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Experiencing The Space: Visiting Cemeteries On All Saints' Day and an Ordinary Day

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Abstract

This paper is a description of collaborative research that was done together with students during the class "Contemplative Sociology. Experiencing Self, No-Self and the Lifeworld." The goal of the research was to introduce the students to the contemplative methods that could be used to research lived experiences and the vision of the lifeworld through contemplation of the mind, bodily sensations, and emotions. A project was started on experiencing the cemetery space. The space for experiencing was chosen to sensitize the students to concerns (such as death, religious holidays, everyday life, suffering, etc.) that could be investigated from the first-person perspective by using contemplation as an alternative to survey-sociological methods, psychological methods and ethnography. The students learned the contemplative techniques of meditation, body awareness, self-observation, and self-description to face their concerns, including the ultimate ones. However, the main concern was the role of the mind, body and emotions in cognition and creating the mood.

Keywords

contemplation, grounded theory, lived experiences, emotions, bodily sensations, cemetery, self-descriptions

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This paper is a description of collaborative research that was done together with students during the class “Contemplative Sociology. Experiencing Self, No-Self and the Lifeworld.” The goal of the research was to introduce the students to the contemplative methods that could be used to research lived experiences and the vision of the lifeworld through contemplation of the mind, bodily sensations, and emotions. A project was started on experiencing the cemetery space. The space for experiencing was chosen to sensitize the students to concerns (such as death, religious holidays, everyday life, suffering, etc.) that could be investigated from the first-person perspective by using contemplation as an alternative to survey-sociological methods, psychological methods and ethnography. The students learned the contemplative techniques of meditation, body awareness, self- observation, and self-description to face their concerns, including the ultimate ones. However, the main concern was the role of the mind, body and emotions in cognition and creating the mood.

Keywords: contemplation, grounded theory, lived experiences, emotions, bodily sensations, cemetery, self-descriptions

Introduction

The space of cemeteries has received the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, historians and geographers (Dethlefsen & Deetz, 1966, Kniffen, 1967). The main interest of the investigators concentrated on burial practices. However, necrogeography also developed and it researched the spatial aspects of graves, the choice of cemetery sites and aesthetics (Ball, 1977; Harvey, 2006), as well as social status after death (Kephart, 1950). The cemetery space could also be perceived as a cultural representation of common patterns and values in a society, and changes in the culture (Francaviglia, 1971; Korczyński, 2016). Metaphorically, they are a cultural text. However, there has been no research on how visitors to cemeteries experience or feel the space. I wanted to investigate these aspects that are generally omitted in other types of research—the experiencing of the cemetery space by visitors.

I have been inspired by McGrane (1993a, 1993b) to teach students self-observation and self- perception, the mind’s work, and to experience the phenomena in the lifeworld, and to do all of these things by experimenting with the use of contemplative methods of research. Some contemplation practices could also be used during qualitative research, when the researcher is taught to be more conscious and mindful of each activity that he or she performs in the field (Janesick, 2015; Konecki, 2018); we tried to do the same by using grounded theory methodology in a constructivist and contemplative way (Bentz & Giorgino, 2016; Charmaz, 2006, 2008, 2017; Davis & Breede, 2015; Giorgino, 2015). Preparing for research might also be connected with bodily practices (Orr, 2002), which we tried to do in our research. We can obtain more knowledge from practicing and personally experiencing some phenomena rather than getting it only from the scientific literature. The lived experiences that come from

sociological experiments become the basis of reflection and elaborating some sociological topics, for example, the concept of trust or the relevance of basic assumptions in the lifeworld that we live by (Garfinkel, 1967; Goode, 1994).

If we want to teach students about lived experiences and the lifeworld, we should also concentrate on emotions. We tried to do it by performing research on experiencing the cemetery space during the 1st of November Christian holiday, All Saints' Day, and during an ordinary day. Feelings and emotions are part of the perception of the lifeworld. Research into feelings and emotions is, at the same time, an investigation into thought. We cannot separate these two spheres. They come together. The mind and body should be researched in one complete research act that does not separate the mind, body feelings and emotions as it is practiced in contemplative studies of lifeworld phenomena (Bentz & Giorgino, 2016; Konecki, 2018) and the existential sociology:

Practical wisdom is right in seeing man as fundamentally a feeling being. We live for feelings. Feelings lie behind, are the foundation of and the goal of, all thought. Feelings pervade thought, are fused with thought, and at the extreme, destroy thought. But feeling without thought is blind. (Douglas & Johnson, 1978, pp. 14-15)

The subject is thrown into the situation and the limits of the situation (historical, linguistic and socio-cultural); they are the features that are deciphered by the subject, who is going to see the situation in a particular way and who is going to choose how they see and act. They are free to choose their own final perspective on the situation and on acting.

Psychological research through experiments shows cultural differences may be noticed when people think and contemplate death. For example, when some East Asians living in the USA face "mortality salience" (when thoughts of death begin to dominate) they start also to think more about enjoying life than European Americans (Ma-Kellams & Blascovich, 2012). The authors found that "some European Americans focused more on defending and affirming the self than the Asian Americans, who were more oriented to defending other people (Ma-Kellams & Blascovich, 2011). Visiting the space of a cemetery could inspire someone to face a "mortality salience" moment directly. I would like to show the reaction by analyzing the experiences of it directly in a more natural space than a psychological laboratory or in survey research.¹ Thinking about death happens in some situations in everyday life. It can be the death of the close person, or celebrity, or just the visit to the cemetery. The emotions, body reactions, and thoughts directly generated in such situations give more clues on how the mind works when facing the image of death than in laboratory or survey context when the mind uses mainly the cultural scripts to interpret death-related situations.

Generally, the visits to the cemetery were difficult experiences for the students but very educational. They felt uncomfortable, and sometimes they felt fear and distress. They were unaccustomed to thinking about deceased people and death in such direct experience when they visited a cemetery. Generally, the place was unusual for them and disturbed everyday routine life and common thinking, which focused on mundane activities (such as study, work, or leisure activities) usually far removed from matters of death. Contemporary culture creates walls so that we do not perceive death directly, in language, architecture and customs (Gorer, 1955). Euphemisms for death are common, and organizing the Dying Matters Awareness Week in

¹ During the survey, the questions asked are the stimulus to think about death. Facing the "silence mortality," for example, is a reaction to the question and is mainly cognitively elaborated. (see the survey results on dying matters: <https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/dying-matters-death-and-dying-survey-3/>; Retrieved on 10.10.2017)

Britain² is designed to facilitate more open communication about death.³ I hope that, with our research, the class could help our students in these matters, too.

The lived experience of recollecting relatives and friends was not easy for the students, especially when they were asked to describe it and later reflect on it when coding the texts and writing some contemplative memos about the coding and described experiences. However, I wanted to include their suffering in the research process and in the research report (Hansen & Trank, 2016, p. 10), and I asked them to write about their experiences openly and sincerely.

About Me

My research interest is in contemplative studies, that is, in describing and analyzing the living experiences of people in diverse situations. The method of self-observation and description was trained and practiced by me. I am a hatha-yoga instructor and mindfulness practitioner. I try to use a contemplative approach in my qualitative research that connects the observation of emotions, body feelings, and thoughts during everyday life activities in many situations (Giorgino, 2015; Konecki, 2016). At the time of this collaborative research, I had just finished writing a book on contemplative studies (Konecki, 2018). The research connected teaching methods of qualitative and contemplative research and applying them in this real investigation. It was also a way to teach the students to be more attentive and mindful of their own emotions, body feelings, and perceptions in the research situation. I was active in coding according to grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006, 2008), I wrote memos on coding, and I reflected on the data. That memos become part of the analytical report that I present here.

Method

In my investigation, my students and I wanted to search for the differences in experiencing the same space (cemetery) during a church holiday and an ordinary day. We wanted to experience personally how culturally-regulated activities are sensed by the body and what kind of emotionality is aroused when visiting the same place but at different times. Therefore, we planned a visit to the cemeteries during two different days; one was a church holiday, All Saints' Day (1st November, 2017) and the other was another day chosen by each student (in December 2017 and/or January 2018). All Saints Day was chosen because it is an important Catholic holiday in Poland. This is also a national holiday. People go to their hometowns, this day, where their family members are buried. The whole families gather around the graves to honor the memory of their ancestors or friends. The crowds flock to cemeteries. A Mass for the Dead is celebrated on the catholic cemeteries. The other, an ordinary day (not a holiday) was chosen to see how the context of time influences the feelings and to compare the atmosphere and feelings connected with thoughts about dead and death during those two days.

