in the work *Le docteur Péan opérant* (oil painting on board 74 x 50) currently held by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.
- <sup>21</sup> G. Bachelard, *L’eau et les rêves*, Paris 1942, p. 114. “The synthetic image of water, of woman, of woman and death cannot be dispersed, a word of the waters, one alone, is enough to draw a profound image of Ophelia. The closed eyes and lips that have ‘the air of smiling and of suffering’”.
- <sup>22</sup> S.L. Gilman, *The Jew’s body*, New York 1991, p. 108.

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