Paul Gough

Commissioned chapter in book published in Germany, derived from University of Manchester seminar with Lincoln Institute, 2015-16

Paul Gough, *“*Turf Wars*”*: grass, greenery and the spatiality of commemoration. Recurring debates and disputes in the uses of horticultural iconography by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in northern Europe, in John Rodwell and Peter Manley Scott (eds.), *Heimat & Belonging: At Home in the Future (*LIT Verlag, 2016).

**Introduction – discourse and debates**

Where once geographers could argue that the ideological issues surrounding the quintessential character of English and Empire military cemeteries had drawn little comment, there is now a considerable literature exploring the space and place 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 (Gillis 1994). 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 localization that constitute contemporary social disorder.*”*[[1]](#footnote-1) In our post-historical era, further argues Blair, temporality has largely been superseded by spatiality, what has been termed the affective and social experience of space. Almost a century after Freud’s treatise *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), 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 exploring the complex interrelationship between memory, mourning and what might be termed *“*death-scapes*”*. Indeed, this fascination with places of death and dying has given rise to myriad academic explorations spawning academic disciplines such as dark- or thana-tourism, which is an extreme form of grief-incited travel to distant prisons, castles, and abandoned battlefields where anthropological enquiry can be conducted. Suspicions of a release of *“*recreational grief*”* aroused after the death of Princess Diana in 1997 have also provided sociologists with considerable material for scholarly attention (Walter 1999).

* Paperback : 216 pages
* ISBN-10 : 3643906382
* ISBN-13 : 978-3643906380
* Product Dimensions : 15.88 x 1.52 x 22.86 cm
* Publisher : Lit Verlag (31 May 2016)
* Language: : English

[pgough@aub.ac.uk](mailto:pgough@aub.ac.uk)

**References**

Ashworth, Graham and Graham, Brian (eds.) (2005), *Senses of Place: Senses of Time*, London: Ashgate.

Barnes, Julian (1995), *Cross Channel,* London: Jonathan Cape.

Basu, Paul (2007), 'Palimpsest Memoryscapes: Materializing and Mediating War and Peace in: Sierra Leone' in: Gordon F. de Jong & Michael Rowlands (eds.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginations in West Africa*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Bender, Barbara (ed.), (1983) *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, Oxford: Berg.

Bender, Barbara and Winer, Margot (eds.) (2001), *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*, Oxford: Berg.

Bennett, Alan (2004), U*ntold Stories* (autobiographical and essays), London: Harper.

Blair, Sarah, “Cultural Geography and the Place of the Literary”, *American Literary History*, Vol. 10, 3, Autumn 1998, 544-567.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <[http://www.cwgc.org/content.asp?menuid=2&submenuid =9&id=102&menuname=Climate%20Change%20Update%20-%20February%202011&menu= subsub](http://www.cwgc.org/content.asp?menuid=2&submenuid%20=9&id=102&menuname=Climate%20Change%20Update%20-%20February%202011&menu=%20subsub)/>, 25 September 2011.

Coombes, Rose E.B. (1983), *Before Endeavour Fades*, After the Battle Publications: London.

Danto, Arthur (1986), “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial”, *The Nation*, 31 August 1986.

de Botton, Alan (2004), *Status Anxiety*, London: Hamish Hamilton.

Fort, Tom (2001), *The Grass is Greener: Our Love Affair with the Lawn*, London: Harper Collins.

Gillis, John. R (1994), *Commemorations,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gough, Paul (2004), “Sites in the imagination: the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial on the Somme”, *Cultural Geographies*, Vol.11, 3, 235-258.

Gough, Paul (2007), “Planting peace: the Greater London Council and the Community Gardens of Central London’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 3, 1, 22-41.

Gray, L. “Lawns will become sign of 'moral decadence' because of climate change”, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 May 2009.

Heffernan, Michael (1995), “Forever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain”, *Ecumene*, Vol.2**,** 3, 293-324.

Helphand, Kenneth (2006), *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime,* San Antonio: Trinity University Press.

Hill, Arthur (1919), ‘Our Soldier’s Graves’, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, Vol.45, 1.

Hurst, Sidney (1929), *The Silent Cities*, London: Methuen.

Iles, Jennifer (2006), ‘Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front’, *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 162-180.

Ish, Lyx (1999), “Peeing on a lily pad (and other musings on gardens and art)” in: Peter Lamborn Wilson and Bill Weinberg (eds.), *Avant Gardening: Ecological Struggle in the City and the World,* New York: Autonomedia, 117-126.

Longworth, Philip (1967), *The Unending Vigil,* London, Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Lowenthal, David (1985), *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McKay, George (2001), *Radical Gardening: Politics, Idealism and Rebellion in the Garden,* London: Frances Lincoln.

Morris, Mandy S. (1997), “‘Gardens ‘for ever England’: Landscape, Identity and the First World War British Cemeteries on the Western Front”, *Ecumene*, Vol.4, 410-434.

Mosse, George L. (1990), *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pollan, Michael (1991), *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education,* New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Rodwell, John (2008), “Forgetting the land”, *Studies in Christian Ethics*, Vol. 21, 2, 269-286.

Rowlands, Michael (1999), “Remembering to Forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials”, in: Adrian Forty and Susan Kuchler (eds.) (1999), *The Art of Forgetting*, Oxford: Berg, 129-147.

Samuel, Raphael (1989) “Exciting to be English” in: Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, Vol. 1. London: Routledge,

Saunders, Nicholas (2001), “Matter and memory in the landscapes of conflict: the Western Front, 1914-1919”, in Barbara Bender and Margot Winer (eds.) (2001), *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*, Oxford: Berg,

Shepheard, Paul (1997), *The Cultivated Wilderness: or, what is landscape?*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Walter, Tony (ed.) (1999), *The Mourning for Diana*, London: Berg.

Ware, Fabian (1929), “The Price of Peace”, *The Listener*, II, 636-7.

Winter, Jay (1995), *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1. Blair, 544. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)