² Dying Matters Coalition is a social initiative set up in 2009 to help in conversations about dying, death, and bereavement. Many institutions, as hospices, hospital and care homes, also used the experiences from this initiative. The members of Coalition are groups, institutions, and private individuals representing a range of faiths (<https://www.dyingmatters.org/overview/about-us>; Retrieved on 04.08.2020).

³ A British survey from 2011 revealed: "The research also found the majority of people have used euphemisms as a way of avoiding using the words "death" and "dying" when talking about the death of someone they knew – the most common euphemisms were "passed away" (57%), "deceased" (23%) and "kicked the bucket" (20%). 17% had used the term "popped their clogs" and 10% used "brown bread." One in five people don't think it's appropriate to use euphemisms when talking about the death of someone they know." (<https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/dying-matters-death-and-dying-survey-3/>; Retrieved on 10.10. 2017)

Setting

The research was with 32 students of sociology who were participants of a course that I gave at University of Lodz (Poland) in 2017/18 entitled “Contemplative Sociology. Experiencing Self, No-Self and the Lifeworld.” The class took place in the fifth semester of a bachelor’s degree and was conducted in English. The 18 students agreed to participate in the project of auto-observation and to sharing their reports. There were twelve woman and 5 men that made the auto-observation and reports. They agreed for sharing the data in publications. The rule of informed consent was met. They agreed twice for participation in the project, once during the class and later by mail, that they sent to me. The names of the students have been kept anonymous. If they did not agree they could still be successful in the project and get credit.

Before the research, I thought that the situations at different observation times might be dissimilar, and that the perceptions should be different. The inspirations come from a situational analysis by Adele Clarke, where the direct and extended context could be considered as the most important condition for taking a particular perspective and proceed with actions. The situation provokes also different kinds of narrations that are used to describe the context (Clarke, 2005) and also different kinds of feelings (Douglas & Johnson 1978). The students did self-observations and auto-descriptions of their thoughts, emotions and body feelings while at the cemeteries. They were taught how to do it, and they also had instruction for the self-observations and auto- descriptions. They were advised to write the protocols from their visits immediately after leaving the cemeteries. I used here the guidelines for self-observation and auto-reporting from contemplative methodological inspirations: “Self-observation is a technique of concentration on the work of the mind, to notice how it works and what kind of thoughts it produces at the moment, and how the body reacts to the incentives coming “from outside,” that is what kinds of emotions appear and how they are felt by the individual in certain situations. Self-observation help us to contemplate and reconstruct the main features of phenomena, objects, or situations” (Konecki, 2018, pp. 229-231; see also Giorgino, 2015).

I also asked them to write poetry that could express their feelings from the visit to the cemetery because I am convinced, as are many other researchers and philosophers, that poetry can express feelings, and even interpretations of the perceived world, very concisely (Janesick, 2015, p. 89; Bentz, 1995, p. 49; Heidegger, 2000). We wanted to obtain first-person knowledge and later explicate it by coding using procedures of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss, 1987), and to reflect on them using the phenomenological perspective to understand the phenomenon from the first-person perspective (as the students understood it) and the second-person perspectives (as the teacher-researcher elaborated the themes; see Bentz, 1995, 2016; Hycner, 1985; Rehoric & Bentz, 2008). So, after the first visits to the cemetery, we analyzed the self-reports, coding them writing the methodological and contemplative memos. We used the grounded theory method for coding empirical materials (Charmaz, 2006, 2008, 2016). We coded also the description of situations and tried to understand the situations by writing the big pictures and later theoretical memos (Clarke, 2005) And we have prepared for the second visit basing on the experiences from the first. After the second visit once again, we analyzed the reports and finally compared the constructed categories with the ones that appeared after the first visit. Writing memos was a way to reflect on the categories and their connections.

I present the results of these observations and self-observations in this paper. The perception of the situation at the cemeteries and the self-considerations were described in auto-reports according to the instructions given by the researcher (see examples of such instructions in Konecki, 2018, pp. 229-230; see also Davis & Breede, 2015, p. 91). The lived experiences were described as they appeared at the moment of experiencing the situation and how it was remembered later. The participants of the project could see whether their experience of All

Saints' Day was authentic and came directly from their consciousness or if it was filtered by cultural assumptions. Were their feelings their own or were they forced by the situational limits? Based on their observations, we were able to see if they had had some ultimate considerations (e.g., if they could feel the unpredictability of the time of death).

The students were prepared to make the auto-observation and self-descriptions through the meditative practices that I did in class. I tried to teach the students concentration and a more individual and clean perception of the everyday lifeworld. Sitting meditation was one of the tactics to learn these capabilities (Konecki, 2016) along with some hatha-yoga practice (Douglass, 2011a, 2011b; Khalsa & Butzer, 2016; Konecki, 2018, pp. 201-220; Morley, 2001; Orr, 2002). I advised the students not to think but to concentrate on their breathing, and when thoughts came, they should observe them and go back to counting and observing their breath. Generally, they were positive; however, sometimes, some students felt uncomfortable during the breathing exercises or the meditation. Below is an impression of one of the students from the preparatory meditative practice:

The strangest thing in the meditation for me is that I see myself then. I'm standing in the middle of a white room, which, in fact, has neither walls nor floors. At the same time, I'm standing in this room and looking at myself from the third-person perspective. I feel calm; I am not disturbed by any thoughts, although I feel them as they revolve around me – I can't catch any of them. And so, I sit and meditate, and nothing happens in my head. It's a strange feeling, but very pleasant. (D.W.)

The students were also asked to practice hatha-yoga to prepare for experiencing the coding and contemplation of reflection on the empirical protocols with a clear mind and relaxed body, which is connected with the mind's work. Here are the feelings of one of the students after the hatha-yoga practice:

I really liked the feelings after finishing the exercises. I felt relaxed. Suddenly, positive energy came to me. I had the impression that I had cleared my mind of all negative emotions. I looked at the problems of everyday life from another side. I had a sense of inner strength. I wanted to deal with things that until recently seemed very difficult to achieve. Yoga aroused only positive emotions. I think that from now I will do such exercises several times a week. (H. S.)

Later, the students coded the data (auto-descriptions) according to grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006, 2008, 2017; Strauss, 1987) during which they wrote contemplative memos on how they felt during the self-observation as well as descriptions of their feelings; similar tasks were performed during the coding of the auto-descriptions. The use of grounded theory methodology was not aimed at creating a general theory but at categorizing data through coding (open coding and selective coding). The inspiration for not reading much about the subject of the research before going into the field comes from the spirit of grounded theory. The methodology used in the research was more contemplative, to understand the lived experiences and their connection with the situational features, such as space and time, rather than directed at producing a formal theory. It is more a reflective inquiry that uses basic grounded theory procedures to order the data and start a reflection on the lived experience of the cemetery place and to create situated generalizations.

Results

First Visits – Normative Thinking

Emotions and body feelings in the frame of normative thinking.

The participants of the project experienced many feelings and thoughts, which they observed and later reported. **They could see the connection between the body and emotions** (“I could feel that calmness in my whole body.” M.D.) However, the dominant emotion was **sadness and melancholy**. We can observe that the place and the time (All Saints’ Day) evoke particular emotions and create a special mood (see also the paragraph *The atmosphere of the place. How does mood arise?* in Results). Mood consists of emotions, and it is connected with a special kind of thinking and perception; the mood could be reflective or normative, depending on what kind of thinking dominates in the place and in the concrete time (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The features of the place and the time create the conditions for this mood (the emotional atmosphere): the candles, the sight of old and new flowers, the smell of the flowers, lights, the weather, the people, their faces, the crying, etc. The mood could be discovered during some activities and self-observation. It is already in us; however, it is only activated under certain conditions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

