Death and disposal of the people's singer: The body and bodily practices in commemorative ritual

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ABSTRACT *This contribution focuses on the power of commemorative ritual with special attention for bodily matters. It relies on empirical material from a sequence of ceremonies in commemoration of Dutch singer André Hazes (1951–2004). All celebrations were staged performances and widely mediated events. In the Dutch context, they were of an unusual form, content and scale, and evoked widespread amazement and even disapproval. Significant in all these performances was the bodily presence of Hazes, not only by the literal presence of Hazes' dead body, but also in the form of mimicked representations by his fans. Hazes was an ambiguous celebrity, his bodily appearance and habits offered occasion for identification as well as abjection. Emphasising his general physical appearance (fat, sweating, unhealthy looking), the 'social body' of André Hazes appears as a counter-ideal of rough authenticity, in opposition to the dominant social construct of the body as young, smooth, healthy and beautiful. The contribution's main argument is that his fans' bodily identification is a practice to contest dominant bodily ideals in a societal struggle about who matters and who does not.*

KEYWORDS: celebrity; commemorative ritual; mimesis; serial disposal; body politics

Introduction

Immortality has always been a major preoccupation for mortals, longing to transcend either their own mortality or that of beloved or otherwise indispensable others. Many feel that we are not entirely dead as long as we continue to exist in the memory of those who have loved or known us. When these memories are shared, our continued presence acquires social significance. Commemorative ceremony in particular maintains and elaborates the social identity of the deceased, whether such ritual is conducted in private or in the public domain together with 'unknown' others. Public commemoration differs from private commemoration primarily in articulating that the significance of a deceased person reaches beyond his or her direct social environment. It is therefore always a political act, confirming the deceased's political identity (i.e. that of saint, king,

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founder, hero), or superimposing such an identity over the deceased's social identity (i.e. that of father, teacher, singer). Such transformations, being far from self-evident or unequivocal, have my special interest. Public commemorative ritual provides an important route of entry to the study of society, pinpointing issues and concerns prevalent in a certain period. Why do we commemorate certain individuals extensively and others not? What political identities are articulated and created in the ritual process? Answering these questions involves focusing on the lives, deaths and deeds of those commemorated, as well as on the spatial and performative dimensions of the actual ritual.

Lately, Dutch society has seen several instances of high-profile commemorative ritual. Besides three royal funerals,¹ extraordinary ritual was organised in commemoration of murdered politician Pim Fortuyn (1948–2002), popular singer André Hazes (1951–2004) and murdered film director Theo van Gogh (1957–2005). The assassinations of Fortuyn and van Gogh, being politically motivated, sent a shockwave through society, evoking massive public responses of anger and protest, partly in the form of collective ritual. To a certain extent these responses were comparable to the extensively mediated British reactions to the death of Princess Diana, albeit of a more modest scale and without the international dimension (cf. Walter, 1999).

The death of André Hazes did not happen in an explicit political context, nor did the forms of mourning events in his memory echo earlier examples. Hazes, to his fans 'Dré' or 'André,' died of a heart attack at the age of 53. Although, in retrospect, public response of some degree was to be expected upon Hazes' death, the forms, scale and number of commemorative ceremonies were unusual and unforeseeable. These events evoked widespread amazement and even disapproval.² I will concentrate on the André Hazes ceremonies since, in my view, this surprise and contention expose a societal struggle about who matters and who does not.

Building on the work of Paul Connerton (1989), Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock (1987), and Katherine Verdery (1999), my analysis of the André Hazes' mourning events will take 'the body' as point of departure. Hazes' physical appearance provides the impetus for this perspective: his unhealthy looks and lifestyle were either reason for rejection or identification. Douglas' idea of the human body as an image for society is helpful in understanding the significance of Hazes' physical appearance. I will focus on the relationship between Hazes' actual physical body and his social body, in which the former may be interpreted as a symbolic vehicle for a counter-model of society (cf. Douglas, 1970).³ Following Scheper-Hughes and Lock, I regard the relationship between individual and social bodies as also one of power and control (1987, pp. 23–24). I will therefore include the 'body politic,' the dominant idiom of bodily appearance and practices, as a third approach to the body. This body politic is not to be confused with the body politic as nation, or the 'political body' of kings (cf. Kantorowicz, 1957). The latter, the embodiment of the state, stands as it were distinct from the physical body of the actual king and is transferable to his successor upon his death. In the absence of such a political

body, Hazes' bodily presence is continued in a different way, as will become apparent below.

