

“THE BLOODY THEATRE OF EUROPE” THE CULTURE OF PAIN, CRUELTY AND MARTYRDOM IN EARLY MODERN HUNGARY

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Abstract: Words like aggression, violence, and violent actions usually carry destructive meanings. People tend to forget their constructive culturally determined meanings. In spite of this, it can be argued that aggressive feelings, hatred, anger, verbal aggression, threatening behaviour, assault, inflicting pain, injuring or ritual killing of men, or the fighting of war are all part of our lives as much as feasts and rituals that bind communities together, or the command to love of different religious ideologies. In the 16th century there was a definitive turn in judging the body in public. It meant that public attention gradually turned from the corpse of Christ to the bodies of the thieves. The two thieves were brought down from their crosses, laid out on the dissecting table, or their bodies were torn apart during fights. Evil-doers became part of scientific cognition. The antisocial public enemy became a hero of the community in the popular literature and historic stories. The conserved and stuffed bodies of robbers and killers were displayed in the first museums of the Early Modern Age, as a main attraction. Rebels were cut into pieces as part of a baroque play on the killing floor to display the parts in buildings of the town. The body of the everyday killer became a spectacle, and the interest in the mind of the solitary killer developed medical thinking on the human spirit.

Keywords: Art of Dying, Bad Death, culture of guilt, recalling guilt, heyduck (rebels), metaphors of pain, peasant war, punishment, spectacles of pain, thief's body

In his study on the formation of national stereotypes Alexander Eckhardt sought an answer to how prejudices are linked to words, images, real or fictitious traces of memory. He gave the story of the man-eating monster (*ogre*) as an example, which the Western European imagination associated also with the name of Hungarian (*Hongre, Hongrois*).¹ *Montaigne, Calmet, Dussieux* are some of the well-known French authors who mentioned or dealt with the Hungarians' fierce and raging nature and inclination to cannibalism.² This association probably preserved the memory of Hungarians' raids in the 9th century, as well as the tradition of an assumed kinship with the Huns. The association was further reinforced with the intrepid 'White Knight' (*Johannes Hunyadi*)³ who never removed his suit of armour, the glorious memory of the 'Turk-beater' (*Paulus Kinizsi*) dancing with corpses in his mouth,⁴ the ominous memory of the revolt of the 'Vlach leader' (*György Dózsa*),⁵ 'Vlad the impaler' (*Vlad*

¹ ECKHARDT 1943.

² CALMET 1746; DUSSIEUX 1839.

³ CSERNUS 1999: 234.

⁴ GALAVICS 1986: 12.

⁵ BARTA-FÉKETE NAGY 1973; *MONUMENTA RUSTICORUM...* 1979.

Țepeș, Dracula),⁶ the international fame of the 'Blutgräfin' or 'Monster of Csejte' (*Elisabeth Báthory*),⁷ the popularity of the 'hero wading in janissaries' blood' (*Nicolaus Zrínyi*),⁸ or with *heyducks* and *hussars*, two Hungarian words which gained international recognition as European-ranking of merciless warriors. Their fame was enhanced with Hungarian vampire-stories, witch-hunt hysteria in Szeged, the trial of 'cannibal' Gypsies in Hont,⁹ or blood accusations against Jews in Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava), Nagyszombat (Trnava), Buda and Tiszaeszlár.¹⁰ This story was full of gloomy tragedies, defeats, betrayals; the characters often died on the stage in the course of the performance and actors often dressed like cannibals or evil-doers.

METAPHORS OF PAIN

Generally speaking, the expressions 'aggression' or 'violence', as well as 'violent act' usually have a negative, destructive connotation. The constructive, culture-defining meanings, however, are often neglected. In spite of this, one cannot deny that aggressive emotions, hatred, rage, verbal aggression, threatening behaviour, inflicting pain, hurting or ritually killing another person, or murder in wartime can also be a part of our lives, as much as celebration, ceremonies binding groups of people together, or the command to love of religious ideologies. In this paper I would like to describe how the experience of pain is decisively shaped or modified by individual human minds and by specific human cultures. It explores what we might call the historical, cultural, and psychosocial construction of pain.¹¹