First visits to the cemetery, on 1st November

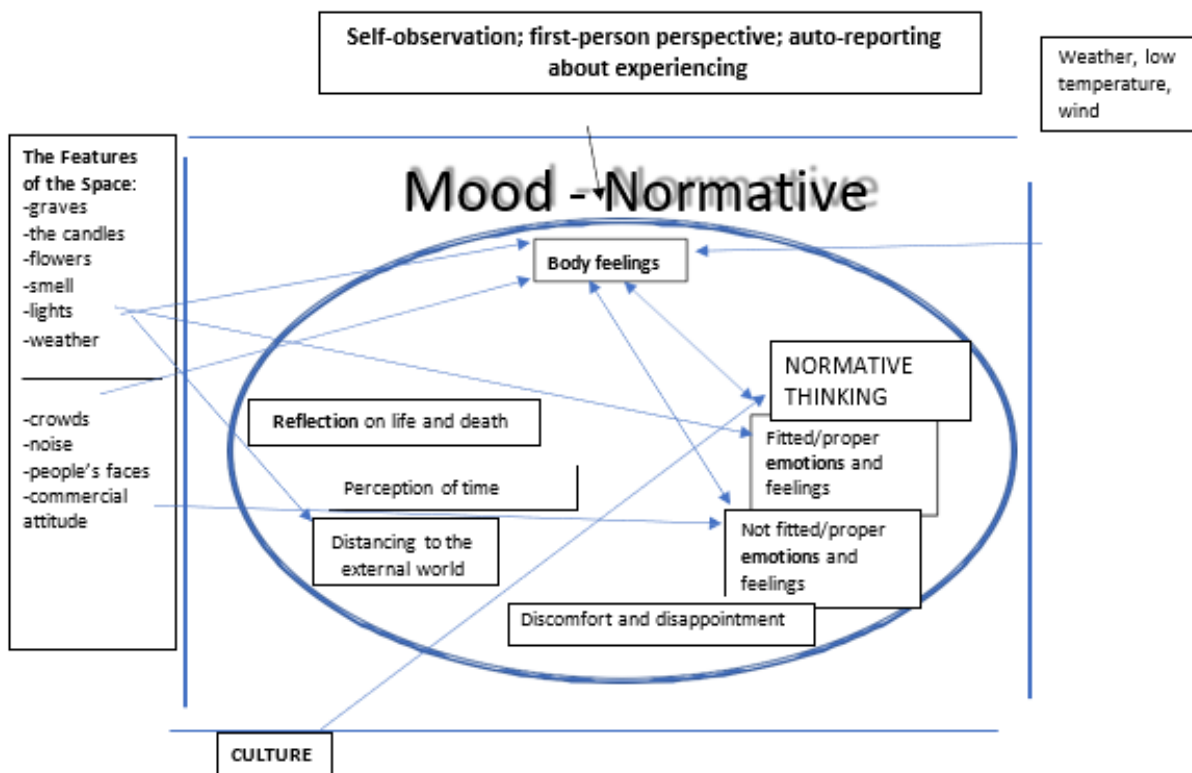
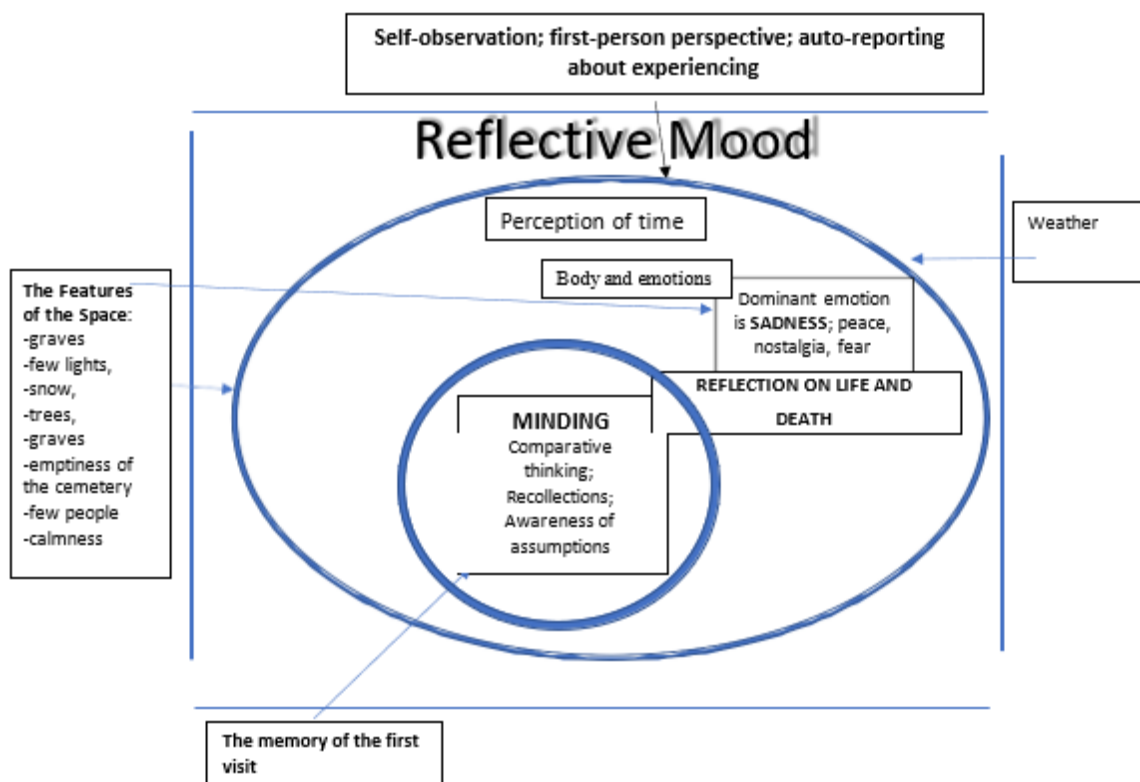


Figure 2
Second visits to the cemetery



The mood is also connected with the perception of time. In the description below, we can see how the perception of time changed and was felt in the body as a calmness: “Time started to flow differently, and I could feel that calmness in my whole body.” (M.D.)

What was interesting in the perception structure of the place was distancing to the everyday life that was concentrated beyond the place. It is like a “natural attitude epoché” when we stop doubting in the existence of the outer world (Schutz, 1962, p. 229) we try to bracket *fundamental anxiety* as we bracket it in the theoretical contemplation (Schutz, 1962, p. 245, 249) to concentrate on the plans and activities here and now. The place (its features), together with the visitor’s perception of it, produces such a *natural epoché*, when they try to forget about the external world and concentrate on the here and now: “I think that it was really great that I could suddenly push away all those unnecessary thoughts about my daily life and just focus on that special atmosphere.” (M.D.) We put the accent on the reality of the cemetery (Schutz, 1962, p. 231) and tune ourselves to its mood. Cemeteries seem to be an enclave of the everyday lifeworld when we are still in the world of working (Schutz, 1962, p. 245); however, we try to isolate ourselves from it. There is a semiotic asymmetry between the conceptual pair of “life” and “death” in everyday life discourse (Zerubavel, 2018, pp. 10-11). The term death is less marked and rarely conspicuous, in contrast to the use of the term of life. A Google search for the English terms death and life yield 3,020,000,000 and 11,690,000,000 results, respectively; in the Polish language the results are 84,100,000 and 291,000,000 (Google search 20.08.2019). The marked and unmarked regions of our phenomenal world indicate the relevance not only of the words but also our selective attention to perceive the world.

Many students/participants of the research experienced the visit to the cemetery emotionally. They felt irritated by the behaviors of visitors that do not fit the expected atmosphere of the day. The normative thinking started to work at the level of emotions. November 1st is a day to commemorate the dead. Families visit their ancestors. They also feel sadness coming from the memories of their ancestors (e.g., grandparents) or the forgotten graves that are not cared for and are in ruins. The sadness was **a fitted emotion** to the normative expectations of what should be felt during that day:

Next to the grave of my grandparents was a very neglected grave because no one visited the people resting in it, and every year the grave grew increasingly dilapidated. This is very depressing for me because there are many well-maintained graves around this grave, which someone constantly cares about, or only for this holiday. My family often lights a candle on this abandoned grave, but despite this, seeing it constantly makes me feel sad that life is passing. I think that maybe all the family members are old and sick and can no longer go to visit this grave. Perhaps they already have their own tombs, or maybe they just live too far to visit loved ones, even such important ones. (M.B.)

During the first visits to the cemetery on November 1st, the students describe the **congestion in the parking lots**. They stressed the crowds at the cemetery and that they would prefer to go on another, ordinary day. The cemetery was a loud place. One of the students had the impression of chaos observing the behaviors of the visitors, and the feeling of irritation: “The cemetery was very crowded, and everyone behaved chaotically. They behaved however they wanted and talked loudly. It was annoying to me.” (M. B.). The feeling of irritation also referred to the behaviors during the mass at the cemetery. These emotions were not fitted to the normative expectations of what should be felt during a visit to the cemetery on November 1st.

On this day some students visited as many as four cemeteries. The season and weather were also stressed. The **feeling of the body’s temperature** was overwhelming. The body becomes an actor during the visit:

Since it is autumn, the cemetery’s paths were covered with colorful leaves that fell with every gust of wind. Among the graves grew many old trees. The trees were stripped of leaves, and the wind could be heard. The weather was ugly. The wind was cold and so was I... So, I did not feel anything in my body except the feeling of cold. Despite my warm clothes, I was cold because I was attending a long Mass that took place at the cemetery. During this Mass, I stood next to the grave of my dead grandparents and prayed for their souls. (M. B.)