Mortality is primarily a bodily reality. Consequently, the body plays an important role in commemorative ritual. This applies to funerary rites in particular as they centre on the corpse and its disposal. Yet, even after burial or cremation, dead bodies still remain with us. The transfer of a (famous) body for reburial, the pursuit of relics, grave-robbery, or disinterment for criminal investigation are the more familiar ways in which (parts of) dead bodies return to the realm of the living, temporarily or permanently. Ashes have an even greater potential to remain: if they are not disposed of, they need to be kept. For some bodies, post-mortem permanence is intended from the onset; for example bodies destined for scientific research, cryopreserved bodies waiting for resurrection, and preparations of body or body parts kept for display (cf. Verdery, 1999).

The way society deals with certain dead bodies, 'dead-body manipulations' (Verdery, 1999, p. 3), and the resultant active presence of such bodies in the world, carry political meaning. Although not as 'immense' a topic as in Verdery's analysis of the political lives of dead bodies in Eastern Europe (1999), the manipulations of the dead body of André Hazes also relate to political and moral concerns, and point to wider processes of social change and dissent. In my analysis of the political life of André Hazes' body, I will discuss this body comprehensively, initially in its living state since, as Verdery argues, 'dead people come with a curriculum vitae or résumé – several possible résumés, depending on which aspect of their life is being considered' (1999, p. 29). Lending themselves to analogies with '*other people's* résumés,' dead bodies allow for a process of identification (Verdery, 1999, p. 29, italics in original). Hazes' curriculum vitae as reflected in his bodily appearance, more precisely his corporal distinctiveness, is relevant for understanding these processes of identification and, by implication, of differentiation. Emphasising his general physical appearance (fat, sweating, unhealthy looking), the 'social body' of André Hazes appears as a counter-ideal of rough authenticity, in opposition to the dominant social construct of the body as young, smooth, healthy and beautiful. The great number of André Hazes look-alikes, from 'token mimicking' by wearing one or two André Hazes attributes to full-scale imitation, are indicative of the need for recognition and belonging this mimicking seeks to meet.

André Hazes, the living body

Writing about André Hazes is writing about celebrity Hazes, and thus involves his mass-media representations. Hazes' curriculum vitae is a narration of a 'jack-of-all trades and master of none,' gifted with a remarkable vocal talent from childhood onwards. All accounts start with the endearing anecdote of Hazes as an 8-year-old boy, singing at an Amsterdam street market, the *Albert Cuyp*, to earn some money to buy a present for his mother. A photograph taken in 1959, reputedly of

the occasion, is the material evidence of three important qualities disseminated in this account:

- The photograph locates Hazes as a working-class lad and an 'authentic' inhabitant of Amsterdam;
- The photograph testifies to Hazes' natural talent as a singer;
- The photograph provides visual evidence of Hazes' special sentimental and emotional qualities and places him within a moral framework. He was poor, and had a heart of gold.

The combination of sentimentality and a working-class background, often from Amsterdam, places Hazes in a specific category of popular singers: the so-called *levenslied* singers. The Dutch music genre *levenslied*, literally 'song of life,' is perhaps best described as a genre based on sentimental, corny or torch songs. Its main characteristics are the idiom of the lyrics, topics like love, hardship and loneliness, and a characteristic extreme opera- or operetta-like vibrato. Apart from the lyrics and the musical dimension, the singer's background is an essential ingredient of a true *levenslied* performance. In the 1970s, Hazes created the subgenre *levenspop*, 'life pop,' by adding pop music elements to his songs.

The photograph also stands for a special moment in the life of the young André Hazes. It is often connected to the discovery of Hazes by singer and actor Johnny Kraaykamp Sr. (born 1925). In 1959, Hazes made his first television appearance in Kraaykamp's *Weekend Show*. This performance did not bring him fame at the time. He left school at an early age, starting his first job when 14 years old. Singing remained a hobby. After a wide range of jobs, Hazes settled as a bartender, another significant element in his curriculum vitae. No biography fails to mention that Hazes gained local fame as 'the singing bartender.' In this capacity he was discovered for a second time in 1976. After his second discovery, Hazes' career as a professional singer was launched, although there would be periods of both good and bad fortune. His status as a celebrity went through various phases accordingly.

Figure 1. André Hazes, 8 years old, singing at the Amsterdam street market Albert Cuyper in 1950. Copyright Spaarnestad Photo.

