



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

HONORING RAMSES SHAFFY

The Afterlife of a Legend
in a Cross-Medial Age



Image 1: Ramses Shaffy. 2009.

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ABSTRACT

From the late 1970s onwards, Richard Dyer published several books on how to analyze stars as a phenomenon within popular culture. His ideas on the reading of the celebrity image, the representation of ‘realness’ and the division between private and public spheres have been functioning as an inspiration for many other scholars, who would soon contribute to the emerging academic field of Celebrity Studies. The success of a celebrity image appears to lie in the representation of authenticity and sincerity, which can result in a strong emotional affinity from a fan towards a celebrity hero: the celebrity even becomes a role model for one’s own creation of identity. When a loved celebrity passes away, then, the experience of identity disruption results in a great feeling of mourning. The media, controlling the representation of death as a phenomenon, is able to guide the individual in their expression of grief, and same goes for the tributing events that appear after the death of a celebrity: they are offering a way to ‘properly’ express feelings of grief. However, regardless of the emotional affection that is involved, the celebrity here functions as a human brand as well: by relying on the popularity of a celebrity name and image, honoring events are produced and promoted while playing in on the emotions of the mourning fans. In this research paper, it is the totality of these theories that will be used to analyze the case of Dutch artist and musician Ramses Shaffy, who passed away in 2009. By looking at the representation of his star image and the successes of the tributing events that emerged after his death, the concept of ‘deceased celebrity branding’ as a combination of deceased celebrity studies and human branding as a marketing concept will be analyzed.

Key Words

Legends - Dead Celebrity Stardom – Human Branding – Fandom – Identity – Nostalgia – Mourning – Identification – Idolization – Authenticity – Emotional Attachment – Celebrity Worshipping – Immorality – Adulation.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Moet je eerst doodgaan tot je eindelijk respect afdwingt? Je moet eerst doodgaan, dan verkoop je weer. En niet steeds doorgaan, eerst moet je de pijp uit gaan. Doodgaan: dan ben je goed, niet te weerstaan. Dus moet je doodgaan, komt er respect aan. Je hart moet stilstaan... Dan besta je weer”.*¹

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“Do you have to die first, in order to finally earn respect? You have to die first: then you’ll sell again. Don’t just continue: first you have to die, and then you’ll be irresistibly good. So you must die first, and respect will come your way. Your heart has to stop beating... Then you’ll exist again”.

Saturday, February 22nd, 2014. It is late at night, already past prime time, and the seventh episode of the Dutch satire series *De TV Kantine* is being aired on channel RTL 4. It is a show in which several celebrities are being caricatured: both Dutch and international superstars are portrayed as comical characters with exaggerated habits and outspoken opinions. From president Barack Obama and Dr. Phil to Dutch celebrities like Bonnie St. Claire and André Rieu - the list of parodies, all performed by actors Carlo Boszhard and Irene Moors, gets longer every week. At first sight, episode number seven did not seem to differ much from the regular concept: it was full of caricatures and ‘fake’ celebrities participating in silly dialogues. However, the final scene of the episode seemed to have a different purpose than just making the people laugh, even though the sketch was presented to be as funny as the earlier scenes. The episode ended with an impersonation of the Dutch singer and songwriter Ramses Shaffy, while performing on stage with an orchestra behind him. Carlo Boszhard, doing the impersonation of the Dutch artist that died in December 2009, is portraying him during the last years of his life: the white hair, tired looking eyes and slow movements are exemplary for the representation of the elderly man. However, it is not the presentation, but the words that he is singing that are striking. The lyrics of the performed song, originally called ‘We Zullen Doorgaan’ (*We Will Continue* if translated to English), are changed into the bitter words *Moet je eerst doodgaan? (Do you have to die first?)*. Several sentences, as written down at the beginning of this paragraph, are thrown at the viewer, and can all be traced back to one simple point of view. The message is clear: the caricature of Shaffy, performed by Boszhard, is asking whether he really has to die in order to get the respect that he deserves as an artist.

¹ Episode 7. *De TV Kantine*. RTL 4. 22 February 2014.

Does your heart really have to stop beating in order to exist again? Do you really have to die, in order for respect to come your way and get admiration for your creative contribution to our society? Whatever the answer is, it certainly is a question that carries a bitter thought underneath the comical charade that is presented by the TV show.



Image 2: Carlo Boszhard impersonating Ramses Shaffy. De TV Kantine. RTL 4. 22 February 2014, 24:25.

The point that Boszhard's impersonation of Ramses Shaffy is making is one that has become more and more recognizable in our modern society. In many Western countries, we see that the death of celebrities create a massive tendency of public mourning and honoring, and there are countless examples to mention when it comes to this process of grief. For instance, when the British princess Diana died in 1997, her country was in complete shock, creating a social drama of great measure (Kear and Steinberg 2). Similarly, in 2009, the whole world grieved for the loss of the international superstar Michael Jackson, creating a celebrity image directly after his death and acts of remembrance through several media outlets from the moment he left this earth (Bennett, J. et al. 231). These famous international cases are both exemplary for the creation of an icon after a celebrity's death, but this tendency is just as recognizable on a more local scale, as *De TV Kantine* illustrated on that specific Saturday night. A Dutch singer like Ramses Shaffy, who gained popularity with the Dutch public in the 1960s and 70s and has had a longstanding career in Dutch theatre and music business, got into the exact same spotlight after his death, even though this same process can now only be measured nationally.²

For many Dutch citizens, singer and songwriter Ramses Shaffy is considered to be one of Holland's most influential artists of the last century. His songs were, in a way, part of what

² *Ramses Shaffy*. 2013. 1 March 2014. <<http://www.shaffy.nl/ramses.html>>.

can be referred to as the Dutch cultural heritage: 'Laat Me', 'Zing, Vecht, Huil, Bid, Lach, Werk, en Bewonder' and 'De Pastorale' are titles that most people will know. With his 'wild' lifestyle, fierce lyrics and energetic sounds, he knew how to touch the hearts of his audience: Ramses was considered to be a man with an extravagant lifestyle that either shocked or moved the crowd. But recently, Shaffy's life came to an end. His fans were deeply moved, and so was the rest of the country. They all shared the same opinion: a 'legend' had died, an icon in the history of the Dutch music industry. Both professional and public media outlets were being used to communicate about the loss of this famous Dutchman, in which social media platforms were used mostly by the larger audience: it was an easy and accessible way to publicly share feelings of grief. Furthermore, soon after his death, several tributes started to appear in many forms. Shaffy's letters towards his friends were published in a book, a musical was written, walks across Shaffy's home town Amsterdam were organized, biographies were written, public expositions were set up, and recently even a television series about his tumultuous life was produced. All of these productions are presented as the ultimate tribute to a local hero, just like many iconic superstars got their tributes after their death. The public need to mourn a celebrity thus appears to be rather universal: we seem to agree on the idea that legends are there to be remembered, and the only way to remember them correctly is by putting our national icons on a pedestal. By idolizing the artist, a true national legend is born.

However, in order to turn the deceased celebrity into a legendary icon, one can argue that the star's personality is molded into a 'human brand'. A lot of money is made through profiting from the emotions of losing a national star: the media productions that are set up to honor an artist are playing in on those emotions and profit commercially by anticipating on this public tendency. On the one hand, they soothe the existing feelings of grief by giving the public a product that gives the artist the tribute that he 'deserves'. But on the other hand, the production of honoring media productions only makes sure that those feelings are reinforced even more: the tributes underline the loss, profit from it by exploiting the urge to mourn the national hero and stimulate the willingness to spend money on this mourning. The tributes thus balance between emotional and respectful homages and profiting marketing strategies to make serious money. But in whatever way we analyze this process, we can clearly see the emotional effectiveness on its crowd and the strong meaning that is attributed to the artist after his death: a meaning that has everything to do with the representation of the legend.

The death of an artist thus seems to activate an emotional and collective feeling of losing a creative ‘genius’, which results in a strong need for mourning. The commercial profits that are made through the tributes that are being set up seem to be overshadowed by the emotional attachments that are linked to them and stimulated by them, even though the media industry is exploiting the enormously grown media-attention that the deceased star is getting. In this thesis, this process will be analyzed by focusing specifically on the case of Ramses Shaffy: an artist that was already loved in his glory days, but became even more loved since his passing away.³ At the moment, more and more cultural products based on Shaffy’s life are created to bring new generations in contact with his work: products that appear in many forms, which comes as no surprise considering the cross-medial conditions of our time. The public is moved by the work that Shaffy left behind in our society, and feels the urge to underline its value since his passing away. And finding a sense of comfort in the work of the deceased icon makes Shaffy’s star only rise more. So how does Shaffy, as a national icon and a human brand, live on in the cross-medial possibilities of our time? Where does the ‘divine’ admiration towards the deceased Ramses Shaffy come from, how does the commercial media landscape play in on this while portraying him extensively, and how is this division between the emotional and the commercial structured? While answering these questions, an overview of the afterlife of an extremely loved Dutch icon will be shaped, and the frictions between genuine public mourning and commercial profiting will be exposed.

In chapter 1, the concepts of stardom, fandom and celebrity studies will be the main topics that will be discussed. By focusing on theories written by Richard Dyer, Su Holmes, Graeme Turner and others, a theoretical framework about stardom and emotional public attachments towards celebrities is being sketched. In the case of a local singer like Ramses Shaffy, we are not only dealing with a star passing away but also with the public experience of losing a significant contributor to the Dutch cultural heritage, which results in an emotional feeling of nostalgia: something that will also be analyzed in connection to Shaffy. In the second chapter, a more concrete description and analysis of the ‘tributing’ productions will be brought forward. Here, we will see the commercial side of the honoring of Ramses Shaffy: the commercial profiting from public feelings of grief and the reinforcement of those feelings by offering experiences to the crowd is being examined here. In chapter 3, the dynamics between the emotional and the commercial are evaluated. The amount of adulation towards a deceased star, in this case Ramses Shaffy, will be compared to the commercial process of human

³ *HP de Tijd*. 2013. 14 April 2014. <<http://www.hpdetijd.nl/2013-08-29/ramses-shaffy-is-nog-lang-niet-dood/>>.

branding, and the representation of dead celebrities within a cross-medial age will be examined. Finally, an extensive conclusion will demonstrate that the boundaries between sincere feelings of grieving for a national legend, public displays of those feelings and commercial anticipations towards them, are not all that easy to be defined.

CHAPTER 1

THE LEGEND OF THE DECEASED STAR

In order to create a theoretical framework that provides a basis for analysis on how Ramses can be characterized as a deceased star, a couple of important terms and theories need to be addressed. Therefore, in the first paragraph of this chapter, a selection of theories that are exploring the concepts of stardom and fandom within the field of celebrity studies will be brought forward. By introducing academics like Richard Dyer, Su Holmes, Chris Rojek and Graeme Turner, the theoretical approaches towards celebrities will be addressed. In the second paragraph, the theories on stardom and Celebrity Studies are expanded by focusing on the receiving side. Here, concepts of authenticity, emotional attachments, and celebrity worshipping are brought forward. Finally, in the third and last paragraph, the focus is narrowed down to the concept of the deceased star. By discussing concepts of immortality within stardom, public mourning, and nostalgia, the deceased star becomes the center of analysis. After describing all of these concepts, an overview of the theoretical approaches towards dead celebrities is sketched: an overview that provides the basis for examining the case of Ramses Shaffy as a praised deceased star.

