

Title: *agonya neiko mfanha uyu?* Of death and funerals – a semiotic exploration of the Shona funeral ritual in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Death and funerals offer a context that draws very interesting semiotic signals that define death, the dead and management of death itself. This paper explores some Shona expressions rich in semiotic signals that generate meanings that define funerals and death in contemporary Zimbabwe. Using semiotics, the article argues that there is a reconfiguration of identities in societies as they participate and respond to the funeral ritual in Africa. The article further argues that there exists an attempt to demarcate the dead from the living without necessarily questioning cultural belief systems as well as connections to the world of the dead who are culturally assumed to have assumed power of the spiritual.