In the early modern Europe often referred to as 'the guilt culture' and centuries of 'permanent penance' portrayals of *Vir dolorum*, *Arma Christi*, the Holy Blood and Holy Wounds, *Mater Dolorosa*, passion cycles presenting Christ's Passion, programmes of the myths of martyr saints and paintings of various genres and functions (frescos, panel paintings, indulgences, prayer-books) aimed to represent naturalistically objects used for causing pain (dagger, whip, pincers, nail, etc.); and the fact that all this became widespread from the 13th–14th centuries indicates to what extent the veneration of Christ and the saints had changed. A new concept based on suffering and pain was developed to present flesh and blood to the public. *The active, judging Christ became a suffering, passive Christ, a "man of sorrows" and flesh was put on the relic bones of the saints.* Several parallel phenomena in the 12th–15th centuries can be related to the change in performance of flesh and blood to the public. Some deterrent principles of Roman law from the 2nd–4th centuries were revived and panel

⁶ FLORESCU 1974.

⁷ ELSBERG 1894; ANTALL–KAPRONCZAY 1973; SZÁDECZKY-KARDOSS 1993.

⁸ GALAVICS 1986: 91–92.

⁹ PUSKÁS–VÉGH 1998.

¹⁰ KENDE 1995.

¹¹ MORRIS 1991.

paintings amplified the variety of tortures of Hell and Purgatory which derived from Christian other-world ideologies as well as chapters from Eastern revelation texts which became known only in the 11th–12th centuries, although they derived from the 2nd–5th centuries. Panel paintings on the passions of martyr-saints spread in the period when trials by ordeal flourished and a new type of trial started to take shape. Although saints' passions were parables of ordeals, the paintings did not depict ordeals but torture: essentially they propagated the visualisation of torture in the 13th–16th centuries.¹²

Significant changes in the visualisation of pain took place in the 16th–17th centuries. Contrary to the medieval panel paintings, the new and liturgical representations emphasised tragedy rather than deterrence and spiritual catharsis instead of the drama of flesh and blood. Certain pictorial representations did retain bodily pain and agony, but with a completely different function. Secularised images with dechristianized symbols dominated pamphlets, which were the modern media of social publicity in the 16th–18th centuries. The pictures reported horror and tortures without catharsis. Although in the formations of folk religion the masses continued to respect the materialised signs of pain and suffering, the upper class gradually left this circle. That was the time when the Renaissance 'death cult' was formed, in which 'the signs of death' were more important than the 'flesh'.

STAGES OF CRUELTY, SPECTACLES OF PAIN

From the spectacle of images let us change to the ritualised extermination of the body. Numerous forms of public performance of the body are known from the late medieval and early modern era. Church ceremonies, liturgical processions, representation of the upper-classes in coronation processions, or common people's ceremonies, entertainments, the rituals of everyday life ceremonies such as weddings, christenings, funerals are controlled forms of sacred and/or profane manifestations of the body. Naturally, in addition to the above a large number of other theatrical performance of the body could be mentioned as well, such as dance, carnival, or the public flesh market of prostitutes, transvestites and homosexuals.

Among the '*places for the socially-controlled performance of the body*' another special place was given to the dying or dead body. The dead body played four significant roles on the stage: execution, the public stages for execution, the spectacle of punishment;¹³ the anatomy theatre;¹⁴ the early modern theatre itself¹⁵ and funeral processions and funerals.¹⁶

¹² COHEN 1995; SALLAY 2000.

¹³ PÁLFFY 1995; HAJDU 1985; PANDULA 1989.

¹⁴ WILSON 1987; SADWAY 1995; KÁDÁR 1976: 951–954.

¹⁵ KISS 1996: 99–112.

¹⁶ BUZÁSI 1975; SZABÓ 1990; JAKÓ 1996: 233–247.

The ‘*places for the socially-uncontrolled performance of the body*’ included brutal acts in wartime and religious conflicts, planned or spontaneous massacres in riots, public criminal acts. The non-normative, but socially controlled ‘riot-rituals’ can partly be related to this group, since as the resolution of ‘rioting ritual’ in the total absence of ‘social control’, raging violence could also result in similar performance of the body.