1.1 Stardom, Fandom and Celebrity Studies in Theory

The academic field of celebrity studies can be regarded as a relatively new one: it was not until 1961 that the first sociological work on the ‘manufacture of modern celebrity’ was published by Daniel Boorstin, which is generally seen as the starting point of the discipline (Bennett, *Historizing* 358). It soon became clear that celebrity studies was a field that overlapped many other more academically acknowledged disciplines, such as sociology, cultural studies and film studies (358). In these fields, many scholars developed their own approaches towards the concept of stardom, and started to analyze a phenomenon that was often considered to be not ‘worthy’ of scholarly research. According to many critics, celebrity studies was just another example of the many academic disciplines that studied the low-brow areas of popular culture, and took the attention away from the disciplines that did matter: our obsession with celebrities within our current society would put low culture above high culture (Holmes and Redmond 2). However, the importance of studying the everyday occurrences and the ‘taken for granted’ gained more attention throughout the years and the products of popular culture were analyzed more and more, both on a local and a global scale (Holmes and

Redmond 3). The concerns about academic objectivity conflicting with the subjective attitude of the passionate fan/author thereby slowly started to move to the background, and the importance of academic research on the concepts of stars (mainly used in film studies) and celebrities (used as a term to define a contemporary state of being famous) began to increase (4). In their article 'A Journal in Celebrity Studies', which functions as an introduction to other articles about this academic field within one journal, Su Holmes and Sean Redmond describe the difference between those two terms as follows:

We respect the fact that film studies in particular has historically used the term 'star', and the concept of the star (deCordova 1990, Dyer 1979, Ellis 1982), was used in this context to refer to a representational interaction between the on/off-screen persona. In comparison, work outside film studies has more often used the term 'celebrity' to indicate a broad category which defines the contemporary state of being famous. Chris Rojek, for example, argues that, 'celebrity = impact on public consciousness' (2001, p. 10). Related to this, the term is also understood, both culturally and academically, to indicate a redefinition of the public/ private boundary where the construction of the famous is concerned: where the primary emphasis is on the person's 'private' life rather than career, if indeed they are seen as having a 'career' at all (Geraghty 2000, Turner, 2004) (...) But what generally unites the work on stardom and celebrity is the agreement that celebrity or fame does not reside in the individual: it is constituted discursively, 'by the way in which the individual is represented' (Turner et al. 2000, p. 11), although this question of representation is of course a vexing one (4).

In this quote, we can read that the authors make a reference to the public/private binary and the question of public consciousness, which is a much discussed topic in celebrity studies: the celebrity functions as a symbol for the division between private and public life through the representation of their image, and can thus contribute to the identity formation of the individual next to its regular reception by a group of fans (Holmes and Redmond 6).

According to Holmes and Redmond, it is becoming more and more complicated to trace the origins of these celebrity images back to specific media outlets, since a celebrity is now presented as 'multi-medial', 'multi-textual', and interconnected: it is difficult to define them based on the medium they are presented in. But when it comes to analyzing the celebrity, they argue that their cross-medial appearance only makes them more interesting as a researchable phenomenon, since it moves through more and more media and presents an image that becomes even more complex by the discourse it is presented in (Holmes and Redmond 5).

This cross-medial context is therefore providing even more importance to apply a theoretical approach on celebrities as a phenomenological concept.

One of the most known and acknowledged academics to write about stardom and celebrity studies is the English professor Richard Dyer (Bennett, *Historicizing* 358). His research made the academic analysis of celebrity studies more accepted among scholars, regardless of the popular character of its object of study (Holmes and Redmond 3). In two of his canonical publications about these concepts, called *Stars* and *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, he examines the theoretical field around stars as a phenomenon. Even though his books are written in 1979 and 1987 and mainly focus on stars as represented in Hollywood film productions, his theories are very relevant to the present day star phenomenon: they are built on several general ideas about media representation and therefore provide a strong basis for many other researches on stardom. In the article mentioned earlier, Su Holmes and Sean Redmond describe Richard Dyer as follows:

Working from within film studies (but certainly drawing upon intellectual tools and paradigms from media and cultural studies), Dyer famously drew attention to the analysis of stars in the realm of representation and ideology: stars were semiotic signs that could be ‘read’ and deconstructed. Dyer focused attention upon the wider ideological and political function of stardom as a phenomenon, foregrounding how stars articulate highly visible discourses on personhood – and within a capitalist society, individuality – at any one time. But one of the key influences of his work was to foster sophisticated conceptual tools for reading the star ‘image’ (Dyer 1986) (*Journal* 5).

This reference to the reading of the image can indeed be called a key feature in Dyer’s theories about stardom. In *Heavenly Bodies*, he explains that his main purpose is to suggest “how general ideas about the stars can be thought through in particular cases” by exploring its social significances, its relation to audiences and its relation to both the individual and society (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* ix, x). But above all, he writes about the question of representation, and the perception of the individual in society that receives the represented image. The two complex sides of the concept of stardom, namely “the constitutive elements of stars and what they consist of” and “the notions of personhood and social reality that they relate to”, are thus both analyzed by Dyer (2). Dyer states that all images are ‘made’: stars are produced by the media industry, just like many other appearances are manufactured (4). Two decades before Holmes and Redmond, he already argued that stars are shaped by the cross-medial context in which they are constructed: the images are “always extensive, multimedia, intertextual” (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 3). According to him, “a star image consists both of what we normally refer to as his or her ‘image’, made up of screen roles and obviously stage-managed

public appearances, and also of images of the manufacture of the 'image' and of the real person who is the site or occasion of it" (8). The audience is hereby just as important for the image making as the media industry is: it is both about the production and the reception that make the image come alive. Audiences feel the need to see the celebrity as 'real' as he or she can be, even though everything they know is mostly based on the constructed and mediated appearance that is presented to us. The media encourages the public to "think in terms of 'really'", since the star is portrayed as a real person to relate with: a phenomenon that is very constructed and 'unreal', to use Dyer's words (*Heavenly Bodies* 2).

Regardless of this 'unreal construction' that the media gives us, Dyer states that it is easy to explain why stars matter to us. According to him, "stars articulate what it is to be a human being in contemporary society; that is, they express the particular notion we hold of the person, of the 'individual'" (8). In our society, he argues, we are separating ourselves into "public and private persons" and "producing and consuming persons", and stars are hereby representing the negotiation between all of these personal stages. They are the ones that give us the ability to make sense of the division between 'publicly constructed' and 'real', even though a star image is all about appearance when we look at it in its truest form (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 2). The relation between the individual 'subject' and the public 'society' is hereby both promising and problematic, since the individual builds society but can become invisible in the masses as well. However, the notion of the core of the 'self' has always been perceived as important. Stars represent this common assumption: underneath their images and different looks, we are convinced that there is one single human being performing them all, always being the same 'self'. Media is playing in on this by taking us 'beyond the image', presenting an 'authentic' and 'sincere' image of the star's 'real private self' (11). We read biographies, we look at backstage footage and 'privately' posted pictures of the artist on social media websites - all to be as close to the 'real' person behind the act as possible: someone we most likely will never meet but feel close to anyway, thanks to those media images. According to Dyer, the "degree to which, and the manner in which, what the star really is" can be found in "some inner, private, essential core" and determines how "the star phenomenon reproduces the overriding ideology of the person in contemporary society" (*Heavenly Bodies* 14). However, we must always keep in mind that all of those 'private' and 'authentic' images are just as produced by the mass media as the 'insincere', 'constructed' and 'manipulative' public images are (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 15). Star images, both the 'authentic' and the 'constructed', are representing "typical ways of behaving, feeling and

thinking in contemporary society”, and present a model to construct the individual life in the world and social categories we live in: making sense of our lives becomes easier by following an image that appears natural, even though it comes with some very blurred lines towards the artificially constructed (18). As Dyer describes radically: “(...) both stardom and particular stars are seen as owing their existence solely to the machinery of their production. Not only are they not a phenomenon of consumption (in the sense of demand); they do not even have substance or meaning (Dyer, *Stars* 13). The marketing factor that lies behind the creation of stars, which is a strong driving force in this phenomenon, is also acknowledged: he argues that “stars are made for profit”, and that “stars are involved in making themselves into commodities; they are both labour and the thing that labour produces” (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 5). It is a statement that is closely linked to the concept of human branding, which is a subject that has been analyzed thoroughly from out of the perspective of commercial Marketing Studies. Matthew Thomson, a Canadian associate professor in the field of Marketing, analyzed the relation between the ‘celebrity brand’ and consumer attachments, which proved to be a crucial factor in this research. In Chapter 2, more of the construction of the human brand and the commercial side of the celebrity image will be discussed, based on the theories of Thomson.

Following Richard Dyer, many other scholars began to focus on the theories behind stardom and celebrity studies. Graeme Turner, an Australian Professor of Cultural Studies, is one of them and wrote several pieces on celebrity studies.⁴ In his book *Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia*, he takes Dyer’s theories into the 21st century by agreeing on the idea that the concept of celebrity is constructed within a system of representation, from where the celebrity ‘self’ functions within the public sphere (Holmes, *Starring* 10). He states that celebrity “is not a property of specific individuals. Rather, it is constituted discursively, by the way in which the individual is represented” (Turner et al., *Fame Games* 11). Just like Dyer, he also recognizes a relation between, in his terms, the image of the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘extraordinary’: both of which are being underlined within the concept of celebrity. Stars are presented as normal people like us, people that we can relate and feel close to, but are presented as special and extraordinary at the same time (22). It is clearly a phenomenon that is made possible by the forms of mass media available nowadays, presenting the star on many screens and magazines. Chris Rojek, an London-based professor

⁴ University of Queensland Australia. 2010. 30 April 2014. <<http://cccs.uq.edu.au/turner>>.

of Sociology, even made a distinction between several types of celebrity that are brought forward today: ‘ascribed’ celebrity (famous because of their background/lineage like royalty members or heirs), ‘achieved’ celebrity (those that became famous because of their talents), and ‘attributed’ celebrity (making one famous by media representation only) (Rojek, *Celebrity* 28), stating that the celebrity ‘self’, and thus the ‘private’ constructed image as well as the public image, now clearly functions within the possibilities of attributed celebrity through media and its presenting of the image (Holmes, *Starring* 10).

The field of celebrity studies is being broadened more and more. As explained, the key ideas that most academics address while following Dyer’s footsteps are mainly based on the division between the private and the public image, and the amount of ‘realness’ that is presented to the public. The audience wants to see the ‘real’ person behind the constructed facade that is being created and presented in media products: the public is interested in seeing that the person behind the celebrity status is ‘just as real’ as we are. Seeing the ‘self’ of someone that most people will probably never meet is thereby providing an example of how to present ourselves in society, which makes the celebrity a ‘role model’ for the ‘ordinary’ person. In the next paragraph, theories about the adulation towards these celebrities are put in the spotlight: how is a celebrity image molded into a legend, an icon that functions as an example for many fans to follow? How are concepts like authenticity and worshipping linked to this tendency? By analyzing those terms, the theoretical ideas behind emotional attachments towards stars are brought forward.

1.2 Authenticity, Emotional Attachment and Celebrity Worshipping

As we could already briefly read in paragraph 1, the star image is just as much created by the media as it is by the public: reception ‘makes’ an image just as much as production does. In the case of celebrity stardom, it is the way in which the star image is perceived by its fans that keeps an image alive, makes it grow or diminish. In this paragraph, we will look at some important aspects of the process of star reception, and how these celebrity images retain their powerful characteristics. As Richard Dyer already introduced to us in his book *Heavenly Bodies*, it is very much the case of presenting the ‘real’ that is playing in on feelings of relatedness on the side of the audience: the audience wants to experience the authentic and the sincere when looking at a public celebrity figure. In his article “A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity”, which was published as a chapter in the book *Stardom*:

Industry of Desire (1991), Dyer decides to go into this subject of the presentation of the 'authentic'. While looking at the film *A Star is Born* and taking this production as a case study, he examines the meanings behind this term and how it relates to stardom. According to him, the "most common-sensical notions attached to the words 'star' and 'charisma'" are "notions like magic, power, fascination, and also authority, importance and aura", which are tightly linked to the "degree to which stars are accepted as truly being what they appear to be" (*Stardom* 132). Words like genuine, sincere, immediate, spontaneous and real are used when talking about the authentic characteristics of a star, which are 'demanded' in order to accept the star in the way he or she is portrayed: it 'secures' the star status (133). According to Dyer, "authenticity is both a quality necessary to the star phenomenon to make it work, and also the quality that guarantees the authenticity of the other particular values a star embodies (...). It is an effect of authenticating authenticity that gives the star charisma (...)" (133). The defining of whether a star is authentic and truthful is based on the exact same notions that we use for 'regular' social affairs around us as well, determining whether an individual is behaving 'truthful' to his or her personality: it is the individual showing its true and sincere self that matters in contemporary society. The star, being far away from normal everyday life, is presented and made by the media, which is perceived as the exact opposite of sincerity. But regardless of these constructive characteristics, the star is both presented and received as genuine, as truer than an image. The reason for this, according to Dyer, is that we know that the person behind that image goes on living their lives when the media is gone, and we are all well aware of this. Somewhere behind the image, there is a 'real' existence in the real world (135). The fact that stars are 'made' through photographic media images is the key element that makes us aware of the human being behind the star image, since we see all kinds of imagery on the celebrity in public and in private surroundings. Here, we arrive at the public/private binary again, the private being in direct linkage to authenticity as a concept. As Dyer describes:

The basic paradigm is just this – that what is behind or below the surface is, unquestionably and virtually by definition, the truth. Thus features on stars which tell us that the star is *not* like he or she appears to be on screen serve to reinforce the authenticity of the star image as a whole (*Stardom* 136).