A further important strand in Hazes' curriculum vitae, indispensable to the understanding of the events that followed his death, presents him as a fervent football supporter; in particular of the national Dutch football team *Oranje* (Orange).⁴ As a singer and football supporter Hazes scored various hits with football songs. But there is more to this: the combination connects him to the Amsterdam football stadium, the Amsterdam ArenA, where he used to watch *Oranje*'s internationals and many other matches. Hazes' song 'We love Orange' [*We houden van Oranje*] still has the status of the national football anthem. In 2003, Hazes celebrated his silver jubilee as a singer with two concerts in the ArenA. Health problems, his increasing deafness in particular, forced him to cancel a series of concerts planned for the following year in the Rotterdam Ahoy Concert Hall. Instead, he planned to conclude his career with a farewell concert in the Amsterdam ArenA in the fall of 2004. This wish would come true, albeit post-mortem.

Ambiguity, glamour and notoriety

Chris Rojek perceives celebrity as the attribution of a 'glamorous or notorious status to an individual within the public sphere' (2001, p. 10). Although glamour is associated with favourable and notoriety with unfavourable public recognition, both qualifications operate similarly, namely through 'social distance' and 'impact on public consciousness' (Rojek, 2001, pp. 12, 31). Moreover, they are not mutually exclusive. Notoriety, with its connotation of 'transgression, deviance and immorality' (Rojek, 2001, p. 31), has become an increasingly accepted part of celebrity life in general. Many celebrities feature notorious habits. Although the notoriety of excessive spending, drinking, drug abuse and extramarital relationships may appear obvious, the consequences of notorious behaviour for the perceptions of the public are less predictable. Some celebrities are allowed a greater degree of transgressive behaviour than others. Specific notorious habits may even be essential attributes of a star's image. In addition to the ambiguity of notoriety as a 'do or don't,' the perception of celebrities' attributed notoriety is also ambiguous. In Hazes' case, his stardom was neither ubiquitous, nor undisputed. Some notorious habits were part of his public image, in brief the abuse of his body through heavy drinking, smoking and eating junk food. His bodily appearance and general habits offered occasion for either identification or rejection. Such identification and rejection, however, are not just a matter of personal tastes but of habitus (cf. Bourdieu, 1979). In this light, one's attitude to Hazes' body is a marker of social distinction.

To make my argument clear, I will contextualise André Hazes in more detail. First of all, one should understand the embedding of the *levenslied* genre in Dutch society. The genre is not appreciated by the Dutch populace as a whole. Like its performers, it belongs to a particular social stratum. The genre is to a large extent the music of white, autochthonous, lower-income, lesser-educated Dutch, most aficionados being working-class or, for a lesser part, middle-class. As such, it has never been taken seriously in the higher echelons of society. For decades, the

genre was hardly broadcast at all on radio or television (De Bruin & Grijp, 2006, p. 948). Today, *levenslied* is mainstream and has made its way on to television. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between *levenslied* aficionados and those who frown upon the genre remains, still largely paralleling a social division. Furthermore, Hazes' *levenspop* was, and still is, connected with the places and occasions of the 'common people.' Next to commercial radio and television, these imply cafés and bars, weddings and other parties. Apart from this, André Hazes and his songs attained cult or camp status in gay and student circles, where he regularly performed (cf. Grijp, 2002, p. 18).

André Hazes has always been an ambiguous celebrity. His earlier honorary nickname 'singing bartender' evokes this double-sidedness. The epithet 'singing' renders Hazes' existence as a singing being-in-the-world. From this basically subjective perspective, his singing appears as a 'unique, ultimately inexplicable phenomenon (...) its singularity is presented as a wonderful gift of nature' (cf. Rojek, 2001, pp. 29–30). Hazes' biography is the story of an ordinary man with an extraordinary bodily talent, which allowed him to work his way up to a glamorous status. In Rojek's terms, André Hazes gained the achieved celebrity of a 'self-made star.' In this quality he embodies many people's desires, and operates 'within a general moral framework that reaffirms the paramount order' (cf. Rojek, 2001, p. 31).

The epithet 'bartender,' however, fits Hazes' eventual image as an alcoholic, heavy smoker and lover of junk food. Here, his bodily appearance stands for neglect and abuse. This dimension of Hazes' life had long been a topic in the tabloids, but the documentary 'She believes in me' [*Zij gelooft in mij*] (John Appel, 1999) made it indisputably visible. Morning or evening, in working or in leisure situations, Hazes (fat, smoking and sweating) appears always with a can of beer. Through the documentary the acronym *bvo-tje* (*Biertje Voor Onderweg*, 'a beer for the road') made its entrée in Dutch parlance.