However, the students also experienced **feelings of beauty** at the cemetery, in particular, in the evening when the candles, against the dark night sky, create a special atmosphere:

At that time – All Saints’ Day – the cemetery seemed like a scary place. But in the evening and at night, the cemetery looks beautiful for me. From a distance, I can see the glimmering candles that create one glow. Although it is already dark, many people still visit graves. It is a beautiful sight for me, especially as we return home with our family in the evening and pass the cemeteries, which are very impressive with their brightness, and encourage people to visit their dead relatives. (M. B.)

The feeling of **disappointment** also happened on this day, and it is connected with normative thinking about the holiday. This shows the perception of not fitted behaviors to the spirit of the holiday:

This year's All Saints' Day liberated me from many emotions, from happiness to sadness and anger. I was a bit disappointed with people that, in my perception, cannot celebrate that day. After arriving home, I was thinking about the meaning of the existence of such a holiday. As a result, I think we should focus on the spiritual side rather than on the visual side. (P.N.)

Normative thinking

Cultures regulate the experiencing of emotions; emotions and feelings should be adjusted to the time and place (Hochschild, 1983). Normative thinking appeared and the participants knew how they should feel and what proper feelings at a certain place and time were. There was acceptance of the proper behaviors (what is considered socially proper behavior at the cemetery and sanctioned) and respect for the people commemorating their deceased relatives:

I was watching people standing in front of their family graves talking about daily things and not really focusing on the meaning of that day. Because of that, I felt sad thinking that they are missing something, but on the other hand, I felt happiness because there were lots of people respecting those who had passed away. I know they only went because going to the cemetery on November 1st is obligatory for all Catholics, but despite that, there was a nice, warm feeling inside of me that there are lots of people who remember those who are not alive anymore. (P.N.)

The normative dimension of feelings was dominant, and thoughts about different motives for coming to the cemetery other than commemorating the deceased disturbed the visitor. When they noticed improper behavior, they felt some discomfort. The discomfort could also be aroused if the students noticed improper feelings in themselves:

I was trying to focus more on my emotions, but it was really hard because there was a lot of people talking around me. It would have been much better to concentrate in silence, but I know that for many people, that day is also a nice opportunity to just be with those who are still alive. I think that because of this, the meaning of this day was somehow gone and I could not feel it properly through my body, even though the melancholy was in my heart for the whole day... Maybe this day should be more meaningful, and I know that for many people it is, especially when the people who passed away were really important for them, but for me, it was just like a normal visit. I am not saying that my grandparents were not important to me, but I guess it was different since I do not remember them. (M.D.)

The self-observation of feelings was sometimes difficult; the students were not very focused because many people visit the cemetery on this day. Family members meet at the graves and talk, and it is a chance for family get-togethers. Sometimes, such meetings happen only once a year.

The normativity of the holiday, which is culturally and socially prescribed, was sometimes **juxtaposed with proper behavior and proper feelings on the spot by the narrator**. The normativity shows that there is an obligation to be at the cemetery on this day; however, the people do not experience deeply the prescribed feelings of the day and place. This discrepancy evokes feelings of sadness and disappointment. The “I” become sad because “me” shows the improper behavior of others (Mead, 1934; Strauss, 1997). The “I” decides to behave properly and feel proper emotions (sadness and nostalgia). The student (quoted below) prays and becomes silent to remember the dead people; it is a time of reflection for her. It is her decision to follow the normative prescriptions of the day, although the majority of the observed visitors do not obey them:

All Saints’ Day is a special time. This is the day when all of us should visit our relatives in the cemetery. On this day we light candles on the graves and leave flowers there. On November 1st, we should recall moments spent with friends and family. This is a time of reverie. In my opinion, for most people, this is the only day they remember the family graves. This is very sad. The year has 365 days, and only on one day do a large number of people visit graves. They treat it as a duty. On that day, the cemetery is like a fashion show. Everyone talks about everyone. They talk about how others are dressed, what flowers they put on the grave, or whether the candles were expensive. It’s horrifying. All Saints’ Day has lost its uniqueness over time. When I go to the cemetery, I recite a prayer, mute myself for a moment and remember all the wonderful moments. I know that life is fragile; it passes faster than we think. For me, this is a time of reflection. I think about life, family and the time that runs so fast. “Let us hurry to love people; they depart so quickly.” I think that Jan Twardowski [a Polish Catholic priest and poet] perfectly described the fragility of human life in that short reflection. So, we should remember loved ones, always... On the first of November every year I celebrate All Saints’ Day. This day is very important for me. My parents and I always visited my grandparents and distant relatives at the cemetery. My family and I talk about our dead relatives. We always lit candles and laid flowers on the graves. This day is very sad for me, and I feel pressure for nostalgia. (H. S.)

We can notice **normative thinking in the description of feelings**. What should November 1st look like? It is a special day to commemorate ancestors and the dead. It is a day that connects us with our ancestors (Zerubavel, 2012). It should be a calm and contemplative day; however, it is a noisy and chaotic day. It is a day when family members from different parts of the country meet and talk at the cemetery, even through the celebration of Mass. During the disappointing moments, when students observed improper behaviors, normative indications appear. *The self* wants to celebrate the deceased in the stillness and concentration; however, in practice, it is different, and this discrepancy arouses irritation:

A week before the holiday, I go to my grandmother’s grave to clean and wash the gravestones, plant fresh flowers, and remove the leaves. This year was similar, but I was furious that someone had dug up all the flowers from our grave. I would say that something similar had happened in previous years. Such incidents mean that November 1st begins to be associated with thieves... I think everyone, even those who live far away from the cemetery of their loved ones, should find time on November 1st and visit the grave. I believe that November 1st is a time for those who do not have time on other days to visit the graves.

On this day, we should forget about what surrounds us and drown ourselves in deep prayer for the souls of our loved ones. This is a pathetic holiday for me. And it demands concentration and silence, not the chaos of people walking around and trying to place candles on the graves, even during the Mass. Instead, they should stand at the graves during the Mass, and place the candles on the graves of other relatives after the Mass. Taking everything into consideration, I feel a little bit angry because people do not honor this feast properly. They forget about those who are particularly important at the time and deal with unnecessary conversations. But despite this, I feel happy that on this day almost everyone, even from distant parts of Poland, manages to get to the graves of their closest relatives to be with them and live this day. (M. B.)

A very interesting and insightful summary of the description above is the poem below. It describes very concisely almost all the categories that we tried to dissect from the empirical protocols of observation. Here we have the indications of a “nostalgic atmosphere,” emotions, traditions, and the sadness that people come to remember about the dead only on this day. The poetry shows the strength of the possibility to express feelings and perceptions at the same time in a very concise way:

I.

When I was at the cemetery
 I visited my family’s graves
 I lit candles
 And it symbolized the memory of the dead.

In the cemetery there was a nostalgic atmosphere

And as a result it was a very depressing day for me.

II

All Saints’ Day
 Is a special day.
 But it is sad
 That people remember the dead
 Only on this day. (M.B.)

Some visitors carefully observe the improper behaviors of others using “normative thinking” about the place and time. When the rules of the visits to the cemetery are broken, many **evaluative statements** are included in the description. When All Saints’ Day becomes a

commercial occasion for selling the food, it is not acceptable for the visitor to follow the rules of behavior and feelings in this place at that time:

On All Saints' Day, like every year, I went to the cemeteries of my loved ones. When I visited one of the cemeteries, I noticed that there was an atmosphere different from the gravity that should be preserved that day. At the entrance, there were hot dogs, grilled sausage or cotton candy. I understand that maybe it's an attraction for someone, but for me it's unacceptable... Going to my aunt's grave, I observed people standing by the graves, talking to each other, laughing at this. I passed a gentleman who finished smoking a cigarette, dropped the cigarette, trampled on it and continued on his way. As I stood at the grave praying silently, the person at the next grave lit a candle and threw the match on the ground. My conclusion is that many people are unaware of what the holiday is about, and in my opinion, it is better to stay home when they cannot act properly; the cemetery is not a waste dump or restaurant. This is a place where the dead are resting..." (A.P.)