This process, as Dyer states it, can either break or reinforce the star's constructed image that is presented by the media. Seeing that someone is exactly the same person as the star image would suggest, can reinsure that this star is sincere in what he or she presents of himself. A

different personality behind the image, however, could either reinforce the feeling of realness underneath the facades more, or get interpreted as someone performing a fake personality, manipulating the crowd, which will result in a shattered illusion. Regardless of the outcome of situations like this, the ‘rhetoric of authenticity’ can be perceived as a complicated but important system when analyzing stardom (*Stardom* 137). Nonetheless, the value of authenticity seems to lie underneath the surface: in where the surface is all planned, controlled and constructed, the underlying ‘realness’ is situated below that. The star’s personality, in Dyer’s words the “own immediate (= not controlled), spontaneous (= unpremeditated) and essential (= private) self” can definitely shine through in the image, but is part of something underlying (139).

The appealing factor of the star’s true self then must be a combination of star quality, or ‘charisma’, and authenticity. The charismatic character of a star, once defined by Max Weber as “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least superficially exceptional qualities”, is shining through in all the mediated images of the star, which makes us only want to see the authentic character of the personality behind it even more (Weber xviii). We look up to celebrities when their charismatic character reaches us and appeals to us, something that could easily be compared to basic theories on the concept of the ‘hero’. According to Sigmund Freud, who analyzed this phenomenon in 1961, a hero is fulfilling “two basic functions for their admirers: identification and projection” (Hegele and Kieser 305). In Freud’s perspective, the fans of a hero-like figure (politician, celebrity, etcetera) look up to him or her because they function as a “yardstick for one’s own achievements” and being an example for the “perfection that one wishes to reach oneself” (306). Heroes are ‘ego ideals’: the embodiment of what a person wishes to reach for himself, which is why they identify with them while contributing to their idealization, and are projecting their own feelings onto the body of a idolized public figure (306). This identification is facilitated by shared characteristics, attitudes or opinions, as Freud argues: we believe that our hero is similar to us. Adding this point of view to the theories we analyzed so far, we can argue that the hero, in this analysis the celebrity, is thus seen to be one to identify with on a level that has to be experienced as as authentic and sincere as possible - something that goes hand in hand with and is activated by the star’s ‘aura’ that is appealing to us.

Freud’s point of view is recognizable in many approaches within Celebrity Studies nowadays: think only of Richard Dyer’s theories as described in this chapter. Just as we could have read

that the star as a phenomenological concept is far more complicated than one would expect, the relationship between the star and the audience thus has to be also viewed in this way: there are many sociological elements and relationships that can be taken into account when we look at the interaction between the star and the crowd. According to Andrew Tudor, there are four categories recognizable in the star/audience relationship, in which Freud's basic principles of the hero's function are strongly embedded: emotional affinity, self-identification, imitation, and projection (Dyer, *Stars* 81). It shines a different light on the star/audience binary since it gives several gradations of relating to the celebrity, *emotional affinity* being the most subtle and, according to Tudor, the most common one, describing the general relatedness one feels towards a public figure. The category of *self-identification*, then, is a very Freudian approach towards the relationship, since it describes how the "involvement has reached the point at which the audience-member places himself in the same situation and persona of the star" (Tudor 81). *Imitation*, being the third category in Tudor's theory, can then be seen as an extension of this Freudian perspective, describing how the audience (especially youth) takes the celebrity as a model for the daily life, taking it "beyond cinema-going" (81). Finally, the (again Freudian) notion of *projection* is taken into account: imitation merges into projection "at the point at which the process becomes more than a simple mimicking of clothing, hairstyle, kissing and the like" (81-82).

To which extent the celebrity is given a central position in the fan's life can thus vary extremely, since the fan can either behave as a distant admirer or be the imitator or projector that adulates the celebrity while treating him or her as a divine figure. Most extreme forms of adoration can therefore result in what academics refer to as 'celebrity worshipping': something that is often linked with religious practices, as the American scholar Sean McCloud describes in his article "Popular Culture Fandoms, the Boundaries of Religious Studies, and the Project of the Self". Recognizing some shared characteristics in celebrity worshipping and religion, McCloud states that both phenomena are based on the search for identity and community (the former being linked to Dyer's theories), and he takes this theory even further by recognizing a tendency that he calls "the late modern 'project of the self'" (McCloud 188). McCloud here argues that, in modern times like these, people are completely free to choose who they are, in contrast to earlier times. As a result, people are searching for their identities, and find these in cultural heritage, goods and activities. Popular culture belongs to this list, and provides the possibility to create an identity through lifestyle preferences and taste (200). According to McCloud, celebrity worshipping therefore functions

merely as a way to distinguish oneself in choice of taste and fandom, in order to create an identity and ‘project of the self’. And even though this search for identity through worshipping can be divided into gradations (from ‘low worshipping’ like watching and reading about celebrities to ‘higher levels’ like emphatic over-identifications and compulsive behaviorism), we can definitely see some overlap with a certain religious approach (McClutcheon et al. 67). We can thus state that celebrity worship is functioning as a kind of ‘implicit religion’, understanding the celebrity as ‘divine’ in many possible gradations (Haughey and Campbell 117).

The importance of the celebrity when looking at the audience’s perspective on its own identity creation, gives another important insight on why the notion of authenticity and sincerity are so crucial for the relation between stars and society. The search for ‘realness’ is in many ways a self-centered business, in which we look for aspects of the celebrity that enrich us: our urge to adore a celebrity is in many ways linked to societal practices in that sense. But what happens when a celebrity dies? What happens to the position of the star, to both the individual and society as a whole, when the living body behind the image is no longer present? How is the process of mourning a celebrity constructed, when looking at this phenomenon from an academic perspective? With the theories on celebrity studies, celebrity worshipping and identity creation in mind, a specification to the directions of the deceased celebrity icon is needed and will be discussed in the third paragraph of this chapter.

1.3 Immortality, Mourning and Nostalgia

When looking at the theories that have been brought forward in the previous paragraphs, one can only conclude that the relation between a celebrity and his spectator can be experienced as a rather personal one, depending on the amount of ‘worship’ that the latter is experiencing and expressing. We should therefore take into account that the celebrity, if only being a fictive image of the ‘real’ that we think is behind the façade of the constructively produced star image, could be perceived to stand very close to our personal lives. When a celebrity passes away, then, his or her death causes a much greater sense of grief than one would initially think. After feeling related to a celebrity for a long time, his or her death can cause a great mourning amongst the public. In this paragraph, this process of grief will be analyzed thoroughly. The representation of death in the media, the public reactions to the death of a celebrity, and the possible transformation of the celebrity image from the moment a star

passes away - it can all be considered as crucial for the analysis of a celebrity's afterlife within our contemporary society.

The way in which death as a phenomenon is represented by the media has been a subject of research for many scholars: after all, the media has the power to create and present images of all kinds, including that of death. It is a phenomenon that is generally received as 'scary', according to Keith F. Durkin, an American Professor of Sociology, Psychology and Criminal Justice.⁵ In his article on his view on the media representation of death, called "Death, Dying, and the Dead in Popular Culture" (2003), he introduces us to this specific academic field of research, and thereby immediately acknowledges the importance of the representation of death in our popular culture. According to Durkin, our society attaches 'fearful meanings' towards death as a concept: while focusing on contemporary American society, he states that death has become an abstract, invisible and scary, yet fascinating phenomenon for the generations born after World War II (43). However, he states that the representations of death as presented by the media do "help individuals deal with the disruptive social impacts of death and dying" and help us redefine them as "something other than terror" (48). 'Thanatological entertainment', with the first word referring to the study of death and dying, has therefore become a crucial part of our society: something that the mass media facilitates by giving us thanatological themes in fictional stories and (live) news reports (Durkin 43, 44). Stories on death have the power to strike the public with their 'shocking' or dramatic entertainment factor, regardless whether it is fictional or a representation of reality, and confront us with a concept that would otherwise be scary and unknown. Death, as a narrative theme in all kinds of genres, therefore became a valuable topic in the way it is being presented to us in contemporary society today.

The way death as a valuable concept is positioned in relation to the public and the private sphere is a theme that has been given a great deal of academic attention. In 1995, Tony Walter, Jane Littlewood and Michael Pickering wrote on the media's representation of death as well. In their article called "Death in the News: The Public Invigilation of Private Emotion" they describe several points of view on death being either "dismissed to the private sphere" or being "very much present in the public sphere" (580). Being ahead of Durkin, they too argue that the mass media is a public arena "in which death makes a more-than-daily appearance", taking death as a "key element of the entertainment" in fictional television and

⁵ *Ohio Northern University*. 2014. 26 May 2014. <http://www.onu.edu/academics/college_of_arts_sciences/academic_departments/psychology_sociology_criminal_justice/our_faculty/keith_f_durkin>.

film drama's and being just as central in the "daily news reporting" (Walter et al. 581-582). However, of all the death cases that are taking place in this world, only a tiny amount is represented in the media: cases that seem to be either extreme cases of "public deaths of private individuals", or "deaths of public figures" (582). In all death stories presented by the media, however, the level of extremity decides how much media attention it will get: according to Walter, Littlewood and Pickering, the commercial mass media will eventually always choose for the story that makes newspapers "sell their product" and lets TV channels "maintain their ratings" (583). The covering of a death story therefore has to be extraordinary in order to become publicly visible, which underlines the ordinary/ extraordinary relation and the relation between the private and the public once again. As the authors argue, this private/public binary can be characterized by recognizing the "public invigilation of private emotion" (584). Activating as much emotions as possible, the media presents images that strike the public again and again. The people's sense of humanity is thus directly addressed and therefore automatically influenced and regulated by the emotions that are presented to them, which results in an emotional invigilation by the press: it is all about "the simultaneous arousal of, and regulatory keeping watch over, the affective dispositions and responses associated with death" (Walter et al. 586). The media is in that way thus 'regulating' which feelings should be felt in which situation by presenting these emotions to the public, and demonstrating how these feelings should be expressed. Grief is thereby presented as a natural and healthy emotion that is necessary to show whenever one is feeling sad: we are guided in how we should grieve, arguably because we need that guidance in our current society. In the authors' words:

If expressing grief is 'natural', then it must be harmful to repress the tears – whatever the situation. Public situations, however, are not natural but governed by socially constructed rules. This is recognized in all traditional societies in which, contrary to what is suggested in some 'pop' psychology, the public display of the tears of grief is not free expression by a feeling individual but a display that is strongly governed by cultural norms (591).

According to Walter, Littlewood and Pickering, the public is "told to cry" by our society, and yet "they are given no guidelines as to which situations are appropriate for expressing grief" (592). The public discourse of death as presented by the mass media here functions as a 'guide' for the public by 'demonstrating' how to express feelings of sorrow 'correctly'. The audience is emotionally influenced, surveillanced, and steered in the 'right' direction in order to perceive cases of death the 'right' way.

It is here that the celebrity steps in, once again taking a public position and providing a behavioral example to the public. The fear of death, being an unknown and frightening concept, is literally being ‘publicly’ embodied by a celebrity when he or she deceases, which makes the celebrity the very personification of the point of connection between life and death: the star “functions symbolically to blur the bifurcation between the living and the dead”, to use Durkin’s words (47). In extension to Walter, Littlewood and Pickering’s perspective, one can argue that the celebrity’s function to make sense of this life and death division gives the audience a public way to express private grief while ‘learning’ to deal with the inner emotions. The death of a celebrity releases a lot of private emotions that become public and collective when the masses shares those feeling of grief, which makes the division between the private and the public not as easy to define. Michael Brennan, author of “Towards a Sociology of (Public) Mourning?” (2001), reviewed some works that have been written on the mourning of great icons in modern history and analyzed this collective process within our contemporary society. Stating that there has been a growing interest in emotion as a driving force for human behavior, Brennan, underlining a difference between the mourning *for* a celebrity and the mourning *of* a celebrity, recognizes a major academic difference in these two approaches: while the first is focusing completely on mourning as a sociological process and observing it from a distance, the latter is recognizing the internal process within the mourning individual, taking factors like identity building and friction between the private and public into account and treating mourning “as a performative action” (Brennan 206-207). In looking at mourning from the sociological perspective Brennan refers to Walter, who states that mourning (in this case for Diana, Princess of Wales) “is regarded as a socially constructed event, for which – in the absence of socially proscribed mourning behaviour – people received instruction by watching others, thereby learning to ‘feel’” (207). However, in Brennan’s eyes, this collective perspective falls short since the individual and emotional motivation to mourn is not acknowledged here (208). Whereas the sociological approach holds that true emotions of grief are only present in the private spheres and public mourning should be perceived as a social process of copying, the “lived human experience” is, according to Brennan, the element that should be focused on. According to him, “mourning is in this sense not simply the outward of public display (as a set of social practices) that intimates the experience of private loss but is instead a process which is integral to the development of the self” (209). When looking at the personal function of celebrity mourning, then, Brennan argues that celebrities provide the possibility to project “unconscious desires and fantasies” on, which makes the celebrity a prominent figure in our lives. The “losses

which cannot be mourned” in real life, not knowing how to handle the loss of a (loved) person in our lives, are then all released when a celebrity, someone “with whom we have invested our hopes and fears”, dies (Brennan 210).