The documentary was a great success, and definitively added to Hazes' fame. Ironically, the documentary was not intended as a hagiography. For the aficionados, *Zij gelooft in mij* catered for the everlasting hunger for personal details from the private life of their star. For others, watching *Zij gelooft in mij* fed their camp interest in Hazes as a cult figure. And finally, in my interpretation, the documentary became a hit because its topic fitted the increasing public interest in 'Dutchness.' André's Dutchness, however, has always remained largely implicit, and is primarily a derivate of his authenticity and Amsterdam working-class background. 'Authentic' implies in this case 'uninfluenced from abroad,' while 'Amsterdam' could be read as a synecdoche for the Netherlands. In Hazes' biography, the widespread attention for *Zij gelooft in mij* is recounted as his 'third discovery' and Hazes' eventual embracement by the Dutch elite. The idea that nowadays the elite, too, 'loves Hazes' has become an established part of Hazes' image (cf. Salemink, 2006, pp. 19–23). Below I will argue that elite involvement still maintains an ironic distance, however.

Most important for my argument are the notoriety inherent in André Hazes' biography and his bodily appearance as a testimony of it. In present-day society,

self-destructive addictive behaviour like Hazes' is considered immoral. Its visible physical effects are in direct opposition to the prevailing 'culturally and political "correct" body' with its appearance of being 'lean, strong, androgynous, and physically "fit"' (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 25), and are consequently rejected. Through this 'body form' our 'core cultural values of autonomy, toughness, competitiveness, youth and self-control are readily manifest' (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 25). Rojek highlights the enormous significance of sport-celebrities in present-day society. They in particular 'underline the connection between self-discipline, training and material success as "examples to us all"' (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 37). But, although Hazes' bodily appearance was a far cry from the 'cultural and political correct body,' he made it to fame. In my view, his iconic status was partly based on being a counter-model, a proof that Scheper-Hughes and Lock's 'fat and flabby' (1987, p. 25) can also be successful, even against all odds.

André Hazes, the dead body

On the 22 September 2004, Hazes was admitted to hospital with high fever. He died of a heart attack the next morning. His unexpected death was major news. Almost immediately people arrived to lay flowers and tributes (e.g. cans of beer) at places related to his person, such as the entrance gate to his house in Vinkeveen, and Eddy's Bar, the café opposite the house where he was born. Here 'he used to come with his father as a boy.' On 24 September, fellow-singers and celebrity friends announced a free concert dedicated to Hazes, to take place in the ArenA on Monday 27 September. 'In accordance with Hazes' dying wish,' the concert would give all his fans the opportunity to say farewell to 'André,' whether watching television at home or in the ArenA itself, since *Hazes' body would be present*. Almost 50,000 people attended the event, titled 'Thank you, André' [*André Bedankt*], with a central role for Hazes' mourning family. The Dutch public broadcasting organisation TROS cancelled its regular program to broadcast the entire event live, drawing an audience of five million Dutch and one million Flemish from all echelons of society (see De Hart, 2005, pp. 32–33).

The above figures, however, should not be interpreted too easily by concluding that the entire audience shared the same appreciation for André Hazes and his music, or the same emotions at his demise. Factors that certainly will have contributed to the broad public attention were the participation of a large of number of other celebrities, including football icon Johan Cruijff; the previous intensive media attention for Hazes' death and the coming event; the curiosity at such an unprecedented event; and the entertainment offered. We should be equally careful in interpreting attendance at, or the watching of, the farewell ceremony as a sharing in a single meaning; as in any public ritual the audience consisted of a variety of what Baumann calls 'competing constituencies' (1992, p. 99), groups of not clearly delineated 'others' who seek 'to assert their agency' vis-à-vis each other (Mitchell, 2004, p. 58). In this perspective, public rituals appear as heterogenic performances, with equivocal messages and meanings.