Another author writes about the inappropriateness of the feelings towards the place and the religious holiday. *Proper feelings* also have a connection with the normative frame of reference. There is no justification for people to be there when they have such feelings. One of the students perceives the hypocrisy (this could be the main theme of her description) in the behaviors of the people going to the cemetery on this day. She takes herself as an example of someone who does not have the appropriate feelings for the day. Her body gave her uncomfortable feelings, and she wanted to escape from the cemetery:

If I have to be honest, I'm not a fan of All Saints' Day. I don't like to feel obliged to walk to the cemetery when I don't need to. On this day, for example, by visiting the graves of dead relatives, I felt nothing. I stood over my grandfather's grave and wondered why I was there. I felt bad, and I had the feeling that I was deceiving others that I wanted to be there. But I didn't want to. I had nothing to say to my grandfather or the other dead people. All the time I spent in the cemetery, I thought, "Why should I feel the sadness of the death of people that I didn't even know?" With one exception. There is a woman's grave next to my grandfather's grave, and it always impresses me. It's an old gravestone erected after World War I, which no one cares about. Well, it makes me absolutely gloomy and makes me feel uncomfortable and bad, although I really like to visit it. I often wonder how Balbina lived (because it was her grave) and what she was like. This year, during All Saint' Day, when I lit a candle at Balbina's grave, I asked myself, 'If I knew that Balbina was a bad person, would I still care for her grave?' I thought I wouldn't, and that I'd be mad at her, that she deceived me... And that would be enough for my thoughts.

On the subject of the body, I felt only the coldness and embarrassment that resulted from being observed and judged by others. Throughout my visit to the cemetery, I folded arms and an irresistible desire to escape from there. I didn't want to make any unnecessary movements, because it might have attracted the attention of others. Well... I think that's all.

Below is an indication of the reason I don't like that day. I think it's sad that loved ones remind us of the dead only before the coming holidays and then they

all come that day and pretend to be a wonderful family, while they don't think of the dead in this way (but I don't want to generalize and know cases are different). (D.W.)

The poem below depicts her feelings in a very concise manner:

Like a fashion review that we go to without thinking
 Like a meeting with the family where we don't want to be
 Like sadness and sorrow, candles and crosses that we don't see
 A day like every day
 But different

Something disturbing hangs in the air
 It's sadness and sorrow, longing and pain
 Which we do not notice every day
 This day is a day of suffering
 For which we usually don't have time

And the dead we visit are like ghosts
 They remind us that time will come for us
 And when it comes
 We will be the judges at a new fashion show
 Which will last forever (D.W)

The metaphor of *the fashion for All Saints' Day* used in the poem reflects the feelings of the inappropriateness of the behaviors and feelings toward the place and the religious holiday. The sadness emerges from the poetic reflection about death, the death that will touch everybody, including the author. She uses the plural form in the poem so the *lyrical I* is not a single individual. If we die, so everybody dies.

Another student also thinks about **the inappropriateness of her feelings** and is full of criticism of the materialistic orientation of the contemporary world. She feels there is almost an obligation to celebrate the day, and it is not a good time or place for real contemplation.

There are too many people, a lack of concentration, and there is the commercial attitude of the sellers; these are the conditions that arouse the feelings of inappropriateness (see Figure 1). She is very disappointed and pessimistic about the future of the holiday:

How can I slow down when everyone else hurries? People often say, "We have to visit everyone! Have you not seen the traffic jam? Hurry! Because later I'll have no place to park!"

What can you say about making the cemetery a marketplace? Really, even on this day, people think only about profits? Seriously, do they think that selling

cotton candy and balloons is appropriate? Nowadays, during the visit, you can even buy fresh bread. Kill two birds with one stone? In my opinion, all these things destroy this day. You know what is sad?... I suppose that it will not change for the better. (A.B)

Reflections about life and death.

Reflections about life and death sometimes become the lived experience of the visitors. The participant of the research quoted below asks questions about the time of life and, what is interesting, the situation that evokes consideration about the **unpredictability of life**:

The feast of the dead is the day when we meet all in the cemeteries to pray for all our loved ones, but also for all those who have died. This holiday allows me to calm down and to think about all those close to me who have gone and to light a candle on their grave. This day is a sad day but also a day of reflection and prayer. I am moved when I see pictures on the graves, especially when it was a young person who did not experience all the worries of life. I wonder why they leave so early and leave an emptiness in the heart... I explain to myself that everyone has a certain amount of time in life. Even though I am a young and healthy person, I have no idea if something bad will happen to me tomorrow. Unfortunately, our life is unpredictable; we have to reconcile ourselves with it. (A.B.)

This anxiety about life was expressed by the same visitor in a poem. We see that the fear is more openly expressed in the poem:

Fear

I stand among the graves

I feel the presence of unknown people
 graves lit more than usual
 flowers smell more than usual
 and one thought in mind...

What will happen after death?

I am more and more afraid of death...

why do I think about it when there is so much time in front of me?

I'm so young... but I know that life is so fragile.

Reflecting about life and death could also become a deep existential thought that we “do not know” how to react to these ultimate concerns; whatever we say could be the wrong answer. The participants of the research had the opportunity to express their feelings and reflections in poems, which is sometimes needed if we cannot express our experience in purely

descriptive and behavioral terms. Poetry can often express it better than a descriptive or scientific reflection:

I feel safe and I feel calm,

And I am walking and it's all right.

I am safe because I am the first.

I am safe because I am the last.

Al one. With others.

Because it's raining. Because of the shade.

Maybe for trying to be a whole in such a gloomy place.

I have the intuition,

I have other ways to tie a cross knot.

Madness for some kind of nature,

Pretending to be fine.

Because it could have happened.

It happened earlier. Later.

It happened, but not to me.

Sometimes we cry,

For someone who grows in the sky.

Watered with our feelings,

When faced with some sad dealings.

We are born to live or die,

And maybe the answer was just a lie.

(I. I.)

I also visited the cemetery. I had many thoughts about death. Here is my (the author of the paper) contemplative memo on dealing with the essential thinking about the self that was the basis for my fear of death as I assumed it to be:

Memos on the fear of death

When I was alone at the cemetery, I felt the fear of death. I felt the same when I coded the data on the others' visits to the cemeteries. I was thinking that nothing will be left of me when I die; that my life and all the efforts are not

worth anything. I have seen what little interest living people have in people who are already dead.

Not believing in God and the after-life, I thought about the lack of meaning of suffering, and even helping others here and now. Meanwhile, however, I practiced meditation. I ask myself while breathing in, "Who am I?"; and answer while breathing out, "I do not know." Many times, many hours, many days. My feeling of ego and self deteriorated a little. After that, I did a thought experiment: what would there be or what would happen to me and others if there were no self? No borders between me and others? And I discovered that almost everything would be the same; however, life would be smoother, no defense of the ego, less suffering, and better relationships with others. If "I" die, nobody dies, because I am a small part of other's things and phenomena that are related to each other, and when there is a sudden lack of one person, others take its place, and everything goes on as before. No borders, only connections. I am part of this interdependent world and I, in some sense, co-created it. So, dying is fiction, nothing really dies. Only the fear of the dead ego brings me great discomfort, but when the ego disappears, there is no fear of death, no worries, no suffering.

The world is wonderfully organized, it has a meaning although I do not understand it fully or maybe at all. It does not matter for me now. Nothing specific in me. The self is only a thought. Death is only a thought. No-thought - No-self – no- suffering.

Distanced descriptions.

Although I underlined to the students that their auto-descriptions should include a description of feelings, some students distanced themselves from the mood and described only the cemetery from an objectivist-outside perspective. The sociological perspective or to borrow a term from Alfred Schutz (1962, pp. 45-49) *scientific contemplation*, was useful for them here to avoid describing feelings. However, the contemplation also belongs to mood; one which is without emotional embeddedness. The distancing was a personal decision on how to face the problem of presenting self and feelings to outsiders. The visitor quoted below dislike the holiday of All Saints' Day and maybe this presumption is the basis for this objectivist description and sociological interpretation. He used the concept of social structure and showed the tradition of buying candles from scouts and lighting the candles at the graves of soldiers:

To be honest, I am not a great fan of All Saints' Day. Therefore, I try to avoid it at all costs. But there is one exception, which is the so-called "old cemetery" in L. There are two reasons for that. First of all, my grandpa is buried there, and secondly, I think that people visiting this cemetery behave there in a different way than at other necropolises. It is very unlikely that you will see people with balloons floating over their heads, or children eating candy-floss right beside the graves of those who have passed away. I think that my observation and impression is related to the class factor, as the people whose relatives are buried at the old cemetery rarely belong to the working class...