From Brennan’s perspective, the meanings that are being attached to the losses of loved ones in our private lives are thus being enlarged by the loss of a loved celebrity, which can contribute to the major intensity of a public mourning process. The object that is being mourned therefore automatically seems to become less important than the mourning process itself (Brennan 210). Didier Courbet and Marie-Pierre Fourquet-Courbet, both French academics, very recently wrote on the strong relationship between celebrities and fans in their article “When a Celebrity Dies... Social Identity, Uses of Social Media, and the Mourning Process Among Fans: the Case of Michael Jackson” (2014). Following D. C. Giles, they call the intimate celebrity-fan relationship ‘parasocial interactions’, hereafter called PSI, being established in only one direction: the direction from fan to celebrity. PSI, described as a imagined inter-human relationship “with fictional characters and celebrities during media consumption”, generally takes place when the celebrity is still alive, but lives on when a celebrity is deceased (Courbet 2). The ‘fictive’ relationship, which is based on a “strong attraction to the celebrity and what they do”, the “social identity that it gives to the fan”, and the “centrality of the fan status” that “provides a particular lifestyle and allows fans to meet other people who are equally passionate” can get intimate as real life relationships: it is therefore no surprise that their notion of ‘bereavement’, being defined as “grieving the loss of a loved one following their death” is added to their research on PSI (Courbet 1, 2). While mentioning that this ‘bereavement’ can generally lead to “serious depression and even suicide”, the authors argue that the process of mourning is a performance that has to be done in order to give meaning to the loss of this ‘loved one’ and adjust ones search for identity because of this (3). Based on the results of their research on fans’ emotions towards the loss of Michael Jackson, the authors concluded that, along with the loss of a celebrity ‘loved one’, many elements of the personal construction of identity were perceived to be lost too (Courbet 5). Memories of situations, of relations with people, of childhoods, etcetera: all of these remembrances are centered on Michael Jackson as a mediating, and therefore valuable, key figure of reminiscence, which arguably provides the basis for PSI between fans and celebrities (Courbet 5). It is therefore a feeling of losing one’s ‘history’ just as much as losing one’s current identity: the first arguably being related to the concept of nostalgia, while the latter being based more on the affection with the celebrity as a personality or as an artist. Nostalgia,

being defined by Morris B. Holbrook as “a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for possessions and activities associated with days of yore”, is activated by the celebrity by being linked to numerous valuable memories (Holbrook 245). Being a process in which individuals deal with negative emotions based on positive memories, the concept of nostalgia can in this case be seen as an internal mourning process of identity construction: we mourn for a personality that has not been physically part of our lives and has yet been playing a significant role in it (Evans et al. 4). But even though the death of a loved celebrity might destabilize an identity construction, one can hold on to the celebrity-based construction of identity just as much as they feel the ‘loss’: the love for an artist can be a form of identity production that does not necessarily have to be harmed. The Internet and the use of social media are modern developments that only increase the “act of being a fan and PSI”, being able to easily express and share feelings of grief towards other fans and showing one’s ‘true’ distinctive love for a public figure (Courbet 2, 7, 8). The need to express oneself as a grieving individual and being part of the mourning social group at the same time gives the fan the ability to express one’s own feelings of identity disruption (9).

Since the celebrity figure is basically no more than a constructed image (as described in paragraph 1.1), one can argue that the celebrity image is able to live on, regardless of the death of the famous body. After all, if we think of Michael Jackson again, the image of the artist is still very much in our minds, regardless of the death of the artist himself. In a way, one can state that a celebrity becomes immortal by living on as an image: something that makes the notion of ‘death’ somewhat unstable, to say the least. According to Durkin, the majority of all of the presented “manifestations of death” are dealing with the notion of the *post-self*, which is exactly what is represented by deceased celebrities (47). This term is describing “the reputation and influence that an individual has after his or her death”, constituting “a form of symbolic immortality” while continuing to exist in “the memories of the living” (Durkin 47). This post-self, being the last shape that an image of a celebrity will take on, is an extension of the image that was already adored by the fan groups in the times when the artist was still alive. According to Ann Kaloski Naylor, who wrote a short article called “Michael Jackson’s Post-Self” (2010), the post-self as a phenomenon is not just a phenomenon that is randomly constructed after one’s death, but is still interconnected with the time when one was still alive, even though it is able to change over time. According to her:

The post-self is based not on the notion of an after-life, but on a person's identity within life and is primarily a secular expression of grieving which overlaps with the practice of remembrance, but has more form and substance, as well as unpredictability: the post-self continues to change and grow after death (251).

The way someone is presenting his or her own self (or as one's 'self' is being presented by the ones that are producing a celebrity image, to tune into Dyer's theories once again), is thus, self-evidently, striking for the way one is remembered after one's death. Everything a celebrity leaves behind, from 'authentic' images of their personal characteristics to actual products that he or she produced (music, paintings, etcetera), leaves a 'legacy' that makes up how a public personality will be remembered and, ultimately, adulated. However, one can argue that something does radically change when death takes place. From the very moment a popular and well-appreciated public personality dies, the focus seems to be on this persona more than ever. One can argue that the celebrity, once being a very popular artist and role model for his or her fans, is immediately turned into a legendary figure by being mourned, grieved, and put on a pedestal more than the celebrity ever experienced when he or she was still alive. Sean McCloud, who was already discussed earlier when describing the similarities between fandom and religion, recognizes some religious aspects in 'dead celebrity fandom' as well (200). However, he recognizes that even this adulation of the dead icon is nothing more than a 'late modern project of the self', meaning the construction of one's own identity in contemporary society (201). He presents the example of Elvis Presley, who can be seen as a religious Saint to many, but first and foremost functions as a creator of his fans' identity (201). Elvis is who his fans want to be, whom they admire: he functions as an ideal personality. And same goes for many other celebrities: graves are being decorated, memorials are being held and tributes are organized, all to honor the ideal persona who functions as an exemplary role model for its fans, who are in their turn constructing their identity based on this iconic personality (201). The adulation might look like a religious act, but McCloud argues that it is nothing but the project of the self that lies at the heart of the commitment to the deceased star. According to him, fans participate in a community that is "tied to a nostalgic past, identity and self-fulfillment", in where "the dead celebrity functions as an exemplar of living" - someone to identify with (202).

In a time in which emphasis is increasingly placed on sensationalism and fast entertainment within the modern possibility of information spreading in our cross-medial culture, it is clear that the presented celebrity image in the media determines our perception of the public

persona, regardless whether this celebrity is still alive or already deceased (McCurdy 236). The public is completely mesmerized by the cult around the presented superstar, and believes in the myth around the image for its own reasons: a myth that flourishes even more when a loved celebrity passes away (Ebert xiii). The star is adulated and praised from the moment he or she dies, causing a great amount of grief. How great the process of mourning becomes, then, largely depends on how attached the fan is to his or her celebrity icon, and the intensity of the PSI between the star and one's fan: the more meaning the celebrity persona was attributed in the private lives of the audience, the more he or she will be mourned for. As we could have read, it is a tendency that has everything to do with the way the public is able to express and process feelings of sadness and grief, in which the star then merely functions as a demonstration of how to cope with the loss of a loved one. By participating in the (public) process of mourning and adulating a deceased celebrity, the public is 'guided' in their process of dealing with the emotions they 'should' be feeling. It is a theoretical and analytical approach towards a phenomenon that seems to be a 'normal' occurrence in our 'normal' lives, which makes the simple worshipping of a (dead) celebrity a rather complicated phenomenon. In the next chapter, the research will be focused more on the specific case study of Ramses Shaffy. In which ways is this Dutch national artist remembered in our current cross-medial society? Which tributes are produced ever since Shaffy passed away, and how can we link these productions to the concept of human branding as described by Thomson? The second chapter, describing how we can recognize the mourning of Ramses Shaffy in contemporary society and linking these findings to the theoretical concept of human branding, will give us an overview of how the theories behind stardom and celebrity mourning are actually occurring in real modern life.

CHAPTER 2

RAMSES SHAFFY AS A HUMAN BRAND

Since his passing away, the Dutch singer, artist and personality Ramses Shaffy has been represented both as a loved celebrity figure and as a national representative of Dutch nostalgia and authenticity. From the moment his heart stopped beating, he has been living on in several media products that were all produced as a result of the growing demand for tributes to the Dutch celebrity. In this chapter, the most prominent productions will be brought forward and analyzed thoroughly. The first paragraph will tell us more about the frequently represented history of the singer and introduce the biggest honoring events and media products that were produced after the loss of Ramses Shaffy in the last four years, including the recently produced television series and the musical theatre show that both portray Shaffy's life. The second paragraph will then link these examples to the concept of human brands, which is a phenomenon that is very tightly connected to the concept of stardom. While relying mostly on Matthew Thomson's approach towards the phenomenon of human branding and his definition of the term and looking at the case of Ramses Shaffy at the same time, a first analysis of the commercial aspects of producing tributes for a deceased and adulated star within the process of public mourning can be made.

2.1 Deceased Shaffy on Display in a Cross-Medial World

At the age of 79, Ramses Shaffy's intriguing life came to an end, along with a way of living that can arguably be seen as one of the factors that has made him so popular among the Dutch public. He appeared to be a man with a complicated background: born in in 1933 in a French hospital in Neuilly-sur-Reine, he spent the first years of his life living with his mother, a Polish and Russian countess. His father was an Egyptian Diplomat which remained largely absent in Shaffy's life, and soon his mother would also disappear: when he was only six years old, his mother put him on the train to Holland to let other people take care of him.⁶ After spending some time in an orphanage, he was adopted by the loving Snellen family living in Leiden, which was where Shaffy spent the rest of his childhood (Hoogmoed 18). When he came to Amsterdam and applied for Theatre School after studying Art for one year, it soon became clear that he was one of the most promising actors of his time. *Het Algemeen*

⁶ Gelder, Henk van. "Ramses Shaffy: mateloze levenslust in stug land". 2009. NRC. 11 March 2014. <http://vorige.nrc.nl/kunst/article2426736.ece/Ramses_Shaffy_76_overleden>.

Handelsblad, a national Dutch Newspaper, reviewed him as “capricious, curious but still unmistakably talented, of which flair and *savoir faire* were the most striking characteristics” after seeing Shaffy’s graduation performance.”⁷ He immediately got the chance to play great parts in several plays at the *Nederlandse Comedie*, which was a famous theatre group in The Netherlands at that time. However, Ramses appeared to build up quite a reputation for misbehaving in the theatre, showing up too late, being drunk, or just not being able to play his part for whichever excuse he made up at that moment.⁸ After getting fired at the theatre for all of those reasons combined, Shaffy used his freedom to start his own theatrical program, centered on his own written songs. ‘Shaffy Chantant’, Shaffy’s first group to make theatrical poetry with, consisted of ‘his’ discovery Liesbeth List, model Loes Hamel and pianist Polo de Haas, and was the beginning of Shaffy’s musical career. Even though he never fully gave up on acting, it was the music that seemed to drive him further onto the road of both success and destruction. According to many sources that have been written about the artist, he had two very problematic characteristics that drove him to the lowest points of his life: his incapacity to deal with money, and his urge to drink exuberantly. Those elements both forced him to cope with debts, relational problems and, eventually, even health problems: due to Korsakov disease, a disease that one gets from excessive alcohol abuse, Shaffy had no other choice than to spend the last eight years of his life in a nursing home in Amsterdam, which was arranged for him by his dear friend Liesbeth List.⁹ However, the two major problems defined not only the path and ending of his life, but also his reputation to the public. Knowing Shaffy’s history, the public judged him as being a ‘symbol’ for rebelliousness and freedom in the 1960s and 70s, being one of Holland’s most distinctive personalities of his time. It was something that the media was portraying as well: from the start of his career to the very end of his life, journalists have been covering Shaffy’s uncontrollable way of living and the destruction that came along with it. Many of these coverages were based on true facts and stories: Shaffy has always been very open about his extravagant lifestyle, especially when his life drew to an end. However, the older Ramses Shaffy got, those already quite sensational stories were highlighted more and more: it appeared to be stories that the public wanted to hear, making it only more melodramatic and entertaining. When Shaffy’s life came to an end, eventually, those melodramatics were underlined to its maximum: a good life story is something that accentuates the individuality of the artist and speaks to the public. In the case

⁷ Gelder, Henk van. “Ramses Shaffy: mateloze levenslust in stug land. 2009. NRC. 11 March 2014. <http://vorige.nrc.nl/kunst/article2426736.ece/Ramses_Shaffy_76_overleden>.