In his epic poem titled *Les Tragiques* Agrippa d’Aubigné described the horror of the French religious wars and similar scenes portrayed the general conditions of the Thirty Years War in Germany in Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus*. A piece of travel literature and European horror chronicles *Ungarischer oder Dacianischer Simplicissimus*, attributed to Daniel Speer, described occurrences in Hungary. The theatrically described chapters of the Hungarian *Simplicissimus* may have contributed to the fact that Western European public opinion often regarded Hungary as the ‘bloody theatre of Europe’, as Alexander Eckhardt called it. In connection with the cruel acts in the ‘long war’, later called the ‘Fifteen Years War’ by historians, István Szamosközy wrote the following in Transylvania around 1608: “*Though it greatly deviates from decency, natural law and sanity, since they also advise us not to vent our rage on the dead body, we, however [...] witness that Christians nowadays act much more brutally not only against the Turks, but also against Christians. For instance, among other things, who would not condemn the barbarian massacre by Walloons and Germans of the Turks at Hatvan? [...] Who would not hate the most horrifying acts of cruelty, that were beyond all human ferocity, committed by today’s Thracian, the so-called Rác [Serb]? Wishing not to be seen to have deviated from their ancestors’ [...] cruelty to the slightest extent, they have performed all the acts of torturer [...] in the present tragic days, so compared to them the most relentless executor proves to be most merciful.*”¹⁷

Europe and Hungary were a theatre of war throughout the 16th–17th centuries. Essentially, there was no difference in the cruel acts performed by Western mercenaries, Eastern Mongol hordes and the Ottomans, or by the southern Thracians. Wartime massacres, bloody armed campaigns, or tortures of the civilian population were occurrences of everyday life.

Ritualised acts of cruelty have also been investigated by researchers of human ethology. According to ethologists certain forms of cruelties against men, women and children occur not only in human cultures, but also among animals. Cruel acts in the heat of fighting are often aimed at the total annihilation of the enemy. This, however, is a characteristic of human cultures, ethologists say.

Many sources could be quoted to describe aggressive acts committed or suffered by men. Here I would highlight sexual crimes and punishments as *non-specific aggressive acts*. Both records of trials and laws setting out punishments mention impalement and castration. The most widespread stories about impalement can be read in the narrative historic sources on the Dózsa peasant uprising (1514) as well as

¹⁷ SZAMOSKÖZY 1876: V. Pentas, Vol. III.

in bloody, revenging laws codified in the very moment of the events. Taurinus (1519), a local-remote observer of the events, versified in hexameters the cruelties of peasants.¹⁸ In his chronicle Nicolaus Istvánffy (1622) commemorated the horror of the peasant revolt in 1514 and placed great emphasis on describing the theatrical execution of Hungarian aristocrats. To describe the events of the past, Istvánffy also used sources that had originated from the time of the rising. He knew, among other things, the works of Taurinus and Tubero, which could have inspired him to create the bloody pictures. On the death of István Telegdi, captured with bishop Csáky by peasant troops, he wrote: *"On his way back home Telegdi was captured by peasants. He was killed by György Székely with new means of torture an honest man of good will shudders to hear. On the top of a high stake this man of fame and honour, undeserving of such terrible punishment, was hanging on a piece of rope tied to his genitals."*¹⁹ Besides the chronicle sources recorded on the cruel acts of peasant troops from the aristocrats' viewpoint, the bloody laws adopted by the nobles that prepared retaliation are also worth studying. These laws were an integral part of the policy of punishment to avenge Dózsa's peasant uprising. Article 60 in Decree VII of 1514 issued by Wladislas II ordered that no herdsmen called 'hajdú' [heyduck] or peasants were allowed to carry arms. If, in defiance of the law, they carried a pike or firearm, anyone was entitled to capture them. On the first occasion, heyducks were sentenced to be castrated and on the second occasion to death, and peasants' hands were chopped off. Heyducks, as the enemies of society, were counted as aliens. Therefore more serious punishment was imposed on them than on peasants who were members of the group. In addition to impalement, castration also carried the message that heyducks were outsiders, they did not belong to the group, that is they were *not human beings*. The most striking examples of the struggle between the peasant armies and the nobility were the brutal offences against the enemy's masculinity.

Castration or impalement, by imposing passive homosexuality, emphasised the non-human character of the enemy. Consequently, impalement and castration in wartime and retaliation virtually destroyed the potential masculine rival.