Before my parents and I entered the cemetery, we bought candles. My mother was not satisfied as she usually buys candles from scouts. It took some time to

look for them and she could not find any. She also bought a kind of wreath, which looked totally different to those offered at other cemeteries – it simply was not kitschy. Then we passed the gate. Just after that, we saw people collecting money for the renovation of the old cemetery. This can be seen only at this necropolis. My mother put some money in the tin, and she also gave money to a priest. It is a tradition that was passed down to my mother from her family, that she always gives them money. Then we went to visit the grave of my grandfather. I observed the graves and the people on our way. All the graves were decorated with flowers and candles. Here I could also see the class difference. The benches were covered with expensive flowers, almost no kitschy ones, very few artificial ones, and some decorations looked really amazing. I would say that they were too expensive, as if people wanted to present how well-off they are. I could see very few people praying; they focused more on decorating the graves, lighting candles and chatting. After visiting my grandpa's grave, as we do each year, we went to light candles at the graves of soldiers who died in the war of 1920. It is our family tradition. What I could observe this year is that there were many more candles on the graves of war heroes who had died during the First and Second World Wars. It seems that people care more about these graves now. We left the cemetery when it was getting dark, which is also an element of the particular atmosphere of this day, and especially this cemetery. (K.K.)

Second Visits – Reflective mood

The second visit to the cemetery was during a normal day of the week. There were fewer people. Some of the participants of the project felt relaxed and were in a good mood; there was a calm atmosphere, and it was easier to get some peace in the mind. However, being alone at the cemetery without many people around could also become a fearful experience. For some visitors, the cemetery becomes a place of **reflection on the fragility of life** and a place for becoming calm and silent. **The reflective mood happens more often during the second visit.** After visiting the cemetery, there could be a greater sense of relaxation and even happiness to see relatives who are still alive. So, the visit to the cemetery is always an experience of meeting death, a death that could be far away; however, it is almost tangible, because the graves are visible, and when the participants stop there, they can read the inscriptions and think about the meaning of life while they are in **a special mood**, a mood of reflection on life and death, in silence (see Figure 2).

The atmosphere of the place. How does mood arise?

The visit to the cemetery is often a chance to observe how the special **mood** arises. The visitor feels *a special atmosphere* because of the unique features of the situation (snow, trees and graves covered with snow, a few lights, the emptiness of the cemetery). The mood is the background to all the perception that is running through the visitors to the cemetery. We use the terms “*atmosphere*” and “mood” interchangeably. However, **the atmosphere** consists of not only the subjectively experienced mood; it is a mood that arises during a special occasion and situation. The features of the space and time are important here. It is the mood attached to the surroundings. The emotions seem fitted to the place from the external point of view; however, the participants do not see them in normative terms. **The space and its features set the mood:**

It was late afternoon when my girlfriend and I were walking through the cemetery gate. It was snowy all around, and I felt the special atmosphere of the moment because the snow had fallen shortly before we entered the graveyard. The trees and gravestones were all covered with snow, and it gave a mysterious air to the place. As we walked further, I observed the graves, and it gave me some more thoughts about the atmosphere of the place. I wasn't really in the mood for contemplation, because we were talking until we got to my grandparents' grave. I noticed the few lights on the tombstones and the fact that nobody was at the cemetery at the time, because we visited the place not long before closing time. It was pretty dark out there, because only a few lanterns were shining, and this gave the tombstone lights some kind of comforting feeling. I also think that the snow was the reason that the place was not completely dark, because there were the lanterns turned off in some places.

As we got to my family grave, I stood and started to think about my grand-grandmother, and it gave me some sad feelings about the place. I remembered what she looked like from my childhood, and the fact that she used to take care of me until I went to kindergarten.

We lit the grave lamp and decided to go back to the car, and as we were approaching the exit, we just decided to go home. I had the impression of the cold and neutral feeling of this place, very different from how I felt on the 1st of November. I thought that only the gleaming snow and the flame of the candles give any comforting impression of that place. I thought about the complexity of life and the fact that the cemetery is the only place that we could collide with the finality of humans in everyday life. I only wanted to get out of the place and have a rest." (M.K.)

Minding. How Does the Mind Work? Comparative thinking.

On the second visit to the cemetery, comparative thinking was immediately switched on. The observers, thinking comparatively, observed that there were not many people; they experienced silence and peace. People do not observe and evaluate each other as they do during All Saints' Day:

When I went to the cemetery on a normal day of the week, my feelings were quite different than on the Day of the Dead. On the second day, you could meet people very sporadically at the cemetery. There was silence and peace. The people who were at this cemetery did not really pay attention to other people. (A.P.)

Observations were interspersed with comments based on comparisons of visits to the cemetery. **Comparative thinking** is almost automatic and creates a field for interpretations of the objects and actions. The observer looks for the reasons of the differences between the visits at different time. Without experiencing at least two visits there, it would be difficult to find a basis for comparisons and to bring forward the interpretation regarding why it happens this way:

When I visited this cemetery in spring, in May, it was green, calm, full of singing birds. When I entered it on the ordinary day it was very different than

on All Saints' Day. It was not crowded at all. I saw some people in black, with flowers, going to the chapel, which meant that there would be a funeral soon. Then I walked along the paths and saw some new graves covered with the mountains of flowers, which means that somebody had been buried there just recently. Then I saw a few people cleaning graves or praying.

To conclude, I can say that on an ordinary day, the cemetery looks different. In my opinion, the paradox is that on All Saints' Day it is crowded with relatives who remember those who had died, and it is a very positive, social value, but I think that it is more authentic on the ordinary day, when there is a visible distinction between the world of people who are alive and always busy and the world of those who passed away and who occupy a very calm place. (K.K.)

Self-reflection and contemplation.

The second visit is connected with solitude, even loneliness, silence and self-reflection, which happens more often than during the first visit, when awareness and concentration are aimed at the other people that are crowding the place. The cemetery can be a place for contemplation and self-reflection, which is done through conversation with the dead:

I don't know if it's a good word. I am very happy when I can calmly think about things that I normally don't have time for, but the cemetery is the perfect place for such thoughts. Especially when there is no one there, because then nobody disturbs our thoughts. Sometimes I go to the cemetery without a reason and sit at the grave of my grandfather (on a bench, not on the grave itself) and talk to myself. Now, I think it's weird, and if someone saw me, he would think I was crazy, but sometimes such a "conversation" with the dead helps. (D.W.)

During the second visit, there is more space for **reflection**. The reflection could be so absorbing that the participant could **lose the sense of time**:

I visited my aunt's grave because she was the closest person to me who has passed away. When I reached her grave, I lit a candle and sat on the bench, and I began to think about her life and death. She died of cancer very early. When things started to go well in her life, she took a loan, bought a flat, and she finally became happy, but a few months later it turned out that she was ill. I remember how quickly a happy woman turned into a sad and powerless person. Now I know how fast life can change in a moment.

I was sitting there for about an hour; I did not feel the passage of time. Then I realized that it was completely dark everywhere. There were no lights. I was very scared; if I can be honest I was more than scared, I was really afraid of everything. There was no one there, I was alone. Fortunately, I had a charged phone and I could use the flashlight. I could not get out of the cemetery – I did not remember the way out, I was afraid that the gate would be closed. Happily, after a quarter of an hour, I managed to get out. (A.B.)

Imagination is connected with the space. Visitors use their imagination and daydreaming to reflect, and they try to understand their feelings (peace and calmness) while

thinking about the ultimate concerns. We can understand the problem when we analyze the case presented below:

The second visit to the cemetery was different from the first one. First of all, because I don't have any family buried here in the city. Secondly, because I was almost alone. The graveyard I went to was Doły. It's a big cemetery, and when I went there, it was starting to get dark. I didn't feel sadness or any similar feeling. I just felt peace and calm. I wasn't worried or scared, even when it was hard to see anything because it was dark and I could barely see anything. I had a weird feeling that nothing bad could happen to me. I was walking around, and between the graves and I was waiting for some feelings to come or for something to happen. Finally, something did happen. I started to think that my family and all my friends will die one day. I started to be scared that I will be left alone in this world, all by myself. I was looking around, and I realized that I one day I will come to a cemetery like this more often than I do now.

That's because all my relatives and friends will be here. Then I started to think about how short life is and how little time we have for those who are dearest to us. After that, I decided to go home because this place started to be so depressing just because of those thoughts. I just went back on the main path, trying not to think about anything anymore. (Ki.Kl)

Self-reflection could also lead to some spontaneous "thought experiments," as in the above- described case. The student expected to experience something, that something would happen, that she would feel something special, and this expectation was realized. The cemetery space gives such a chance to those that desire and expect something unexpected to happen. She imagined that those close to her would die, and she imagined what might happen to her at that time. She felt very depressed while doing this experiment and decided to leave the graveyard.