⁸ *Idem*.

⁹ As told by Daan Bartels, guide of the ‘Shaffy Walk’ through Amsterdam. 22 May 2014.

of Ramses, his death in 2009 only encouraged the media to blow up the drama, and highlight the toughest parts of his life: it made Ramses Shaffy look like a rebellious hero even more than was being done when he was alive. As a result, we have seen several striking examples of large media productions that function as serious tributes to Shaffy, playing in on the public's collective feelings of grief that the public was experiencing. Book publishers provided us the chance to read about Ramses' fascinating life in several book publications, theatre producers created a musical that showed us the rollercoaster life of Shaffy on stage, a biographical (but fictional) television series was being produced, guided city walks through Shaffy's hometown Amsterdam are being organized and the Theatre Database of the University of Amsterdam recently opened an exposition about Shaffy's life in one of the faculty buildings. Each and every one of these five examples belongs to a different category within the media landscape, but together they all appear to have the same purpose: honoring Ramses Shaffy by portraying his 'special' tumultuous lifestyle, and giving the public a way to mourn the 'hero' that became so important in their lives.

2.1.1 Book Publications

Being a true all-round artist, Ramses Shaffy could do more than sing and act. Besides writing songs, painting canvases and creating theatrical pieces on stage he also wrote short stories and poetry, and a large part of his written work was already being published while he was still alive. For example, 'Het Boek Lielje', which was a book containing an absurd story written by Shaffy and illustrations made by his then boyfriend Joop Admiraal, was published for the first time in 1964 and got reprinted in 1975: it was Shaffy's first of a select amount of publications that would be for sale to the Dutch public.¹⁰ In 1979, a first publication of Shaffy's lyrics was printed with many to follow after, and in 1997 his journal notes would be published, along with some of his own watercolor illustrations. In the beginning of the 21st century, when Shaffy landed in the final decade of his life, some more bibliographical publications were produced, starting with 'Ramses Shaffy: Naakt in de Orkaan' (*Naked in the Hurricane*) which was written by Bas Steman and published in 2003. In 2004, the book 'Brieven uit Rome' (*Letters from Rome*) appeared, which consisted of many letters that Shaffy and Admiraal sent to their friend Shireen Strooker when they were on an adventurous trip to Italy (Strooker 7). In 2005, a songbook with sheet music was published, and in 2009 the public could buy a book in where Ramses was looking back on his life himself,

¹⁰ *Ramses Shaffy*. 11 March 2014. <<http://www.shaffy.nl/boeken.html>>.

accompanied by a cd with some of his songs. It was the last product of many published merchandise available on paper that Ramses Shaffy would actually hold in his hand before his death. Surprisingly enough, only one extra book was published after his passing away, called ‘We zien wel! Het wonderbaarlijkje leven van Ramses Shaffy’ (*We’ll see! The extraordinary life of Ramses Shaffy*), written by Sylvester Hoogmoed in 2011. Ramses Shaffy was thus able to experience a large part of his glorification through published materials during the last years of his life. The books that honor his celebrity persona and career could apparently already be written while he was still on this earth: in the eyes of the book publishing industry, his glory days were already in the past and available for looking back and describing them. However, Hoogmoed’s biography of the artist was considered to be slightly different than previous publications: in where former biographies appeared to romanticize the glory days of a star that was still alive, this book was giving the public the simple but striking facts of Shaffy’s life: bare facts that were “exotic enough” just the way they are, according to a review written by Henk van Gelder in *NRC Handelsblad*.¹¹ But how ‘bare’ the given facts may be in ‘We zien wel!’, it is a conspicuous fact that the first edition of this book was published in 2012 and promoted around the date that Shaffy’s would have turned 80 years old. Thus, in remembrance of Shaffy’s birthday, one that he himself would never be able to celebrate, the public was able to buy a biography that looked back on the tumultuous lifestyle of the deceased artist. The pictures, the chronologically told storylines, the interviews with Liesbeth List and other people who were dear to him, and quotes of Shaffy himself: they were all collected to make the reader feel like he is given an insight into Shaffy’s life: something which makes the audience feel close to the ‘real’ person behind the media representation, as Dyer would argue. Even though the book is perceived to only consist of ‘bare facts’, its purpose is still to give the reader a feeling of tribute, a feeling of being able to look into Shaffy’s real past. The biographies help the fans in getting a bit ‘closer’ to their adulated hero by telling them everything they want to know about the ‘real’ rebellious and artistic person behind the publicly constructed image, even though the ‘real’ persona is just as constructively presented as the public one. Nonetheless, the book publications that came out, both written by Shaffy and written about him, provide one of many ways for the public to come closer to him.

¹¹ “Genuanceerd beeld van een ‘troetelalcoholist’. 2011. NRC. <<http://www.nrc.nl/boeken/2011/12/07/genuanceerd-beeld-van-een-troetelalcoholist/>>. Last consulted on 11 March 2014.

2.1.2 *Ramses Shaffy: the Exposition*

On the 7th of March 2014, *Ramses Shaffy, the Exposition* opened its doors for the public on the Oude Turfmarkt 129 in Amsterdam. The exposition, organized by the Special Collections department of the University of Amsterdam, put a large part of Ramses Shaffy's inheritance on display for the public to dive into Shaffy's life completely. After a festive opening on the 6th of March, where Liesbeth List and many other friends and relatives of Shaffy presented the impressively big collection to the press, the Dutch public was invited to come and see the many products that Shaffy left behind. The items that are put on display, coming from many sources such as his adopted family, former colleagues and close friends, are taking the audience by the hand by giving a 'tour' through Shaffy's life, starting with original childhood pictures and family member's diaries and ending with the piano on which he used to play his last songs. Costumes that were worn in plays he used to appear in, paintings, illustrations, scrapbooks, letters towards his friends, and even the original sheet music of both known and unknown songs: it is all there to admire for Shaffy's fans. Several video projectors show old footage of the young Ramses Shaffy, presenting several scenes from plays and old television series, and even complete dressing rooms have been rebuilt, complete with the many props that he used in his time. All of it is made 'accessible' again by putting it on display, accompanied by many contributing signs explaining the context in which the curiosities were situated during Shaffy's life. With this exposition, the fan is thus able to not only admire many 'real' objects of Shaffy's historical past, but is even able to go back in time and be 'present' in the artist's life oneself. The pieces that are shown give the impression of 'realness', once again playing in on Dyer's notions of searching for the 'real' while experiencing a connectedness with a celebrity: the seeming lack of simulation makes the public actually believe that they are really getting to know Shaffy by getting to know everything about his life. The exhibition gives us the feeling that we are able to dive into Shaffy's true past, even though we consciously know that everything we see is structured by people telling us Shaffy's history.

2.1.3 *Ramses Tours*

Amsterdam: the city in where the biggest steps in Shaffy's career took place. It was his hometown, his source of inspiration, and even a much loved subject to sing about: Amsterdam was tightly linked to Ramses and the other way around. A guided walk through the city while seeing every important place in Shaffy's life therefore seemed like a logical tribute in order to keep the *post-self* of Shaffy alive and 'real'. Daan Bartels, described as "the Don Quichot of

the Dutch song” in the Dutch newspaper *Telegraaf* and founder of the website ‘Het Lied’ (*The Song*), knew he had to show the public how Shaffy experienced his city and started to organize exactly these walks.¹² When joining one of his guided walks through the city, the participant gets to see most of Shaffy’s favorite locations in Amsterdam: the houses he lived in, the bars in where he used to drink his beer, the theatres he used to perform in, and even the nursing home in where he eventually died. By walking through the city like this, the Shaffy fan experiences ‘Shaffy’s’ view on Amsterdam, the city of Shaffy. Even though the artist has been dead for over four years, we are still willing to get mesmerized by Ramses’ perspective on a town which meant everything to him, as we should believe from the lyrics of songs like ‘Het is stil in Amsterdam’ (*It is quiet in Amsterdam*) and ‘Ik denk over je na, Amsterdam’ (*I’m thinking about you, Amsterdam*). However, being a tumultuous city, Amsterdam has never stopped living after Shaffy’s death: it still exists as a beautiful and touristy city, whether Shaffy is living in it or not. Amsterdam does not need to be linked to Ramses Shaffy in order to be admired as a lively architectural landscape. However, Shaffy fans are all very willing to experience his view on the city, even though the places that the audience is pointed towards have never really ‘belonged’ to Shaffy. By looking through the eyes of a deceased icon, and again being driven to walk into his footsteps to get another step closer to Ramses as a loved deceased public figure, the city is sold to us in a different package: one we are fascinated by only because we are believed to stand in Shaffy’s shoes for just a moment while looking at the places that turned out to be important in his life. With this walk, the sensation of seeing Amsterdam through Shaffy’s eyes is turned into an interactive experience of participation and sympathizing with the hero, which makes us stand closer to the celebrity icon.

2.1.4 Ramses the Musical

A perhaps less obvious but just as successful way to create a tribute and honor the deceased artist was the creation of a musical: a theatrical piece that would bring Shaffy’s rebellious life story to the stage, for the public to see what Ramses Shaffy ‘would have been like’ as a person. The musical premiered on the first of December 2011, which was exactly two years after the day he died. Albert Verlinde Entertainment, one of the bigger musical production companies in Holland, saw the moving life story of Ramses Shaffy as something that could easily be transformed into a theatre show and expected that the public would love to see ‘their’ Ramses on stage. And indeed, the musical proved to be a great success: directly after

¹² *Daan Bartels*. 2014. 11 March 2014. <<http://www.daanbartels.nl>>.

the opening night, the biggest newspapers reviewed the musical with a minimum of four out of five stars, and the actors were being praised for their performances. William Spaaij, a young musical actor, was portraying the young, wild and free Ramses, whereas Tom Jansen and Hans Hoes were doubling the part of the elderly Ramses. In the theatrical concept, they are looking at each other from a completely different stage of their life: ‘old’ Ramses is looking back at his younger self, while spending his last days at nursing home Sarphatihuus in Amsterdam. All the famous songs were sung, all of Ramses’ dearest friends are represented, and the madness of his life is molded into one big spectacle on stage. The purposely chaotic dialogues, as written by Dick van den Heuvel, were representing both the mixed time frames and the chaos in Shaffy’s head: there was no chronological order to be found in the piece.¹³ These and many other theatrical strategies all serve to represent the character Ramses as accurate as possible. However, as Henk van Gelder states in his review for the *NRC*, it is very hard to recognize the “troubadour-like” man, who swept everyone of their feet and dragged everyone along into his way of viewing the world, in the young and passionate actor that is playing his part.¹⁴ In whatever way we look at the overall performance, it remains a staged performance in which a real star is being imitated, constructing another tributing production around a deceased legend and shaping the image of the deceased artist into something that is staged and an imitation of reality. Albert Verlinde, producer of the show, pointed out to be extremely happy with the end product, stating that “Shaffy is an icon” and that “Shaffy belongs to everybody”.¹⁵ It was exactly that spirit in which the musical was set up: to put the extravagant character and lifestyle of an icon on display for every Dutch citizen to see. At least, when they come to the theatre and pay for their ticket. The young musical loving generation that did not grow up with Shaffy now had the chance to get introduced to him: they were able to fall in love with Shaffy’s personality and music by seeing an imitation of him on stage. But regardless of this positive outcome of becoming more known among the Dutch public, the fact remains that we are looking at an actor ‘playing’ Ramses while telling a life story that is being transformed into a scripted theatrical concept for the crowd to enjoy. We are aware that we are being moved by an adapted biographic story about our national icon, and yet both the critics and the public received the tribute with open arms. It is, apparently, the successful combination of spectacle and closeness to an icon that makes this

¹³ Gelder, Henk van. “Musical Ramses spaart Shaffy niet”. 2012. *NRC*. <http://www.blauwekei.nl/cms_files/MediaGalerij/Other/otherfiles3704_00.pdf>

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ <http://www.theaterhits.nl/news/detail/theatervoorstelling_ramses_in_premiere/> . Last consulted on 11 March 2014.

tributing formula succeed. By going to this musical, the audience is able to see ‘our’ Ramses perform on stage, which is something that could never happen in reality. The staging of Shaffy’s life story in theatres and inviting every Dutch citizen to come and admire Ramses as an lively and fascinating personality makes the experiencing of Shaffy as a performer more ‘real’ then ever, and yet extremely constructed at the same time.