Unlike other authors who have understood Hazes as a temporary symbol of national or cultural unity (Salemink, 2006; Venbrux, 2005), I will trace the political strategies in contesting the meaning and ownership of Hazes' body and legacy. My starting point will be the presence of Hazes' body at the farewell concert, as the controversy about the appropriateness of this is the first indication of the existence of separate parties.⁵

Presence of the body

The social life of André Hazes' dead body began with its transport from Hazes' house in Vinkeveen to the ArenA in Amsterdam. The journey was broadcast as a compilation, accompanied by Hazes' voice singing his song *Waarom* ('Why'). The convoy closely resembled a funeral procession: a hearse with Hazes in his coffin followed by several funeral cars with family and friends. The destination, however, was not the cemetery but the football stadium. A police motor escort and the (semi)live broadcast confirmed Hazes' celebrity status. When the body was about to arrive, images of the procession alternated with shots of the crowd waiting inside the stadium. Close-ups of the group of invited celebrities, seated on a separate floor on the field, interchanged with close-ups of the audience; some in a sad mood, many rather cheerful, clearly having a good time and looking forward to the concert, quite a few with a beer in their hands. Many André Hazes look-alikes appeared among the public. People had brought banners and posters with images of Hazes, or attributes related to his songs. On the whole, the atmosphere was not one of mourning as we know it; the stadium resounded with football slogans, *olé, olé*, alternating with 'André' slogans, *André bedankt, André bedankt*, and cries for beer, *biertje, biertje*.

The entrance of the procession into the stadium, the hearse preceded by the undertakers and flanked on each side by three pall-bearers, heralded the actual beginning of the event. Yet, whereas the arrival of the dead is usually met with respectful silence, the entrance of a star evokes cheers and applause. The arrival of Hazes, the dead star, evoked it all: silence, cheers, applause, whistling, lit lighters, Bengal light. No established code or etiquette exists for such ambiguous and exceptional occasions. However, when the (closed) coffin with Hazes' body was taken from the hearse, a profound silence filled the stadium. The silence lasted only a few seconds, then applause and slogans put an end to it. First, as if it were a funeral service, the undertaker escorted Hazes' wife, Rachel,⁶ their two children, Roxy and Dré Jr., and other family members to their seats, in the front row on the celebrity floor. Roxy carried a portrait of her father, which she (as the voice-over explained) would place by the coffin. Six male friends carried the coffin to the centre point, where it would remain during the entire concert. Every time the pall-bearers made a turn or another special move, people applauded. When the coffin was placed in position, Roxy put Hazes' portrait on the display table placed in front the coffin (which remained closed). With this significant act she gave Hazes, already physically present in his coffin, a face, turned towards his family, the assembled celebrities, and the audience.

But Hazes was looking back at the portrait as well: through the eyes of the many look-alikes in the auditorium, but also from the huge screens on which the image alternated with close-ups of the audience. The whole setting calls to mind Elias Canetti's (1973) description of the relationship between the arena and excitement:

The seats are arranged in tiers around the arena, so that everyone can see what is happening below. The consequence of this is that the crowd is seated opposite itself. Every spectator has a thousand in front of him, a thousand heads. As long as he is there all the others are there too; whatever excites him, excites them; and he sees it. They are seated some distance away from him, so that the differentiating details which make individuals of them are blurred; they all look alike and they all behave in a similar manner and he notices in them only the things which he himself is full of. Their visible excitement increases his own. There is no break in the crowd which sits like this, exhibiting itself to itself (p. 28).

Canetti's explanation helps to capture the presence of the audience in the Arena event. Yet, many spectators did not just 'look alike' in the sense intended by Canetti, i.e. all people looking alike when differentiating details 'blur.' Instead, many people in the Arena, men as well as women, had purposely come as 'look-alikes.' They had made a conscious effort to appear as their object of veneration, as performers rather than as mere spectators. 'The happening' did not only happen on the field, but on the seats as well. Some had come in the full outfit: black clothing, the 'André Hazes hat' and wearing sunglasses.⁷ Others had chosen for just one or two of these differentiating details. Altogether, they added to the effect of a physical omnipresence of 'André.'

Connerton, seeking to understand the imaginative persuasiveness of commemorative ceremonies, points to the significance of what he calls 'the rhetoric of re-enactment' (1989, p. 65). This rhetoric works through three modes of articulation: calendrical repetition, verbal repetition and gestural repetition. The André Hazes commemorative ceremony in particular demonstrates the significance of gestural mimesis in relation to the dead: 'the idea of representation as a re-presenting, as causing to reappear that which has disappeared' (Connerton, 1989, p. 69). Important is Connerton's emphasis on ritual 'as not a type of the symbolic representation, but as a species of the performative' (Connerton, 1989, p. 70). And for performances to be persuasive, people 'must be habituated to those performances. This habituation is to be found (...) in the bodily substrate of the performance' (Connerton, 1989, pp. 70–71). In the case of the André Hazes commemorative ceremony, the André Hazes fans were its bodily substrate. The André Hazes commemorative ceremony was also a re-enactment of an André Hazes concert, which enlarged the possibility of tapping directly into their bodily social memory as fans. The collective singing of André Hazes songs by the performing celebrities and the audience (singing being a bodily engagement par excellence) once more enhanced the persuasive power of the whole occasion. But, despite all this, the mimicking fans were present here with a different

commitment, a different interest in prolonging Hazes' presence, than the others: the curious, seekers of entertainment, journalists, stars and members of the elite.