In addition to brutal criminal acts committed against men, aggressive acts against women were also common manifestations of human nature. János Decsi's (Baranyai) Hungarian Chronicle (1598) on the cruelties of the Mongol hordes which made several incursions into Hungary at the end of the 16th century wrote: *"They kept virgins and good-looking women with attractive appearance or young age for dissipation and took turns at tormenting these women usually tied down to the ground, until most of them died of this ignominy."*²⁰

Acts of cruelty committed against children were used as tools in the set of patterns of the chronicler to describe non-human behaviour. Naturally, the archaic motif best known to the European literate was the biblical Massacre of the Innocents by Herod, which was used as a guide in the works of chroniclers. In his work entitled

¹⁸ TAURINUS 1519: Liber I/459–460.

¹⁹ ISTVÁNFY 1622 [1867]; THÁLLYAI 1629.

²⁰ DECSI 1982: 158–159.

‘Explanation’ Péter Kis Pécsi (1564) wrote on the customs of the Turks: *“having finished their night-time immolation, they fornicated with the captured women, and raped fragile virgins and used children and youth for most disgusting incest and sodomy. Moreover, the Christians must curse and remember all kinds of wild and domestic animals that they defiled for their pleasure”*.²¹ János Baranyai Decsi wrote about raiding Mongol troops in the Hungarian Chronicle (1598): *“They had sport and joy in carving up crying children thrown into the air or driving a pike through their neck. [...] They tore apart pregnant women to see how the foetus lay in the womb and delighted in this horrible anatomy lesson.”*²² Even if these are considered as exaggerations of the chronicler, they remain the most powerful and impressive way to describe cruelty.

The principle of the traditional criminal law in the 12th–17th centuries was reflection and deterrence, which aimed to impress spectators by public executions. These attractions included the following: a trial procedure, in which fear often gripped the suspect; instruments of torture were put on display; demonstrating instruments of torture to the suspect; public demonstration of the instruments of torture which caused pain or death to the victim; the spectacle of a scaffold; and finally the spectacle of agony and death of the poor criminal’s body; these all reinforced the theatricality of punishment. The main goals of the procedure were deterrence and retaliation, which, in accordance with a distinctive liturgy, offered the poor sinner the opportunity to do penance, to become purified by punishment and the parts of the body left behind may in cases have lived on as relics. In the 19th century, when the public was excluded from the execution of the sentence, for a long while the masses attempted to inflict collective punishment independently from the central authorities and determined only by customary law of the local community and to allow the community to have control over the body. The history of the 19th century is full of reports of pogroms and lynchings. In this way the liturgy of public executions was replaced by spontaneous, unregulated mob rules. Subsequently the spectacle of destruction was not determined by various types of execution and punishment, but the experience of wars and civil wars. In addition to the secularisation of the poor sinner’s agony, the condemned were deprived of the possibility of purification. At first, executions became compassionate contemplation with an end in itself, then mere retaliation when the public was excluded. Measures to reform execution in the 19th century resulted in that the sinner had no chance to become purified and the victim to grant forgiveness.²³

In the social-psychological sense in all events with a large scope for aggressive actions, where outbursts of rage, cruelties and killing are spontaneously organised, dominance and victory are made perceptible to the defeated enemy with the most diverse indications of aggression. In such events the defeated party is often forced into a situation in which women have to offer themselves sexually and men suffer passive homosexuality. In the final analysis, source texts of peasant movements

²¹ KISS 1993: 75.

²² DECSI 1982: 158–159.

²³ FOUCAULT 1975.

which often mentioned impalement, castration, cutting off breasts and other parts of the body are about one of the most brutal acts of aggression, namely sexual molestation of the victim or dead body.

From the beginning of the 16th century impalement that played an important role in the cruelties of peasant troops in revolt as well as impalement used for retaliation became the most spectacular symbols of power dominance. This was proved by sources that reported on actions of peasant troops and the subsequent retaliation against *György Dózsa* in 1514 and *Péter Császár* in 1632 in Hungary, *Mathei Gubec* in Croatia, *Wenzel Morakshy* in lower Austria. Impalement, which was probably of Eastern origin, as proved by Scythian, Persian, Ossetian, Turkish and Byzantine sources, probably appeared in the European theatres of operations and as a means of torturing criminals when the Ottoman Turks advanced in the 14th–15th centuries. Under Hungarian law, impalement was used to punish acts of brigandry, murder and robbery. Impalement was often used as motif in our medieval revelation texts and descriptions of the Last Judgement. In these texts and images the devil often pushes a huge, red-hot pike into the genitalia of sodomite men and licentious women. The fearsome devils ‘incarnating’ other-world powers were often depicted with phallic attributes.