2.1.5 Documentaries and Television Series

From the start of Ramses Shaffy’s career a lot of performances and interviews have been recorded, which is something that makes it possible for us as a society to ‘save’ the image of Shaffy as a performer and make it part of our cultural heritage. It can therefore not be considered a surprise that the saved footage soon proved to be useful when the first documentaries about Shaffy’s life were made. For example, in 2002, film director Pieter Fleury produced the documentary ‘Ramses’: a movie that belonged to a selective amount of movies in the ‘Quality Film Collection’, which made sure it was automatically associated with high culture. It consisted of many interviews, both with Ramses and his friends, and contained many historical images of Shaffy performing on stage in the 60s and onwards, all to show the public how interesting Shaffy’s life has been. This documentary, which was made while Shaffy was still alive, soon proved to be the first out of many products that were produced with the video footages of the performing Shaffy: the images were being used for countless television shows, documentaries and DVD boxes. Hence, there was plenty of video material of Ramses Shaffy to be found, which made his history more accessible than ever.

However, even though Shaffy was still alive during the usages of the footage on him, a new and ‘televisional’ way of portraying Shaffy’s life and career came years after the day he died. On the 11th of January 2014, a bit more than four years after his passing away, the first episode of a fictional television series portraying Shaffy’s life aired on Dutch national television.¹⁶ The series, consisting of four episodes that were aired on the public broadcasting channel Nederland 2, took the life story of Shaffy and made it into a format that balanced between documentary and drama. Actors Maarten Heijmans, Noortje Herlaar and Thomas Cammaert were playing Ramses, Liesbeth and Joop in staged settings, which were representing real locations and events. But even though as many of the scenes were shot at the original location as possible, it still remained a constructed reproduction of real historical events and emotions. By looking at the television series, the audience is introduced to the life

¹⁶ *Ramses*. 2014. 28 May 2014. <<http://avro.nl/ramses/>>.

story of Shaffy that has been told in so many ways before already, but it is the fact that these stories are brought to life that makes it appealing for the spectator. Instead of focusing on real historical facts, documents and video footages, the producers of the series brought a living representation of the main characters in Shaffy's energetic adventures directly into the homes of the viewers. According to the critics, the television series proved to be a production of great quality, which was recently confirmed by winning the 'Zilveren Nipkowschijf' in June 2014: a prestigious award that is given to the best Dutch television show.¹⁷ It therefore surely is not the quality factor of the way the series is produced that could possibly be problematic for this research. The success of the series, however, remains striking in the sense that the life story of a celebrity is presented to us in a fictional way, but makes the public feel like they are looking at a 'true' biographic representation of the life of their national icon. Within four episodes containing every important happening, Shaffy's life is perceived to be a dynamic and spectacular one. The outstanding aspects of his life style are underlined, dramatized and slightly adjusted to make them appeal to the public as much as possible, even though the ideas behind the creation of the series has always been to portray Shaffy's history as accurate as possible. According to Liesbeth List, "all that was beautiful was more beautiful than you can imagine, but all the misery was much heavier than you can imagine too"¹⁸: the fictional representation of an icons' life can come quite close to reality, but the producers will never grasp the true happenings as the way they really happened. But nonetheless, for the viewer, the series lives up to its purpose: we are able to see all of Shaffy's ups and downs while getting introduced to a representation of what Shaffy must have been like as a person in his private life.

2.2 Shaffy as a Human Brand

The five examples of produced tributes in memory of Ramses Shaffy thus all serve the same purpose: they give us the opportunity to look into Shaffy's 'private' life, and give us the feeling that we are coming close to knowing everything about his personality and history. All of the tributes play in on the emotional attachment that the public feels towards Shaffy by continuously underlining that we are looking at a representation of the 'private self', someone that we can relate and look up to. The representation of authenticity and sincerity is thereby key, since Shaffy's image has become a large part of our lives. The formula of success seems

¹⁷ *Filmnieuws*. 10 June 2014. <<http://www.filmnieuws.nu/?page=feeds&action=view&id=93620>>.

¹⁸ *Ramses*. Pieter Fleury. 2002.

to be self-evident: we are emotionally touched by Shaffy as both an artist and a personality because we have been able to identify with him, and feel the urge to give in to our emotions of grief when he passes away, simply because he became such a great part of our lives. Thankfully accepting the possibilities to experience an event that is set up to honor Shaffy is therefore a great comforting factor in this process of mourning, and seems to function as a guidance of how to grief and remember him. Participating in a tribute, which in this case means going to ‘Ramses the Musical’, watching the television series, buying one of the books containing Shaffy’s lyrics or going to the exposition, gives us the chance to show our respect, fandom, and underlying feelings nostalgic grief. But when we look at the tributes themselves and leave away the emotional attachments that are inextricably linked to them, we see a set of culturally produced products that are exploiting the success of a deceased star. In a way, the star is functioning as the name that these products are selling, which immediately seems to be the key to their success since the tributes are playing in on the emotions of grief. One can therefore argue that the star becomes a human brand (Thomson 104). The concept of human branding, being viewed from an academic point of view, has only been defined recently since it has been a phenomenon that is linked with many other fields of study such as marketing. However, Matthew Thomson, an associate professor working at Ivey Business School in Canada, wrote several publications on the concept of human branding and defined the relation between the celebrity brand and consumer attachments in his article “Human Brands: Investigating Antecedents to Consumers’ Stronger Attachments to Celebrities”.¹⁹ Thomson underlines how important it is to analyze ‘attachments’: defined as an “intensity of a person’s target-specific emotional bond with a human brand”, he presents this concept as a construction consisting of many elements (105). The idea of ‘autonomy’ is one of these elements, describing the feeling that a person needs to feel like “his or her activities are self-chosen, self-governed, and self-endorsed”: the feeling of freedom in individual expression provides a basis for attachment, combined with the concepts of “relatedness” (the need to feel close to others) and “competence” (the need to feel curiosity for effectiveness and achievements) (Thomson 106). According to Thomson, the human brand satisfies these “fundamental human needs”. In his eyes, making the public feel “autonomous, related, and competent” will eventually create a strong emotional attachment, which is a process that he refers to as fulfilling the “A-R-C needs” (106). While performing three practical studies, Thomson analyzes this process of fulfillment and then comes to the point in where he

¹⁹ *Richard Ivey School of Business*. 11 March 2014. <<http://www.ivey.uwo.ca/faculty/directory/matt-thomson/>>.

concludes that human brands, such as “actors, musicians, politicians or media personalities”, create a consumer-brand relationship in where feelings of accessible interaction, realness, and authenticity are the most important factors (108, 117). A human brand is most successful when the consumer feels like he is able to embrace the human brand personality: to radiate the idea that the celebrity could practically be standing right in front of you is working for both the branded persona as the branded product that might be linked to them.

Another article that analyzes the relationship between human brands and their admirers is called ‘Exploring Dimensions of Consumer-Human Brand Attachment’ by Jasmina Ilicic and Cynthia M. Webster, whom are both working at Macquarie University. In their article, they recognize “four distinct factors of consumer-human brand attachment”: separation distress, trust, relatedness and satisfaction (Ilicic and Webster 0). According to them, the idea that the media is able to create the illusion of a “face-to-face relationship between a spectator and a performer” has been present for a long time, just as the idea that celebrity loyalty is “more likely to develop” when the celebrity appears to be within reach (1). Hence, they are skipping the “overall assessment of attachment” and focus on the core factors that create the specific attachment between consumer and human brand. They agree with Thomson’s findings, but add that “an individual’s emotional state with regards to the celebrity, their cognitive assessment of the celebrity’s character, the closeness they feel with the celebrity, and the happiness they sense regarding the relationship they have with the celebrity were all factors in a consumer’s attachment towards a celebrity” (Ilicic and Webster 5). Those findings, along with those of Thomson and many others, are the basis for an analytical approach towards purchase intentions and consumer attitudes and are very useful when it comes to marketing research: after all, the human brand is selling a product, whether this is his own ‘self’ or a product that he is promoting while functioning as an endorser for a brand.

While looking at these theoretical approaches, one can easily state that the theories behind human branding as a marketing concept are applicable to tributing productions that appear after the death of a celebrity: after all, it is the name and reputation of a star that attracts consumers towards the productions that are produced. It is the manufactured celebrity image that functions as the center of attraction while offering the public a way to express their adulation towards their idolized celebrity icon: a person that most fans haven’t even met even once, but yet feel very personally related to. By making sure that the public gets the feeling of being able to ‘embrace’ the star simply because of the way the star is presented and promoted

as a human brand, products are selling and consumers are consuming. It is a marketing strategy that is an effective one, regardless of whether the tributes are created as a profitable undertaking or a small local initiative to unite fans. A celebrity image is one that sells, functioning as an enticement to activate the celebrity's followers in spending their time and money on tributes that soothe their feelings of affection towards these images. And it is exactly here that two seemingly different theories on celebrity attachments converge - one on celebrity adulation, and one on human branding as a marketing theory. In Chapter 3, this overlap will be analyzed thoroughly. Seeing the concept of deceased celebrity tributes from the perspective of Marketing studies will not only show that both studies are largely depending on the same ideas on the star-fan relation, but also demonstrate that they are able to function as an addition to one another in analyses on celebrity mourning and honoring. By looking at public and private mourning processes for a deceased star and simultaneously seeing it as a marketing strategy, a new look on the theories behind honoring a deceased celebrity is provided.

CHAPTER 3

EMOTION VERSUS COMMERCE

In Chapter 1, extensive theoretical approaches on Celebrity Studies have been presented. The relationship between stars and their admiring fans, the processes of mourning when a celebrity dies, and the guided expressions of grief are all topics that have been discussed thoroughly in order to get an overview on stardom and fandom as phenomena. In Chapter 2, a more concrete description of the tributing productions for Ramses Shaffy was brought forward and the theories behind human branding as a marketing concept were introduced. With the information as presented in these two chapters in mind, one can perhaps already recognize a few clear similar characteristics in the relation between celebrity and fan on the one hand, and the relation between human brand and consumer on the other. In this third and last chapter, it is this exact linkage between the two binary structures that is getting some more analytical attention. In the first paragraph, the theories behind the two binaries will be compared and merged into one concise theoretical framework. In the second paragraph, then, the processes of mourning and adulation that became visible after the loss of Ramses Shaffy will be viewed from out of this theoretical perspective. The tributes are thus seen from an angle that is taking theoretical backgrounds of both Celebrity Studies and Marketing studies into account, which provides an overview on how the emotional and the commercial are balanced in the process of honoring a celebrity icon like Ramses Shaffy.

