

ISABEL LASALA, STEPHANIE ROLAND, AND KATRINA SIMON

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Missing you already: Losing the love of the unhomely homes of the dead

Introduction: Heterotopia, death, and landscapes of love

Cemeteries are landscapes created to hold the physical remains of people who have died. They are also places that reflect cultural processes. Foucault theorises cemeteries as heterotopias, spaces that are ordinary and institutional, but also disturbing in their otherness.¹ According to Foucault, their uncanny duality describes a world within a world, reflecting but at the same time distorting what lies outside.² This inherent duplicity forms the foundation of cemeteries' cultural meanings, as places where enduring expressions of love, grief, and longing intersect with death, decay, and horror.

Modern cemeteries are typically arranged as microcosms of a living city.³ Structured to support rituals of visitation and remembrance and create a permanent home for the dead visited by the living. Materially temporal but conceptually eternal, cemeteries embody an unsettling tension with memory, time, and meaning. Landscapes built to preserve memory change and decay almost as soon as they are established. Academics David Leatherbarrow and Mohsen Mostafavi discuss weathering as “the gradual destruction of buildings by nature,”⁴ asserting this as a desirable attribute of structures intended to undergo transformation over time. Cemeteries are heterotopic in the ways they juxtapose time and reality, combining notions of permanence, perpetuity, and continuity, with death, the ephemeral, and expiration.

Burial rites are sometimes used to reach back into the past to construct narratives of admiration and honour guiding contemporary remembrance of individuals. In other cases, the histories of those interred have been forgotten, even as the physical commemorative markers and cemeteries have been maintained and preserved. Fear of illness and contagion has led to the modern conditions of burial places displaced from the homes of the living, located on the outskirts and outside the “city wall.” According to Foucault, this “radical isolation” lends a deviant quality to the dead, who remain present in the memory of the living but must be contained and separated.⁵ These unsettling tensions and the various ways they symbolically and physically manifest across cultures, religions, and historical epochs, create fascinating distinctions in cemetery landscapes.

Cemeteries function to perpetually enplace the interred, conferring upon them both an elevated status and a permanent presence in the landscape. Burial, remembrance rituals, and cemeteries have been used as colonial tactics to lay claim to land and landscapes and to shape collective identity through the emplacement and displacement of subjects. In that way, cemeteries are landscapes that embody place attachment and group identities. McClymont has shown how cemeteries in cities with migrant populations are co-created through design and memorial practices, functioning as repositories of collective memory, symbols of civic belonging, and differentiation between groups of people.⁶ Maddrell and Sidaway show how death and associated acts of remembrance have spatial and geographical dimensions, which are shaped by the interplay of the body, culture, society, and the state.⁷ In the context of Northern Ireland, Graham and Whelan examine how politics in the form of belonging, civic identity, and public memory are embedded in burial places.⁸

Memory holds a deeply rooted political aspect, and each period strives to reconstruct and redefine memory according to its current goals, which often revolve around promoting national aspirations and narratives.⁹ Cemeteries function as mechanisms that convey the values a specific society desires to prioritise during a particular period.¹⁰ Colonial cemeteries serve simultaneously as landscapes of contemplation and as present-day signifiers of violence.¹¹ In that way, colonial cemeteries can be considered to act as metaphorical landscapes of signs,¹² akin to Barthes' concept of *indexes*,¹³ where the burial grounds contain physical traces (tombstones, inscriptions, enclosures) that index or signify historical, cultural, and social relationships of the past. Some colonial cemeteries with violent and traumatic colonial pasts, where ancestral and emotional connections have been deliberately severed, manifest a state of decay so pronounced that their enclosing structures have vanished. This absence of enclosure, even more than the degradation of the graves themselves, underscores the tension between the worldview of their origins and their present-day perceptions as unhomey places to be shunned.