The concept of mood becomes important where there is space for contemplation. **The mood is contemplative, and the mind is at peace.** Mood opens the self and opens the world to the subject; "the gray weather" could be meaningful here to create the mood:

Later, I realized that this visit had put me in a good mood. I also thought about this fact when I compared this visit to the one on All Saints' Day; this place is peaceful and full of reverie, although it may have been the result of this gray weather. Thanks to this calmness, you can think more deeply about all matters – and "collect your thoughts." (P.N.)

The second visit is more reflective, and there is less or none of the normative thinking about how to behave and what to feel in this place. Thoughts and emotions come unexpectedly and spontaneously. The features of the situation change, as do the living experiences of the cemetery.

Being aware of the assumptions of perception.

The observer is aware of his assumptions about the social structure and aesthetics of the cemetery graves. When observing the cemetery and describing it, he thinks like a sociologist; we can call it *scientific contemplation* after Alfred Schutz (1962, p. 245) with sociological concepts in mind, such as social structure (social stratification, the intelligentsia, the middle class):

My work is based on the observation of the same cemetery I described on All Saints' Day, that is, the so-called "old cemetery" at Ogrodowa Street. It is my favorite necropolis in the city because it is full of trees, which makes the place nice and friendly, although I am not sure if these words really are appropriate to describe a cemetery. Besides, it is the oldest necropolis in the city so we can see graves from the end of the 19th century. They are very nice pieces of art. One more thing that seems to be important, and I wrote about it in my first observation, is that we can see at this cemetery social stratification, and mainly that the cemetery is devoted to people who belonged to the intelligentsia, the middle classes, etc., and even during the socialist times the image of cemetery did not change too much and the art of graves was on higher level than on other cemeteries what we can see now visiting these places in L. I think that this general impression influences my reception of this commentary. (KK)

I also did the second visit to the cemetery, and it was connected with recollecting the past, when my relatives lived. However, having experienced the emotions during the visit, I also practiced distancing to the place by scientific theorizing.

Memos on the memories (the author's visit)

When I visited the cemetery for the second time, I concentrated on my parents and grandparents. I tried to remember their faces, their bodies, and how they moved. I did not want anybody to disturb me in this contemplation. When I go to the cemetery with my sister, she always talks too much and disturbs me. I cannot concentrate in her presence. So, I wanted to be alone. In my memory, my parents were alive, not dead.

The graves were only symbols of their images that I had very vividly. And some situations came to mind. My grandfather sitting on the bench in front of the house. Mother working in the field, my father very tired after work but still very strong. Sadness, the lack of my parents and that carefree childhood. It never comes back... Nearly crying. However, after a moment, I come back to everyday life, going to my sister. Outside of the cemetery. I have feelings of "normalcy," it comes back.

So, I see that the fence of the cemetery is a symbolic boundary between the two worlds. The deathworld and the lifeworld. However, this deathworld is seen from the point of view of the lifeworld.

The deathworld is like an enclave of the lifeworld. It is always present; however, if the lifeworld is still being experienced, the deathworld cannot dominate the perception, and we still are alive and want to balance life and death.

Emotions and the body.

During the visits to the cemetery, emotions appeared. The fear of death sometimes emerged, especially concerning family members, and one of the visitors did not want to be at the cemetery. One of the participants felt uncomfortable and wanted to leave. Going to the cemetery alone was a very challenging experience for her. Thoughts about the future and her

parents' possible death were especially **sad** for her. The dirty graves also influenced her the frame of mind. Lighting the candles was the only relaxing activity for her at the cemetery. **She felt the emotion in her body**, especially when she started to go faster while leaving the cemetery:

Walking through the cemetery, I was hoping that there would be no funeral taking place. I felt fear of the coffins, death, and funerals. I felt fear and warmth (the second feeling was probably the result of stress).

I decided to go to the grave of my grandparents. I turned left from the main path. It was really empty. Only a few elderly people were sitting beside the graves. When I went to the grave of my grandparents I felt very lonely; I did not want to be there. It was the first time I had visited their grave alone, without my parents. I felt very uncomfortable. In my opinion, this discomfort was associated with the feeling of being alone with a stranger. In such moments, we do not know what to do, how to behave.

The tomb was dirty, only some wilted flowers and spent candles lying on it – from the day of All Saints, so everything was already spoiled. This sight was depressing.

Standing at the grave of my grandparents, I was thinking about my parents – I was very afraid of their death. I was thinking that I will have to go to their grave in the future. Tears appeared in my eyes. I felt sorrow and powerlessness.

After 5 minutes of depressed contemplation, I decided to go home. I lighted the candle with pleasure (I really like to light candles), I prayed (during the prayer I did not feel anything special), and I left the grave. Walking down the path, I did not notice if anything had changed – there were few people, no funeral. I noticed that I was starting to go faster. I think that, subconsciously, my body already wanted to leave this place and go home. (H.S.)

The feeling of **sadness** is inscribed in the place:

Then I went to the grave of my younger friend from school. Nostalgia was with me still and... Unfortunately, I could not find them. I was very pensive.

Before leaving the cemetery, I said a prayer for my friend and decided to go home. I still felt sad they are no longer with me, but also that I will meet them one day. I hope and believe it. (Z.Z.)

The body also reacts to the place. There are moments when some visitors want to leave the place quickly. The body informs us what to do. It is connected with the emotions it feels, in this case, fear:

When I was standing in front of my grandparents' grave, I did not expect to feel so lonely. Suddenly, I wanted to go home quickly, but I do not really know why. There was also this small feeling of fear because I realized again that there is no one around me.

I started to think about my grandparents. I do not remember them well and I do not know much about the lives they had, and that made me really sad.

I was standing there, and suddenly my body started to push me to leave this place so I lighted the candle and went home.

The area around the cemetery was empty... (M.D.)

For some of the visitors, it was a very personal experience. They went to the cemetery **to talk with those deceased people they were closest to**. Touching and body feelings were very important in these meetings:

I went to the cemetery, to my father, on his name day in December. It was a normal day for everyone else. I visit my dad the way I want; to talk to him, sit with him, but also if there is any occasion. There were not many people at the cemetery; it was already getting dark. Whenever I enter the cemetery, I have the impression that it is colder. This is caused by the dead souls hovering there. I welcome my dad by touching the monument at the height of his head. I sit down and I start the prayer. I am very sad. I think about why it happened to me, while others still have both parents. I wonder when I will see my dad in the other world. What will it be like to be thrown into his arms after all these years? I remember his smile, our moments together. I talk to my dad quietly, because I know he can hear me. My heart rate accelerates, I get chills, I start to cry. It's stronger than me in this place, with him. I tell my dad how I can hear that I always remember him, I miss him and love him very much. I touch the monument with my hand in mourning. I wipe my tears because I know my dad would not like to see me like that. Leaving the cemetery, I calmed down, I know I must be strong. Only in the cemetery do I let myself feel despair; I hope that my dad sees me only outside the walls of the cemetery. I am leaving the cemetery until my next visit. (A. Pi.)

Conclusions

There is very meaningful research on cemeteries that concerns history, using archeological methods (Baugher, Veit, & Nassaney, 2014). Geographers, in turn, look for patterns of how cemeteries are constructed and compare them to the patterns of the settlements of society in general (Francaviglia, 2010). Meanwhile, anthropologists want to understand the functions of grave houses from the anthropological perspectives (Ball, 1977) and the meanings of grave tombs (Dethlefsen & Deetz, 1966). However, we do not have a great deal of research on experiencing the cemetery space. Sensoric and contemplative methods are rarely used (Davis & Breede 2015). Therefore, our research could contribute knowledge to this topic, especially because the research was done from the first-person perspective and is based on the self-observations and self-descriptions of the participants.

Emotions are an important part of experiencing a space/place. They appeared during both visits. Sadness is almost designed for a cemetery, in a way. It happened almost always during the first and second visits, if other feelings did not disturb it, like anger or embarrassment because of other people's improper behavior. The fear associated with the visits is often, although not always, openly expressed. Sometimes a poem is a better medium to express emotions. Some visitors felt calmness at the graveyard. The stories of descriptions, in whatever

forms, are living stories, they are not sedimented like inscriptions in stone, they are meaningful and evoke emotions, they create interpretations, often blurred, not clear, and discrepant.