3.1 Celebrity Adulation versus Human Branding

If one wishes to analyze the relation between commercial interest and emotional affection when it comes to deceased celebrity adulation, a look back on the basics of star studies as described in Chapter 1 is necessary. As we could have read, Celebrity Studies is an academic discipline that emerged in the last decades, which makes it a rather new theoretical field. The first publications of Richard Dyer made stars as a phenomenon a more academically acknowledged subject, which encouraged many other scholars to contribute to this relatively new field of research. The basics on Celebrity Studies, however, can in some way still all be traced back to Dyer's work - even when analyzing the first commercial characteristics of the star. It was a part of Celebrity Studies that did not receive much attention in the first stages of the research process: the theories on "the constitutive elements of stars and what they consist of" and "the notions of personhood and social reality that they relate to", the former

describing all of the constructively ‘made’ celebrity images by the media and the latter referring to the individual building of identity while taking the celebrity as an example to project oneself on, were the topics that Dyer focused on most during his research. However, next to this main approach to Stardom, Dyer already slightly acknowledged the importance of the marketing factor that is attached to stars and their fame (*Heavenly Bodies 2*). It was, in a way, the first recognition of a relation between stardom and marketing. By arguing that “stars are made for profit” and that “stars are involved in making themselves into commodities” as “they are both labour and the thing that labour produces”, he recognized the commercial aspects of stardom (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies 5*). In Dyer words:

Stars are made for profit. In terms of the market, stars are part of the way films are sold. (...) Equally, stars sell newspapers and magazines, and are used to sell toiletries, fashions, cars and almost everything else. This market function of stars is only one aspect of their economic importance. They are also a property on the strength of whose name money can be raised for a film; they are an asset to the person (the star him/herself), studio and agent who controls them; they are a major part of the cost of a film. Above all, they are part of the labour that produces film as a commodity that can be sold for profit in the market place (Dyer 5).

The overall commercial characteristics of the celebrity figure can thus easily be pointed out and divided into several basic strategies to sell a product. Here it is particularly important to link these basic commercial tactics to Dyer’s reading of the image and underline the star’s selling of their own personality ‘image’. The star image sells the products: products that are simultaneously keeping the image alive by reinforcing it and making the celebrity even more popular. These theories are based on stars that are still alive: public personalities that are shaped into celebrities even more because of the marketing success that is inextricably attached to them. A star, regardless of how much talent he or she possesses, is getting more powerful because of these simple marketing factors, and the amount of commercial sales around a star is dependent on the success and popularity of the star image. It is the basic theory behind the commercial characteristics of every celebrity. To put it in Rojek’s words, a star is made into an ‘attributed celebrity’ for commercial profits while being shaped by media representations (Rojek, *Celebrity 28*).

The commercial profits that are mentioned here can, in a way, be seen as the basics for the theories on human branding as introduced in Chapter 2: it is self-evident that the marketing

position of the celebrity is making him or her into a branded figure that sells products while relying on the successes of his or her image. However, since we are looking at the deceased celebrity and taking the influences of public mourning into account, it is first and foremost important to analyze how these theoretical approaches towards deceased celebrity studies and human branding are comparable, and might be functioning as an addition to one another while recognizing similar underlying ideas. Graeme Turner, taking Dyer's basic principles of celebrity marketing into the 21st century by recognizing these same commercial characteristics, stated that:

The effect is, of course, to turn celebrities into commodities, products to be marketed in their own right or to be used to market other commodities. The celebrity's ultimate power is to sell the commodity that is themselves. This fact has been thoroughly integrated into contemporary popular culture and the marketing of the celebrity-as-commodity has been deployed as a major strategy in the commercial construction of social identity. Within a highly fragmented but increasingly globalized mass market, the use of celebrities has become a very efficient method of organizing cultural significance around products, services, and commercially available identities (*Fame Games* 12).

Following the last statement of Turner's quote, it is exactly this supply of "commercially available identities" and the "construction of social identity" that is key in the approach that will be taken in this paragraph. Turner, elaborating on the commercial sides of the celebrity image as once introduced by Dyer, adds a crucial element to the earlier description of the marketing factor: the construction of identity and the idea that this identity is being spread commercially. Even though it is a brief reference to a seemingly simple definition of commercial stardom, it certainly is a description that portrays the overlap between the great theoretical frameworks behind celebrity studies on the one hand, and that of human branding on the other.

As described in Chapter 1, a very important element within Celebrity Studies is the notion of the public versus the private: the binary between these spheres is repeatedly underlined, while the celebrity is functioning as an intermediary between the two. Thanks to the celebrity personality, the audience is able to make the division between the 'publicly constructed' and the 'real' and 'authentic', which helps us to make sense of the contemporary separations between "public and private persons" and "producing and consuming persons" (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 2). As seen from the public's point of view, this idea functions as a demonstrator for the creation of one's own identity: the celebrity helps in deciding how we

should embody our private and our public selves. The public role that the celebrities take on in this makes it able for them to spread these identities commercially while reaching their audiences through media outlets, which is exactly how Turner's notion of the supply of "commercially available identities" is working. According to him, the construction of one's own identity, which is based on the one that a celebrity is demonstrating, has everything to do with the marketing side of stardom. Identities are sold to us in a commercially structured public sphere in where product distribution and sales are of primary importance. We are getting 'inspired' and therefore influenced by the celebrity images that we see in the media, and pull these images into our private lives to let them influence our identities. Through commercial outlets such as television shows, tabloid articles, movies, and other media productions, we are confronted with the personalities that we identify with and project our own desires on.

It is here that the concept of human branding steps in, now being viewed from a different perspective – it is not just about the simple commercial strategy of selling products like movies and merchandise any more. While the distribution of celebrity identity is very much alive in the binary between the public and the private as described in the theories on Celebrity Studies, the celebrity image is actually functioning as a human brand that is being sold to the crowd. It is not just about the sales of productions, but also about the shaping of public and private identities for which the celebrity functions as a symbolic personality. With Thomson's theories about human branding in mind, one can state that this process is successful because there is authenticity and sincerity involved, which is a very important central theme in the theories of both Celebrity Studies and human branding. To put it in Thomson's words on human branding, the creation of a consumer-brand relationship is most effective when the public is satisfied in their feelings of accessible interaction, realness, and authenticity (Thomson 117). As described by Thomson, Ilicic and Webster, the concept of the human brand is all about making the consumer feel like he is close to the celebrity that is being portrayed. Authenticity and sincerity, both being constructed values in the images of celebrities that are shown to us, are the factors that let the celebrity into the private lives of the fans while functioning as an inspirational role model for identity construction. A celebrity, being a human brand, is able to come close to the private spheres of the individual within the masses, and can therefore be considered to be much more than just a marketing tool to sell a product that is designed to be financially profitable. Even though it is a commercially

constructed image, it is able to influence real human lives and create emotional affection, which makes it a very powerful approach.

As we could have read in the third paragraph of Chapter 1, the influence that the celebrity has on the private lives of the audience gets even bigger when a celebrity dies. The star is able to come close to the lives and emotions of his or her fans through feelings of affinity, identification and projection, and soon gets viewed as a loved one even though the fans never met their idol. When this celebrity dies, then, the celebrity gets mourned as if the relationship between star and fan was one that actually existed in real life. The truth, however, is that the celebrity here functions as a symbol for many emotions that the public experiences in their private surroundings but has not been able to express properly, and the death of an admired celebrity gives the opportunity to grieve while being socially and publicly guided in how to express these totalities of suppressed emotions. One can argue that the celebrity therefore gets an even bigger and more important role in the private lives of his/her fans, now functioning not only as a role model for the creation of identity, but also as a guide for the expression of grief. However, the celebrity image that was once created as a commercially profitable construction from the moment the star was 'born' stays alive and keeps its function as a profitable marketing image after the celebrity's death. The feelings of grief are a justification to promote the celebrity persona once again, this time with the idea to 'honor' the celebrity legend. While playing in on the public feelings of mourning, the deceased celebrity thus becomes even stronger as a human brand. The public feels a strong need to take the identity construction that the celebrity is demonstrating as an exemplar for their own living: it is the late modern project of the self as defined by McCloud that describes their willingness to take any example of identity to shape their own (McCloud 201). Tributing productions that are produced when a celebrity dies, then, are successful precisely because of these factors: the 'selling' of identity while playing in on feelings of mourning and identity disruption because of the loss of a loved celebrity is exactly what appeals to the public and reinforces a celebrity image. However, it does complicate the theories behind human branding. In a way, the theories behind this marketing concept do cover the public distribution of identity in order to sell an image or a product. However, with these ideas on mourning and expressions of emotion in mind, the human brand becomes something much more than 'just' a commercial strategy with a personal approach. Based on the theories on celebrity mourning and identity projection, one can argue that the branding of deceased celebrities is a phenomenon that proves to be more multidimensional than the existing theories on human branding, leaving the

former analyses on living celebrities behind by being broadened with theories on emotional affinity, ‘genuine’ mourning, and feelings of grief.

In where the living celebrity already lives up to Thomson’s notion of the public ‘A-R-C needs’ (the public’s satisfaction in feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence) that belong to the marketing concept of human branding, one can thus argue that the deceased celebrity brings these A-R-C needs to a higher and more complicated level (106). The consuming fans feel related to and moved by the star representation that is being portrayed, they trust in the realness, authenticity and sincerity of the image that are being presented, they feel related to him or her as a person, and they feel autonomous while choosing to engage in tributes in where they can express their emotions of grief over their beloved celebrity – an image of someone that is perceived to be a dear one in the private lives of the public, kept alive within parasocial interactions as mentally created by the fans (Courbet 2). But above all, the most important factor from the theories on human branding is the feeling of satisfaction that the public experiences when all of those previous needs are fulfilled, which is brought to an ultimate public experience when a celebrity is mourned. Human branding is not just a simple commercial marketing theory any more when it is applied on deceased celebrities, and should therefor be molded into an approach that could perhaps be called ‘deceased celebrity branding’: a phenomenon that is taking theories on celebrity mourning and the construction of private identities into account.

3.2 Analyzing the Ramses Brand: the Successes of Cross-Medial Honoring

“Ramses Shaffy died of cancer in the early morning of the 1st of December of the year 2009. Seven days later, his body was transported to Carré Royal Theatre, where thousands of people would walk past a plain wooden coffin covered with red roses until the night would fall. His body could not stay there that night, but would be brought back again for the funeral that would take place the next morning. Through the backstage door Shaffy came in, right on time for once, and left the theatre through the main entrance.”

- Intiem: the memories of Liesbeth List (203).

The citation above is coming from the epilogue of a book on the memoires of Liesbeth List, as written by author Alex Verburg. List, being a muse and dear friend of Shaffy, added the last chapter right before the book would be published, because of Shaffy’s passing away around that same time. The epilogue describes the funeral of the Dutch artist, giving many

examples of emotional speeches that were held by people that stood close by him and looked up to him. While hearing famous Dutch personalities like Jeroen Krabbé talk about how Shaffy possessed a ‘magical’ power that made him so special, List asks herself what this ‘magic’ that everyone seems to agree on actually consisted of, later to conclude that it was the fact that he always focused on the moment, lived on emotional impulses, and never let himself be defeated by critics. Those were the characteristics that made people look up to Shaffy, making him ‘elusive’ and ‘unreachable’: the magic was in the uniqueness of how Shaffy viewed and lived life (Verburg 205).

As this view on Shaffy as described by his friends points out, it was a special kind of liveliness and charm that made so many people admire to him, and it is exactly this image that has been characteristic for Shaffy as a public celebrity image. His impulsive and rebellious way of living was exactly what was underlined in the media and created his reputation as an artist and a public persona. The charisma that Shaffy naturally possessed was undeniable and was based on an authentic representation of his personality: Shaffy was unique as an individual, having no attachments towards rules and regulations whatsoever, and the people that had true relationships with him always publicly confirmed this. From the public’s perspective, then, one could do nothing else but believe that Shaffy was as sincere and ‘real’ as could be. As a rebellious personality in the 1960s and ‘70s, he functioned as a symbol for authenticity and sincerity, which made it easy for the public to let the ‘real’ Shaffy into their hearts. For many, Shaffy would even function as a role model for how one would like to be: he was the perfect example of how to be free from societal regulations on how to behave, which was rather remarkable in a time in where those regulations were perceived to be very important. Being this charismatic character, it was therefore very easy to put him in the role as a public hero and to idolize him as an example on how to live life: Shaffy could easily be taken as a symbol for the construction of ones own identity. Being a celebrity that presented himself as ‘true’, the crowd felt like there was a possibility for genuine interaction, even when it was just a fictive relation as mentally created by the fan. Shaffy was a celebrity that was perceived to be accessible, just because his celebrity image was presented as such: something which should be questioned considering Dyer’s statement on the construction of images, even when they are ought to be as ‘real’ as possible (Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* 2). Nonetheless, Shaffy was believed to be portraying his own self, being both ordinary and extraordinary at the same time, which gave him the power to touch the public’s hearts and influence their lives, dreams, and identity shaping.