Dispersal of the body

The next phase of the social life of André Hazes' dead body began after its cremation. Hazes was cremated in private, the day after the concert. However, the disposal of the ashes would take place in a sequence of, again, unusual public commemorative events, almost one year later. The remains of celebrities have a particular potential for, what I have called earlier, 'serial disposal' (Stengs, 2008). For an understanding of the significance of Hazes' ashes in these commemorative events, I will elaborate on the idea of serial disposal as well as on the relationship between cremation and ritual. The latter subject is extensively dealt with in particular by Douglas J. Davies. Davies starts out from the work of Robert Hertz, who, based on his fieldwork in Indonesia, argued that 'as for cremation, it is usually neither a final act, nor sufficient in itself; it calls for a later and complementary rite' (Hertz quoted in Davies, 2002, p. 14). This principle of 'the double nature of cremation' (Davies, 2002, p. 27) is universal. The remaining ashes need to be dealt with separately.⁸ In addition, Davies observed that people increasingly preferred a disposal of the cremation remains in a private ritual, without involvement or assistance by (religious) professionals, and at a personally chosen location, usually of personal significance for the deceased (Davies, 2002, pp. 29–32). Although he made this observation with the UK in mind, it also holds true for the Netherlands. In the words of Davies, 'cremation has introduced this optional rite (. . .). [It] marks a new ritual process in the modern Western world, largely undocumented' (Davies, 2002, p. 29). This potential for personalised, new ritual represents one aspect in an explanation for the sequence of rituals that dealt with Hazes' remains. Yet we need to bring in two more elements to grasp these rituals in full: mass media and the potential of mediatised identities to generate ritual.

Cremating a body implies changing it from a larger singularity into a multiplicity of small parts. Each particle of those ashes has the potential to represent the whole of which it was once a part, i.e. the 'person.' This multiplication allows for multiple disposals; the enactment of a series of rituals, separate in space and time, with one body. Therefore, one might also speak of 'serial disposal.' This observation holds true for anyone's body. Although many people prefer to dispose of all ashes in one location, multiple disposals are becoming increasingly popular (cf. Prendergast, Hockey, & Kellaher, 2006). When it comes to the ashes of celebrities, whose identities are media constructions, the multiplicity of the ashes matches, remarkably well, the multiplicity that characterises the media representations of a celebrity's body. Each subsequent disposal ritual generates its own media attention, and consequently prolongs the celebrity's mediatised presence. In other words, 'serial disposal' fits the serialised nature of the media attention given to celebrities.⁹ Hazes' wife Rachel (or other initiators behind her)

understood perfectly well the potential of ‘serial disposal’ as a means to extend Hazes’ mediated presence. As the driving force behind the initiatives, this meant by implication continued media attention for herself and the children.

It had been Hazes’ specific wish that his ashes should be launched by rocket into the North Sea. And this was done, at least for the greater part of his ashes. First, however, several smaller portions were disposed of in different ways:

André Hazes’ disposal

Episode 1

On Hazes’ first birthday after his death (30 June 2005), Rachel, Roxy and Dré Jr. all had tattoos placed on their wrists, with some of Hazes’ ashes mixed into the ink ‘as a symbol of their eternal interconnectedness.’¹⁰ Rachel: ‘André lives in us, which gives a very good feeling.’¹¹ Roxy: ‘I am very proud of this. This can never be removed, and when I eventually die, I will take my father with me into my coffin.’¹²

Episode 2

Some friends of Hazes also had themselves tattooed with Hazes’ ashes. Fearing to be suspected of homosexuality for carrying a man’s name on their arms, they had the tattooist write André in Chinese characters.