This paper explores some of these ideas grounded in Western traditions of death, burial, and remembrance that have links back to ancient Roman times through case studies in three different cities, in three different continents. The case studies illustrate distinct heterotopias, revealing some of the unsettling tensions and contradictions of their respective societies. The combination of the three uniquely divergent case study cities arose from discussions between the three authors around cemeteries as architectures of love, and how commemoration of the departed manifests as landscapes of care which can also turn into abandonment, erasure, and exclusion. The cemeteries discussed in this paper originate from modern Western traditions of burial, but their material expression of death and symbolic remembrance practices have been shaped by the societal power relations of their time. The concept of perpetuity, as demonstrated in the case studies, is inherently ambivalent, interwoven with impossibility and unattainability. Whether it's the renowned, the mundane, or the overlooked, cemetery landscapes serve as stages where the passage of time, historical narratives, transformations, and acts of forgetting unfold, despite the impression given by their enduring monuments and inscriptions suggesting otherwise. This paper compares four cemeteries located in Paris, France; Windhoek, Namibia; and Melbourne, Australia, to explore the history of Western burial landscapes, their

colonial application and appropriation as political tools, and how the concept of perpetuity produces deserted urban cemeteries.

The first cemetery to be discussed is in Paris, France, the epicentre of a major cemetery reform in the late 1700s that influenced subsequent cemetery design, particularly in the United Kingdom and its colonies. The second case study is in Windhoek, Namibia, where the isolation and separation of some cemeteries from the communities of people buried there has been affected by colonial structures and planning laws that sought to reinforce hierarchies based on race. Their subsequent uncanny liminality and state of decay are reminders of historical institutional hatred. An additional case study in Windhoek examines a different type of cemetery: the war memorial, which embeds independent Namibia's politics of death onto the landscape to promote love in the form of respectful admiration for a political lineage and its narrative of national salvation. The third case study is in Melbourne, Australia, and examines a typical Victorian colonial cemetery based on ideas translated directly from the United Kingdom and analyses how ideas of perpetuity resulted in a contradictory situation between oblivion and presence that harbour inklings of unease. This example illustrates how the concept of perpetuity affects urban cemeteries, leading to the emergence of deserted realms of mortality. Additionally, this case study underscores the significance of preserving cemeteries as cultural expressions, as they are often threatened by redevelopment.

The Roman legacy and the link between the worlds of the living and the dead

Roman law required the worlds of the living and the dead to be kept separate. Burial tombs were kept beyond the legal boundary of the city. However, a significant link existed between these two realms. Tombs assumed the semblance of a dwelling for the deceased, often accompanied by a garden where the living could visit and hold gatherings to show respect to the departed. The firm division between these domains underwent a profound shift with the ascent of Christianity as the prevailing faith in the third century CE.¹⁴

Under the influence of Christianity's emphasis on the afterlife in heavenly realms, the process of bodily decay underwent a pragmatic transformation. Its purpose shifted towards preservation of the body, which held a significant role in the envisioned Judgement Day when the deceased would be resurrected and face judgment. Cemeteries and burial grounds gained heightened activity as sites for ongoing decomposition, involving the continuous exhumation of bones to be stored in charnel houses and replaced with new bodies. These ever-changing and volatile landscapes were also frequently situated next to, or even periodically used as, fairgrounds and markets, blending the realms of the living and the deceased in a manner that would be nearly incomprehensible to modern sensibilities.

This state of proximity and casual interaction with the dead began to cause unease in Europe as the effects of the plague and other diseases continued to threaten the human population. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, many aspects of civic life during Roman times had begun to reassert themselves, including an emphasis on hygiene and a desire to separate the living and the dead.