It is exactly this identity shaping that made Ramses Shaffy an influential celebrity persona, just like many other celebrities were before him. Shaffy, taking on the role of the celebrity hero by being the embodiment of his fan's desires to reach for themselves, was taking on a very important role in his fan's lives, depending on how attached the fan was towards the image of Shaffy. However, for most admirers goes that Shaffy, as a musician and personality, is linked to many private memories and situations. A celebrity like Shaffy is thus first and foremost important to his fans because of the personal construction of an individual's history, which gives the celebrity an important role in an individual's life (Courbet 5). One can have great memories on personal happenings that are attached to Shaffy as an artist, might have great memories on one's unruly youth in the 1960s by thinking about Shaffy's rebellious character, or might even be seeing Shaffy's music as a reminder of past relationships with others. Regardless of which memories are attached to which part of the Shaffy image, the linkage to personal history and thus personal identity gives Shaffy an important role in one's personal life as a loved and valued celebrity and friend.

When Shaffy died on the first of December 2009, these private feelings of attachment towards this public persona suddenly became public. The celebrity that knew how to reach his audience with his genuine, authentic and extraordinary personality, touched the hearts of many and had been functioning as a hero-like role model for many identities to be constructed, was gone. It was a happening that caused a great amount of grief, which is something that can be understood better by thinking about the theories on celebrity mourning. The fan-celebrity relations towards Shaffy while he was still alive made him function as a true loved one for his admirers, having a great importance in their personal lives and therefore causing great sorrow when he died: the admiring public feels like a dear friend has passed away. Simultaneously, they experience a true disruption of identity because of the loss of their history and therefor identity that was built on this same celebrity. Shaffy, being the one that functions as an symbolizing embodiment of many personal memories on precious relationships, life phases and happenings, falls away and seems to 'take' these memories with him. Shaffy's death is therefore inextricably attached to a personal feeling of nostalgia: "a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for possessions and activities associated with days of yore" (Holbrook 245). The loss of Shaffy, being a symbol for past times, signifies a much greater loss than one would initially think, activating a feeling of identity disruption by 'losing' a significant part of what we perceive to be a part of ourselves.

As we could have seen in the first paragraph of Chapter 2, the death of Ramses Shaffy's would mean the start of many public events to appear, resulting in a totality of many produced tributes that would publicly prove that Shaffy was a man who was not only loved by the people standing close to him, but also by a great group of citizens. His 'magical' charismatic aura, his ability to reach the fans personally, and the resulting feelings of grief all seemed to be factors that made those honoring productions into great successes - something that does not come as a great surprise considering the theories as explained in the previous parts of this paper. In a time in where identity can be freely constructed, celebrities such as Shaffy play an essential role in the creation of one's personality. When this celebrity dies, then, feelings of sadness are experienced and need to be expressed, which is something that we need to be guided in. Tributes, as a form of medial guidance in expressing grief, give the audience the opportunity to publicly mourn for their beloved hero while finding some peace in this feeling of sorrow. In the case of Ramses Shaffy, attending the public funeral could have been a first channeled event in where grief could be expressed publicly, which was the first of many events to attend in order to express feelings of grief and adulation. Walking through Amsterdam while seeing the places where Shaffy used to go, seeing a representation of Shaffy on stage in a musical performance or looking at a fictionally dramatized television series based on his tumultuous life: it is all presented to the public as an option to give attention to the feelings of emotional attachment towards Shaffy as a symbol of importance to the private lives of many.

Of course, each tribute has been produced out of a different motivation. The musical production and the television series, for example, were probably created to produce a product that would be as profitable as possible, whether the Ramses Shaffy walks as developed by Daan Bartels are merely created to offer the Ramses Shaffy fans a nice experience of walking through Shaffy's hometown. These commercial motivations are dependent on very practical financial factors that will not be addressed further in this research. However, there is one core principle that all of the tributes are relying on, which is the concept of deceased celebrity branding. In relation to the tributes that appeared around Ramses Shaffy after his death, this concept can be analyzed from out of two perspectives: a commercial one and an emotional one. On the one hand, the tributes are self-evidently produced around Ramses as a celebrity image: dependent on the popularity of Shaffy's name and reputation, consuming fans are attracted towards the tributes because of the personality that is put central the tributes. Here, Shaffy thus functions as the brand that is labeling tributing productions, selling and promoting

them just because his name is attached to it. This ‘profiting’ side of deceased celebrity branding is a merely commercial one, and plays in on the formerly described feelings of public grief in order to promote cultural or commercial productions that are centered on the honoring of Shaffy as a legendary icon. Producers play in on the increased popularity that Shaffy gained after his death, being a ‘human brand’ that satisfies the public’s feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Thomson 106). Using Ramses Shaffy’s name as a brand to qualify the tributing product and attract consuming fans with, can in this perspective thus be seen as a ‘clever’ way of using a celebrity’s status in order to brand a product: centering a tribute around Shaffy as a popular deceased personality makes sure that the tribute will reach the target audience that it focusing on.

On the other hand, we can look at this process from the other side of the spectrum by recognizing that the tributes are a multimedial way to guide the public in their expression of grief, which is something that we feel a need for in our contemporary society (Walter et al. 592). From this perspective, it is not a necessity on the production side of the tributes, but a necessity of the public that needs to make sense of their own emotional experience. The tributes give the audience a possibility to cope with our inner feelings of sorrow, filling the emptiness of losing Shaffy with a ‘proper’ way to mourn him while expressing feelings of grief during a publicly arranged event. While honoring him by participating in a tribute, we are processing our unresolved feelings of sorrow and accepting a way to express and understand them, regardless of the underlying private emotions that cause this great need to mourn. The tributes, offering a happening in where these emotions can be released, are in their turn profiting from this process of need by attracting even more grieving fans. The concept of deceased celebrity branding can therefore be viewed as a circular process: both the emotional and the commercial side of the phenomenon are influencing and stimulating one another, resulting in a commercially profitable but emotionally valuable situation of mourning and honoring.

For his fans, Ramses Shaffy has always been a role model figure in one way or another: his personality demonstrated an unusual way of how to live life and how to present one’s ‘truest’ self, even when in public. These factors, along with his charismatic appearance and his association with authenticity and sincerity, made him a treasured personality and a symbol for personal memories in the private lives of his fans. As a human brand, Shaffy reinforced these qualities of being an idealized persona in order to attract the people who admire him, selling the products that he made as an artist while gaining popularity. After his death, this

constructed celebrity image stayed alive by living on in several tributing productions: productions that bring his fans comfort while being focused on attracting consumers at the same time. The branded celebrity image that lives on in these productions remains appealing to consumers that engage in them because of the stimulation of expressing grief, which only reinforces Shaffy's commercially powerful position as a legend and a human brand. Deceased legends attract mourning fans and human brands attract consumers. And in the way the deceased Shaffy is portrayed nowadays, his represented personality manages to do both.

CONCLUSION

Celebrity Studies has been an academic field that emerged rather recently. With the first publications on stardom by Richard Dyer in the 1970s celebrities gained more importance as a phenomenon in the research on popular culture, which started an academic movement that many scholars contributed to in the last decades. The reading of the celebrity image, the fake construction of 'realness' and the emotional relation between stars and their fans were popular subjects for academic analysis, soon treating stars as the symbolization for the division between the public and the private sphere: by representing typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking, the audience sees the celebrity as a role model for their own embodiment of private and public personalities (Dyer, Holmes and Redmond). By being ordinary and extraordinary at the same time and representing the very notion of authenticity and sincerity beneath the surface of the manufactured star image, the celebrity is able to present a star image that could be embraced by the audience (Turner et al, *Fame Games* 22). Feelings of identification, imitation and projection turned the star into a loved personality in the private lives of fans, resulting in strong emotional affinity or even worshipping (McCloud). Whereas the star was originally constructed to be a profitable image to sell the products that he or she appears in, the star became much more than just a commercial face.

However, being "both labour and the thing that labour produces", to repeat Dyers words, this research paper demonstrated that the theories behind celebrities as a concept are directly linked to the principles of human branding as a marketing concept. While playing in on the fan's need to recognize oneself in a celebrity and projecting his or her identity on their own, celebrities are presenting themselves through commercial outlets that are making them a human brand. The underlying motifs for the audience to appreciate this specific presentation of the celebrity is embedded in the audience's need to get in touch with their celebrity hero and feel close to him or her. While fulfilling the 'A-R-C needs' by making the consumer feel "autonomous, related, and competent", as stated by Thomson, the celebrity icon is molded into a brand that appeals to the public as a lovable human being (Thomson 106). As Graeme Turner argued in *Fame Games*: "The celebrity is (...) a combination of the commercial interests of a cultural industry (...) and the shifting desires of an audience. The celebrity's personality must negotiate between these differing, sometimes competing, conceptions of a public" (11). The binaries of the public versus the private as described in celebrity studies,

and the commercial versus the authentic as described in the studies on human branding, are therefore more alike than one would initially think, and are able to function as an academic addition to one another. In the eyes of the audience, the public and commercial image is constructed within the representations of several media outlets: believing that there is a true, private, authentic and sincere 'self' underneath these manufactures makes them accept those constructed media images. However, as we could have read in this paper, the image of the 'true' self is just as constructed as the publicly presented images are. The images of 'true' private celebrity selves are selling us commercially produced products, and while being convinced that there is a 'reality' behind these facades we thankfully accept these make-believes and consume the products that are sold to us, regardless of the motivation that is behind it.

The deceased celebrity, then, changing into a post-self that is living on after being 'created' in his/her living years, is an image that is just as constructed, but appeals to the public even more. Because of the emotional attachment that has been emerging from the moment that the fan started to identify with his/her celebrity hero, the star gained a significant role within the private lives of the admirers while being treated as a dear friend. When this 'friend' passes away, then, a great amount of grief is being set free. Thanatological entertainment, being the sensational entertaining factor of death that we see in the media of everyday, is giving the audience a way to deal with the scary notion of death, but gets more personal when a loved celebrity icon passes away. The death of an admired hero symbolizes our troubles with dealing with death and additional emotions of sadness, which is where the media steps in to 'guide' and 'supervise' us: the media represents celebrity death situations as a situation in where bereavement has to be experienced and expressed, together with the masses that seems to be sharing the same feelings. Expressing grief is considered to be healthy when it is done in the 'right' way during the right mediated events, which means that it is here that the expression of private emotion and the promotion of commercial honoring events come together.

While looking at the private experiences of mourning a loved celebrity icon, the human branding gets more multidimensional at the same time: in where the living celebrity already fulfilled the 'ARC needs' that belonged to the marketing concept of human branding, the deceased celebrity fulfills them even more. Feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are underlined even more when the mourning admirers are able to participate in tributes that have been designed to express feelings of sorrow, while simultaneously showing

all of one's adulation towards their beloved star. Tributing productions after a celebrity's death can thus first and foremost be viewed as events that soothe the public's urge to publicly express their public feelings of mourning while being guided in how to express them.

However, one should not forget that these tributes are still relying on commercial characteristics by profiting from the extra attention and popularity that the celebrity received after his death. By producing an honoring event around a celebrity, target audiences are easy to be reached while playing in on their feelings of grief and sorrow.

As the research in this paper showed, the afterlife of Ramses Shaffy should be viewed through a new theoretical framework, combining the theories on celebrity mourning and human branding in a new concept that might be called 'deceased celebrity branding'. Shaffy, being a rebellious personality that symbolized a great amount of freedom and individuality in the 1960s and '70s while using these perspectives to make music and art, is inextricably attached to personal memories of many of his fans. The importance of Ramses Shaffy as a celebrity hero is therefore largely determined by the amount of personal nostalgic emotions that he is symbolizing. When this rebellious hero passed away, then, many of his fans would feel like a part of their personal history fell away with him. The tributes that have been produced around Shaffy as an extraordinary personality, be it a television series, a musical production or a public exhibition about his life, fill up the gaps that were left empty after this process of identity disruption, and give his fans the possibility to keep the image of Ramses Shaffy alive. The personal feelings of grief are sustaining the commercially produced public honoring events, just like the events are sustaining and soothing the personal feelings of grief. And regardless of which of the two profits from the situation most, it is the celebrity image of the famous Dutchman Ramses Shaffy that stays alive because of it.

IMAGES

Image 1. *Ramses Shaffy*. 2009. Digital image. <<http://www.iwaanidee.nl/forum/index.php?topic=6598.0>>.

Image 2. *De TV Kantine: Carlo Boszhard impersonating Ramses Shaffy*. Screenshot. RTL 4. 22 February 2014, 24:25.

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