Hans Peter Dürr’s monumental work, which is at the same time a critique of myths created on civilisation processes, dealt extensively with the social-psychological sense of the motif of impaling (‘ficken’)²⁴ enemy and opponent. He considers that sexual crimes, raping women, castrating, or impaling, or raping men on battlefields were found in almost all periods.²⁵ Representatives of human ethology also talk about ritualisation that is part of dominance and the performance of power. *Wickler* pointed out that phallic signals are common among primates, including humans as well. Their function is to mark territory. According to *Eibl-Eibesfeldt* it can be regarded as a cultural and behavioural universal and he defined war as enforcement of culturally developed territory-protecting mechanisms among groups, which fundamentally has territorial functions. Groups of humans are inclined to define themselves as unique, real human beings and use terms expressive of disdain for neighbours, real or imaginary enemies. Strangers, enemies or opponents therefore become dehumanised and in this self-training process people separate themselves from signals that would evoke compassion. In peace there is a cultural filter above the biological one, giving the command: ‘you shall not kill’. In war or during ‘revolt-rituals’ these filters often vanish or assumes other forms. Arms that made remote killing possible (arrows, spears, guns) efficiently hindered the formation of ‘suppressions’, which could have acted against aggression. Moreover, killing an enemy became a cultural virtue, which had to be proved by cutting off his or her nose, ear, head, penis, breast, hand or leg.²⁶ Killing or destroying an enemy or opponent

²⁴ Dürr made deliberate use of this expression that is rather pejorative and obscene in today’s language. DÜRR 1993.

²⁵ DÜRR 1983, 1993.

²⁶ EIBL-EIBESFELDT 1970, 1988; EIBL-EIBESFELDT-SÜTTERLIN 1990.

did, however, lead to many defensive, protective mechanisms, which often meant that *ritualisation* of killing, as well as *rites* to guarantee the killer's safety emerged. The killing-rites of execution of sentences and the props, actors, and the audience of the theatre of fear also contributed to this ritualisation. The poor sinner (a witch, a robber, a murderer, or an arsonist) was a player on the stage of execution. In the bloody liturgy both the victim and the executioner had to follow the guiding principles set by law or custom just like in a theatre.

In his study on early modern Europe *Jean Delumeau* came to the conclusion that the culture in the 13th–18th centuries was a culture of 'sin and guilt' dominated by the 'language of terror', 'evangelisation by fear' and the 'discourse of intimidation'.²⁷ Virtually the Lateran Council (1215) was followed by centuries of relentless persecution, in which new religious movements (Waldensians, Cathars, Lollards, Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, Unitarians) as well as the non-Christian (Jews, Moors, Muslims) were subject to persecution together with many representatives of folk culture (witches, folk healers, wise women, community wizards). In connection with the Christian ideology of the period *André Vauchez* also concluded that the entire life career of the common man of that age was continuous penitence, in which the *virtual life career* of the saints set an example of the right behaviour.²⁸ Therefore a new model of life career or rather a life career full of sins and absolutions was formed, and was dominated by the Good Death, the Art of Dying and above all penance and the possibility of entering Paradise at the end. In contrast to this model stood the life of evil-doers, thieves and obdurate criminals crowned with the concept of Bad Death and the horrors of Hell. The Two Thieves crucified by the side of Christ symbolised these two models in images of the stations of the Cross of the type which portrayed the triple crucifixion. This type emerged in iconographic programmes from the 12th century onwards, but became widespread only during the Renaissance, probably due to Franciscan influence. According to *Mitchell Merbeck*,²⁹ *Dysmas*, the Good Thief and *Gestas*, the Bad Thief represented the model and anti-model of life career (spiritual biography) in the early modern era. These examples determined the rites of execution in the early modern age. If the poor sinner had repented his sins in the moment before death and done heartfelt penance, then he could receive Christian mercy, which certainly did not ease his bodily pains, but relieved the soul. If the sinner had not wished to receive Christian forgiveness, then his life ended grievously and his soul was expelled from the Christian community forever. In the 16th century there was a definitive turn in judging the body in public. It meant that public attention gradually turned from the corpse of Christ to the bodies of the thieves. The two thieves were brought down from their crosses, laid out on the dissecting table, or their bodies were torn apart during fights. Evil-doers became part of scientific cognition. The antisocial public enemy became a hero of the community in the popular crime literature and historic stories. The conserved and stuffed bodies of robbers

²⁷ DELUMEAU 1990: 321, 327, 496, 523, 529.