Cemetery reform in Paris

The drive for reformation in burial practices was particularly pronounced in the case of Paris, France. The city had been systematically undermined, and its structural integrity eroded by subterranean mines and tunnels used since Roman times to extract construction materials like stone and gypsum.¹⁵ The collapse of a substantial portion of a densely populated inner-city burial ground in the eighteenth century into the basements of surrounding houses evoked a visceral horror and fear of decay and contagion in cities. As a response, legislative measures were enacted to close all burial sites within the city walls, and three new expansive cemeteries were established beyond the city limits. Over two years, the remains of approximately six million deceased Parisians were relocated into the catacombs, some of which were repurposed from the abandoned mines beneath the city. While the persistent belief in an afterlife mandated the preservation of bones, these convictions gradually waned. Consequently, certain features of the newly established cemeteries outside the city walls responded to these societal changes. Foucault describes this transformation: “The cemeteries then came to constitute, no longer the sacred and immortal heart of the city, but ‘the other city,’ where each family possesses its dark resting place.”¹⁶

Père Lachaise—the grave as property in perpetuity

Among the trio of expansive new cemeteries, Père Lachaise was inaugurated in 1804, standing out as a vast, park-like ground for burial on the city’s elevated outskirts. From certain viewpoints, the city was observable from within the cemetery. Nevertheless, a tall perimeter wall distinctly delineates its boundaries (Fig. 1). The cemeteries’ uniqueness stemmed from their role as innovative burial spaces, marking the first time a parcel of land could be purchased in perpetuity. Previously, the Church had been entrusted with the care of the deceased until Judgement Day. However, at Père Lachaise, a paradigm shift occurred as the departed were laid to rest in a permanent home for eternity.¹⁷ As belief in the afterlife waned, greater importance was placed on the ability to personally visit loved ones within the earthly realm.

Fig. 1 Monumental entrance to Père Lachaise Cemetery through the boundary wall. [Photograph: Katrina Simon, 2013]



Père Lachaise was intentionally designed to offer a morally improving experience to visitors, who were encouraged to stroll through the extensively planted slopes and read the inscriptions on tombs and monuments. As an added allure, several celebrities were disinterred from their original burial places and re-interred in Père Lachaise, which created both a cultural and commercial attraction. The tomb of the medieval couple Abelard and Eloise, who had passed away more than 800 years prior, gained remarkable fame and prominence among these transfers (Fig. 2).¹⁸



Fig. 2 Tomb of Abelard and Eloise in Père Lachaise, one of the early “celebrity” tombs established to attract visitors to the cemetery. [Photograph: Katrina Simon, 2013]

Père Lachaise is also closely linked with other notable figures, including writers, composers, politicians, and actors. The resting places of Oscar Wilde and Jim Morrison have drawn persistent displays of unrequited love from visitors, whose tokens including lipstick kisses (destroys the stone!) and trinkets, have created an ongoing maintenance issue for cemetery staff over many decades.

While the cemetery’s promotion and information highlight these more notable instances, the everyday essence of the cemetery reveals numerous dimensions of the tensions between love, loss, and longing. Family tombs, boldly inscribed to sustain the family name, resemble small house-like structures (Fig. 3). However, the passage of time gradually alters the cemetery’s fabric, hinges rust, glass cracks, and vegetation takes root in the organic matter that accumulates from fallen leaves. The mere addition of a single tomb initiates this transformation. Even the berries that fall from memorial wreaths introduce growth and transformation to the cemetery’s environment.

Père Lachaise became a very influential model and was particularly emulated in the United Kingdom.¹⁹ The business model of attractively landscaped grounds

Fig. 3 Family tombs as small houses arranged in streets in Père Lachaise Cemetery as in a microcosm of the city. [Photograph: Katrina Simon, 2013]



and ownership of graves with perpetual upkeep led to the establishment of famous cemeteries such as Highgate and Kensal Green in London, among others. However, this model was flawed as it hinged on perpetual upkeep, and often underfunded endeavour. When cemeteries reached capacity and revenue from plot sales ceased, the businesses faltered. Cemeteries reverted to local authority care, frequently succumbing to physical deterioration and decay. This pattern also emerged in many colonial settlements, where each locality demonstrated its response to the ongoing tensions embedded in this scenario.