Following the procedures of grounded theory, we can put forward the following hypotheses:

1. ***A connection between the body and emotions and the features of the space is experienced and perceived. It happened during both visits. Therefore, the situational features are important in creating the mood. Mood is an interaction between the environmental features (the physical and climatic features of a space), the cultural norms (the culturally defined time of the event), and an individual's interpretation of the norms. Some features of the space are disturbing (crowds, noise, "people's faces," commercial attitude) and co-create not-fitted emotions (see Figure 1) while some others co-create proper emotions, fitted to the situation. The interpretation of the features of the individual situation is decisive here.***
2. ***Normative thinking is based on the cultural norms of how to behave and what to feel at the cemetery.*** We can see that the participants condemn the improper behaviors. Moreover, the feeling of improper emotions, or not feeling them at all, is an issue for serious consideration and self-condemnation. It happened especially during the November 1st holiday, All Saints' Day (see Figure 1 and Table 1).
3. ***The reflective mood is more easily evoked during the individual visits at the cemetery when the conditions are conducive to co-creating this kind of mood.*** The loneliness of the person and the emptiness of the cemetery are good conditions for creating a reflective mood. The minding of the participants could work and concentrate fully on the theme of life and death. The circumstances are also good for self-reflection and analyzing the assumptions and conditions of perceiving the space and world in general. (see Figure 2)
4. ***Body feelings are influenced by the climatic conditions and also the diverse sensory perceptions of the space (the smell, seeing the candles and flowers, the temperature) that influence how the emotions and reflections on death and life are experienced. Sensoric perception is very important in co-creating the reflective mood*** because it is different from the mood outside the cemetery space. And this sensoric perception, together with the solitude of the participant, creates a special personal mood that is subjectively experienced.

After analyzing the data, it can also be noticed that the two visits have some similar and some different properties (see Table 1). The normative mood is created by emotions that the participants compare to the norms of what is proper to feel at a cemetery, and by reactive emotions (depressive feelings, feelings of irritation, anger, body feelings) to the behaviors of others. The normative thinking is permanent while experiencing such a mood. Moreover, there is a perception of time slowing down. The reflective mood is created by emotions (sadness, peace, and calmness, fear, nostalgia, being pensive) that come from the sorrow and regret about the dead people and the fragility of life. The reflective mood is created during the lonely trip to the cemetery. The participants contemplate life and death and also compare the two visits while losing their sense of time. (see Table 1) However, the two visits produce generatively different moods that are experienced during the two visits.

Table 1

The comparison of first and second visit to the cemetery. Characteristics, similarities, difference, and thesis

First visit	Second visit
≠ NORMATIVE MOOD	≠ REFLECTIVE MOOD – lack of normative terms
NORMATIVE MOOD [Normative thinking] -> Emotions fitted to the day/proper feelings – sadness, melancholy, nostalgia, feelings of beauty, pathetic day	REFLECTIVE MOOD [lack of normative thinking] -> Emotions -> sadness, peace and calmness, fear, nostalgia, being pensive,
NORMATIVE MOOD -> Inappropriateness of feelings -> Lack of emotions fitted to the day/not proper, not feeling sadness	REFLECTIVE MOOD -> Being aware of their own assumptions
NORMATIVE MOOD -> Emotions arising from observation of not fitted behaviors - depressive feelings, feelings of irritation, anger	REFLECTIVE MOOD –> individual perspective (silence, self-reflection, loneliness, “individual conversation with the dead”)
Mood -> <i>epoché</i> of the cemetery place	Mood -> Theoretical contemplation (being aware of their assumptions about the perception of cemeteries)
Mood -> permanent normative thinking	Mood -> Comparative thinking (comparing the first and second visit)
≈Mood and time - perception of time <u>slowing down</u>	≈Mood and time – losing the sense of time
≈Body feelings and mood -> feeling the cold weather, body wanting to escape from the cemetery	≈Body feelings and mood -> emotions – fear of the place, body wanting to leave the cemetery
≈Distanced descriptions – scientific contemplation	≈Distanced descriptions – scientific contemplation
≠ The features of the situation (conditions) -> too many people, congestion in parking lots, loud conversations, smell of light, a lot of candles	≠ The features of the situation (conditions) -> few candles, graves covered with snow, emptiness of the cemetery, few people
THESES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A connection between the body, emotions, and the features of space is experienced and perceived.</i> 2. <i>Normative thinking is based on cultural norms regarding how to behave and what to feel at the cemetery.</i> 3. <i>The reflective mood is more easily evoked during the individual visits to the cemetery when the conditions are conducive to co-creating the mood.</i> 4. <i>Body feelings are influenced by the climatic conditions and also diverse sensory perceptions of the space (the smell, seeing the candles and flowers, the temperature) that influence how the emotions are experienced and provoke reflections on life and death.</i> 	

- The ≈ sign, plus bolded and underlined rows, shows similar features of the experiences of the two visits
- ≈ - almost equal to.
- ≠ - not equal to.

Discussion

Some features of experiencing the visits are similar. The perception of time is similar between the two visits. However, time is experienced differently beyond the cemetery fence. Time slows down, or there is a complete loss of the sense of time. Some participants want to distance themselves from expressing their feelings through the scientific contemplation of the place, indicating its specific architectural or historical features. It seems that this distancing comes from the specific features of their personality. If somebody has the inclination to analyze the world, then he also does it at the cemetery.

The differences come from the social and cultural characteristics of the two days. The visit on November 1st is marked by a holiday (i.e., by the obligation to visit graves and to buy flowers and candles). There are also commercial activities going around the cemeteries. There are lots of people, crowds, and congestion.

The other day of the visit, the ordinary day, is completely different. There are few lights, the graves are covered with snow, the cemetery is almost empty, there are few people, and often only one visitor, the participant. There are conditions for contemplation and reflection. The emotions are different; however, sadness dominates.

The second goal of the research was didactic. The students/participants in the research found out the importance of emotions in cognition in this specific place. Moreover, they were able to experience some kind of suffering connected with understanding difficult, ultimate concerns: "... the research itself involves suffering, but that very suffering opens the researcher to the empirical detail and theoretical insights not possible in dispassionable research" (Hansen & Trank, 2016, p. 9).

They could see the dialectics of cognition. During the visits, the mind works intensively and in one symphony of being with emotions (Douglas & Johnson, 1978; Hordge-Freeman, 2018). The human being is not programmed to always feel what the normative structure of places suggests to us. The space/place is, of course, very important and attached to the dimension of the mind, body, and feelings but people could be distracted by other features of the situation, and they could also decide about their feelings and thinking. The human being is not consistent when it comes to thinking and feelings (Douglas & Johnson 1978). We can wish for different things and have discrepant feelings at the same time. The situation, together with cultural norms and the biography of the person, could become the basis for decisions on what to feel and on the emerging structure of feelings. It is not so easy to be at the cemetery, but also, it is not so easy to explain and understand what we are doing there and what we think and feel. We feel fear, sadness and calmness, or even happiness at the same time. The place is reflexive, and we can find not only despair and fear but also harmonious feelings with what we are and how things happen in the world. Death is also connected with life. There is no death without life. So, life cannot be appreciated without death, no matter how difficult it is to accept it. This kind of reflection would be almost impossible without students visiting the cemetery. Therefore, the visits also had a didactic goal, to induce reflection that is connected with a direct experience, which is not often taught in university classes. The issues of suffering and experiencing it, and ultimate concerns, are left outside of classroom.

Generally, sociologists avoid using emotions and body feelings in descriptions of events and cultural customs and behaviors. They also rarely use the lived experiences to explicate some phenomena. Sociological concepts and interpretations usually hide the emotions that are part of the lifeworld and the activities of human beings. If we look at a human being from a holistic perspective, we cannot ignore the feelings, personal mood and also the "mood of the situations" that are created by the juxtaposition or contradiction of the individual and the cultural norms. For sociologically trained students, these concepts are sometimes the tools to hide feelings and present themselves professionally as the objectivist sociologists.

The cemetery and the holiday (the specific space and time) helped to open the self of the person to the ultimate concerns. The mood here is decisive. It also creates fear, because we meet the ultimate concerns directly and tangibly; the symbols of death and the space of death are experienced directly, which does not happen very often in our life. The mood allows us to understand and give meanings to the world and life (Heidegger, 2008; Łojek, 2015). Even in fear we get knowledge about ourselves. We can be afraid of something, but it happens, and it looks the way it does. We can perceive it only in the mood that accompanies our activities. Sadness uncovers our attachment to life; it is sad to die. It is sad to forget about dead family members and others. The identity is built basing on the memory of the ancestors (Strauss, 1997; Zerubavel, 2012). It is sad not to commemorate the deceased in an appropriate way. Mood also helps to show us the conscious being at the moment of experiencing something, here and now. In this case, at the beginning, it was the experience of All Saints' Day, but at the end, it was sensing the self in the context of life and death.

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