Topographies of Remembrance across the former British Empire



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Abstract

Where once geographers could argue that the ideological and aesthetic issues surrounding the military cemeteries created by the British Empire had drawn little comment, there is now a considerable literature exploring the spaces and places of remembrance. Increasing attention has been paid during the past decade to the value of *‘*situation*’* in the discourse of death, grieving and commemoration. In this respect, ‘situation’ should be understood to be a focus on ‘place’, ‘space’ and the geopolitical.The emerging discipline of cultural geography in the late 1990s created the tools necessary to elaborate ‘space’ in the abstract, to regard ‘place’ as a site where an individual might negotiate definitively social relations, and give voice, as Sara Blair argued, to ‘the effects of dislocation, disembodiment, and localisation that constitute contemporary social disorder’.Almost a century after Sigmund Freud’s treatise *Mourning and Melancholia*, our understanding of how memory and mourning function continues to be challenged, revised and refined. Issues of place have become important to this debate. Once a marginal topic for academic investigation, there is now a body of scholarly work – including deep research in landscape and garden design – that explores the complex interrelationship between memory, mourning and *‘*death-scapes*’* (or *‘*memory-scapes*’*), a portmanteau term that fuses an appreciation of once-violated landscapes with personal and discursive memories.

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