Episode 3

Rachel and the children buried a small portion of the ashes in the garden of the House of Blues in Orlando, Florida, ‘a favourite place of André.’¹³

Figure 2. The unveiling ceremony of the André Hazes statue, 23 September 2005. At the left, mayor Job Cohen with Rachel’s book. At the right, Rachel and children. Photograph by the author.

Episode 4

Rachel divided a part of the ashes into three small urns, so that she, Roxy and Dré Jr. could all have their own personal urn.

Episode 5

One rocket with ashes was fired from Noordwijk aan Zee. This ceremony was conducted by Hazes' first wife, her daughter fathered by Hazes and the son and relatives from Hazes' second marriage. Firing of the rocket took place in secrecy, but was publicised the next day in the newspapers.

Episode 6

Divided between 10 rockets, the major part of Hazes' ashes was fired from the Hook of Holland, in a ceremony on the beach (Rachel: 'a star among the stars').¹⁴ The firing was conducted by Rachel, Roxy and Dré Jr. The ceremony formed the closing performance of the commemorative concert held on the first anniversary of his death (23 September 2005) in Rotterdam Ahoy Hall. After the last song, the scene switched from the stage to the large screens in the hall, on which the audience could follow the firing of the ashes. The whole event (the concert and the ceremony on the beach) was integrally broadcast on television.

On this culminating day of the disposal rituals, André Hazes was resurrected: at the Amsterdam Albert Cuyp Street Market, Rachel had a statue of Hazes unveiled. Hazes' body now had definitively overcome temporality and was ready as a site for pilgrimage (cf. Verdery, 1999, p. 5). Before I address this topic, I want to show how closely Hazes' disposal and resurrection were interwoven into media productions.

The preparations for the concert, the making of the statue, the tattooing, the burying of the ashes in Orlando, the personal urns; Rachel shared them all with the public in a real-life soap series. The soap, titled 'Typically André' [*Typisch André*], functioned as a build-up to 'André Hazes Commemoration Day': the day of the concert, the rockets and the unveiling. These events, each in turn, all received ample media attention. Another topic of 'Typically André' was Rachel's writing of Hazes' biography, titled 'On behalf of André' [*Namens André*]. Rachel presented the first copy to Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen, after unveiling the statue together with her children and Hazes' discoverer Johnny Kraaykamp Sr.

According to Rachel, it was all done for the fans.¹⁵ Yet, during the unveiling ceremony, I overheard much disapproval of Rachel Hazes among them. Many were annoyed by her appropriation of Hazes. Most of the money for the statue had been donated by fans, but now they were kept at bay by crush barriers and security staff, to protect Rachel from a crowd that had not come. It took over an hour before the audience was allowed to approach the statue.

‘On behalf of André,’ Rachel placed herself in the limelight. In this respect Rachel is a typical example of what Rojek has coined a *celetoid*, a person with ‘a media-generated, compressed, concentrated form of attributed celebrity’ (2001, p. 18). In other words, such celebrity does not stem from any special skill or talent. ‘Celetoids,’ according to Rojek, ‘are the accessories of cultures organised around mass communication and staged authenticity’ (2001, pp. 20–21). One important characteristic of celetoids is their evanescence. After their brief moments of fame they rapidly disappear from the public consciousness (Rojek, 2001, pp. 21–22). Indeed, without Hazes’ body and curriculum vitae, the media would never have shown any interest in Rachel. Their attention only revived when ritual spotlighted Hazes’ body. Rachel may now have almost disappeared from the media, but she has left one concrete, material legacy: Hazes’ statue. The interest in the statue did not fade, and after the unveiling it began a life of its own.¹⁶

André Hazes, the afterlife

In my analysis of Hazes’ body, I follow Verdery’s suggestion to extend dead bodies to their statues. They are ‘dead people cast in bronze or carved in stone’ that symbolise specific people. But statues *are* also their bodies, arresting the portrayed’s decay and even time itself (Verdery, 1999, p. 5). Rachel had taken care that Hazes’ statue would represent his body as closely as possible. His appearance, including a detailed watch, jewellery and microphone, and his posture, singing seated on a bar stool, make the statue almost a three-dimensional photograph in bronze. The statue is exactly life-size, which has the unintended

Figure 3. André Hazes fans posing with their hero. Photo taken at the second anniversary of Hazes’ death, 23 September 2006. Photograph by the author.

Figure 4. André Hazes fans at the commemorative ceremony of 23 September 2006. Photograph by the author.