²⁸ VAUCHEZ 1993: 122.

²⁹ MERBECK 1999: 218–265.

and killers were displayed in the first museums of the Early Modern Age, as a main attraction. Rebels were cut into pieces as a part of a baroque play on the killing floor to display the parts in buildings of the town. The body of the everyday killer became a spectacle, and the interest in the mind of the solitary killer developed medical thinking on the human spirit.

Destroying the body of those who exerted power (brutal torture, mutilation and murder of priests, nobles) represented an offence against the body (power, regime) of the nation and evoked the cruelty of retaliation, that is the total power of the elite on the body of subordinated groups. Executing leaders (beheading rebellious troops), mutilation (chopping off the nose, lips or ear) or branding (tattooing, burning a hot stamp into the skin) of troops aimed to restore power over the body of society. Ruling the body meant exerting real power, and torture, castration, impalement, putting to the sword, violent acts, infanticide symbolised the war between the forces of good and evil, the army of hell and divine order. *Koppány* (rebel lord, 10th century) was quartered in line with the concept of Bad Death for rebellious evil-doers. The king used the quartered body to renew his power and mark his territory. *King Saint Stephen I's* body, also in parts, as relic symbolised the power of the current Hungarian ruler. Performance of the holy body represented renewal of the power of the current Hungarian ruler. The parts of *Koppány's* body reinforced the power of King Saint Stephen I, and in the same way Stephen's body reinforced the current Hungarian ruler. Sending and hanging out parts of a body on a gate announced that order had been restored, and the parts of the body also marked the 'territory' in which the victorious party could legally exert his power.³⁰

The very same principle was followed in cases of retaliation to resolve peasant movements and conflicts. Essentially retaliation was carried out to make people 'remember'. György Dózsa was killed in order to make people remember the murder of rebels in Belgrade; in Péter Császár's movement Nicolaus Esterházy, however, attempted to restore order with reference to János Szapolyai's retaliatory actions that quelled György Dózsa's peasant uprising. Mathei Gubec, a Croatian leader of a peasant revolt, was roasted to death also with reference to Dózsa. The reference to Dózsa as a motif emerged in every Kuruts movement,³¹ including the revolts of Gáspár Pika, the rebels of Hegyalja, Péro Segedinac, rioters in Hódmezővásárhely, or uprisings headed by Horea and Cloșca.³² The execution ceremony touched Christian liturgical immolation in many aspects. It is not by chance that György Szerémi (1534) compared Dózsa to the Macedonian martyr Saint George, for instance, or Reverend Lőrinc to the martyr Saint Lawrence who was also roasted to death.³³ It is not by chance that Dózsa was crowned with a white-hot crown similar to Christ's crown of thorns; it is not by chance that the heyducks made to eat Dózsa's flesh and

³⁰ GYÖRFFY 1970; KRISTÓ 1983: 77–92.

³¹ Soldier in the insurrectionist armies of Imre Thököly, Ferenc Rákóczi and József Rákóczi fighting against Habsburg oppression at the turn of the 17th century.

³² GERÉB 1950.

³³ SZERÉMI 1857.

drink his blood recalled the Communion. After all, retaliation functioned to mark territory, to legitimise and thirdly to recall, since the ritualised performance of reprisal made everybody *remember*. The death of the victims was the memory of previous brutal executions and reprisals for revolts, but it also *set an example* for crimes not yet committed. The victims of the ‘theatre of mourning’ witnessed and were martyrs in line with the concept of Bad Death.

Our society wishes not to ‘experience’ pain, but only to visualise it in pure brutality, without sensations or at the most make it feel abated at the level of medicine, imprisonment, or weapon-technology. If we believe only what we see and do not remember the pain of the body, then the most cruel pictures will leave us without effect. Therefore the spectacle experienced in the theatre of mourning cannot be compared to the spectacle of images full of mere brutality, deprived of sacrality. The theatre of horror amplifies the memory of experienced pain, whereas violent pictures make it blunt. Pain, presented in a theatre and mediated by the body of an actor will always have a more intensive influence on the audience than a Passion depicted in movies or video films. To draw the final conclusion we can state that we should not forget, or rather it is time we recalled the fundamental idea of Christianity, the Passion, and in broader terms the general principle of punishing pain or experiencing pain.

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