Figure 5. A typical André Hazes look-alike, complete with beer and cigarette. Photo taken at the fourth anniversary of Hazes' death, September 23, 2008. Photograph by the author.

effect of it appearing somewhat too small. In summation, the statue is not meant to be an artistic interpretation of Hazes, but is meant to be him.

The statue is appreciated by many fans. When the crush barriers and safety guards finally made way on the day of the unveiling, the statue became theirs immediately. Since then, fans come to lay flowers and André Hazes attributes at the statue, especially on the anniversaries of Hazes' birth and death.¹⁷ Virtually all have their pictures taken with the statue, as posthumous material evidence of their relationship with Hazes. Significantly, many of these fans mimic the singer by wearing Hazes attributes, or embody him through a tattooed portrait, or through wearing André Hazes T-shirts.¹⁸ Elite appreciation of Hazes, on the contrary, does not involve bodily identification through mimesis or tattoos, as the commemorations made clearly visible. For the 'true' fans, loving Hazes implies more than just enjoying his music. Their practices aim at establishing a direct contact, a 'palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' (Taussig, 1993, p. 21). Their bodily performances do not only maintain

Figure 6. André Hazes portrait tattoo, Hazes' signature underneath. Photograph by the author.

the presence of Hazes' body, but also are an act of social differentiation. Benjamin has already observed the urge 'to get hold of something by means of its likeness' (Benjamin quoted in Taussig, 1993, p. 20). As we have seen, the 'something' Hazes' fans try to get hold of by mimicking their idol is not Hazes' physical body, but his social body. In my interpretation, this social body is an emancipatory construct, contesting the exclusion of those who fail to comply with the dominant body politic. In this light, embodying André Hazes enables the performers to live in an, albeit transitory, world in which people like them matter and may be successful irrespective of background or bodily appearance.

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Notes

- [1] The Prince Consort died in 2002. The Queen Mother and her consort both passed away in 2004.
- [2] For examples of newspaper quotes expressing this disdain, see De Hart, 2005, p. 89, and Venbrux, 2005, p. 73.
- [3] Hazes' own experiences of his 'embodied self' (cf. Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 7) are not part of this analysis.
- [4] In tribute to this very special supporter, one seat would remain empty forever.
- [5] The next section is based on the broadcast of 27 September 2004.
- [6] Rachel Hazes was Hazes' third wife and his wife at the time of his death.
- [7] Ironically, Hazes' outfit had little to do with Dutchness, but was American-inspired through his identification with blues singers.
- [8] Davies actually says 'widely applicable to modern cremation practices' and makes a distinction between 'secondary rites' and 'ashes ... simply scattered or thrown away' (Davies, 2002, p. 27). However, my understanding of this principle of the double nature of cremation is based on the assumption that the 'disposal' of a body is always a ritualised practice, whether ashes are

'simply scattered or thrown away' or dealt with in a more elaborate, formalised, culture-specific 'secondary rite.'

- [9] This argument, based on the case of André Hazes, has been developed earlier in a more limited form (see Stengs, 2008).
- [10] *De Telegraaf* (2005, August 13).
- [11] *De Telegraaf* (2005, August 13).
- [12] On behalf of André. *Namens André*, 4 September 2005.
- [13] *De Telegraaf* (2005, August 13).
- [14] *De Telegraaf* (2005, September 24).
- [15] *De Stentor* (2005, July 9).
- [16] While this article was being completed, Hazes' presence was prolonged in yet another way. In commemoration of his day of birth, Rachel organised a concert entitled 'Together with Dré in Concert' [*Samen met Dré in Concert*]. At this event (26 May 2008) and broadcast (2 weeks later), celebrated *levenslied* performers sang their favorite André Hazes songs 'in duet' with Hazes on screen, the audience joining them in a mass karaoke, guided by the subtitles on the screen. The concert, of course in the ArenA, began with screen shots of Hazes entering a white stretched limousine which drives him to his ArenA jubilee concert, and these shots were followed by the actual entrance of the same car into the ArenA escorted by men in black. Although the escorts were security guards this time, the scene closely paralleled the entrance of Hazes' body at the farewell concert in 2004. When the doors opened, Roxy and Dré Jr stepped out to open the concert with 'It is Cold without You' [*Het is koud zonder jou*]. From a perspective of ritual, the opening scenes may be interpreted as an attempted transference of Hazes' identity as a singer to his children.
- [17] André Hazes' attributes are generally bottles, cans and glasses of Heineken and items referring to specific songs.
- [18] André Hazes T-shirts are black or white decorated with his name and/or portrait.

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