Missionaries, religion, and burial in Namibia

Thirty-five years before the British missionary David Livingstone arrived in Africa, missionaries arrived via the Cape Colony in Namibia. European missionaries and traders established regional trade routes in the late eighteenth century that brought significant political, social, and economic change to Namibia, laying the groundwork for colonial claims to the territory. These changes included the Cape Colonial and transatlantic slave trade.²⁰ Missionaries propagated salvation through not only faith and moral behaviour, but also through strict sexual morality—rejecting “heathen” practices and obtaining salvation through the adoption of European peasant society traits, Western attire, square-shaped houses, literacy, Christian education, gender roles confining women to domestic spheres, and tools like the plough.²¹ These practices included introducing Western ideas of death, burial, and remembrance. Missionaries played a major role in the establishment and development of Namibia’s capital city Windhoek.²² Their social impact remains palpable, with most Namibians considering themselves nominally of Christian faith today.²³

Memory, power, and Windhoek’s forgotten cemeteries

Memory persists through collective recollection and repetition, which unifies diverse interpretations of events to form an idealised composite shaping the societal foundation for future memories.²⁴ In that sense, memory and power are intertwined, and memory and its counterpart, forgetting, are hegemonically

produced.²⁵ Windhoek's successive colonial occupations were marked by efforts to separate the living population racially and later ethnically through the spatial segregation of the city's domestic spheres. This preoccupation carried through to the realms of the dead, where separate cemeteries segregated the city's dead in perpetuity.

As Windhoek's colonial population expanded through successive waves of immigration, indigenous domestic spaces were forcibly demolished to maintain and strengthen racial and ethnic segregation. An ironic reverence for death prevented the destruction of churches and cemeteries while actual homes were razed. The paradoxical nature of apartheid laws spared cemeteries and places of worship from demolition, while pass-laws made these sites inaccessible to former residents, leading to their gradual decay.²⁶ Over time, these forcibly abandoned churches and cemeteries became integrated into segregated prosperous suburbs. The memorial practices linked to these places, expressing love through recollection, were dislocated from the communities that could uphold the memory of those buried there, and their experiences of suffering under colonial rule. This "hegemonic forgetting" has been perpetuated by the independent Namibian government, under whose authority the destruction and redevelopment of some of these spaces have occurred.

Veronica Street Cemetery, in the affluent suburb of Ludwigsdorf, is an example of a cemetery whose physical state of abandonment can be read as a lack of love and an obstinate refusal to be erased. Ludwigsdorf is one of the most expensive suburbs in Windhoek, home to embassies, ambassadors, diplomatic missions, high-level government staff, and the city's most privileged residents. Veronica Street Cemetery is marked only by a small, dilapidated sign in a cul-de-sac and is located next to an overgrown ephemeral riverbed. The site is the burial ground of indigenous residents who lived in nearby Klein Windhoek but were forcibly moved across town during German colonialism. The remaining legible tombstones indicate that burials occurred here from 1900 to the 1950s. Little is published about the cemetery's interred, and no plaques attempt to illuminate their fate. Many graves are identifiable only as mounds of heaped mica and quartz stone, interspersed with the region's thorny but slow-growing highland savannah vegetation (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Heaped mounds of quartz stone and stacked blocks of mica rock mark graves in Veronica Street Cemetery. [Photograph: Stephanie Roland, 2020]





Fig. 5 Traces of care in Windhoek's neglected Veronica Street Cemetery. [Photograph: Stephanie Roland, 2020]

Veronica Street Cemetery's disintegration and abandonment reveal the violent destruction of the ties of love that bind people to landscapes. Upon closer inspection (Fig. 5), some of the tombstones have received intermittent care and restoration, indicating the periodic interaction of the dislocated community. These traces of care stand in contrast to the apathetic attitude of the affluent suburb towards this haunting liminal space, which serves as a stubborn and perhaps unwanted reminder of colonial oppression in the heart of Windhoek's wealthiest district. The cemetery subverts proprietary suburban values through its state of neglect. Its captivating and unmarked existence and the palpable destruction of love produce a landscape of imagination and dread that undermines attempts at looking the other way.

The politics of death at Heroes' Acre in Windhoek

As in the early nineteenth-century cemeteries of Paris, Windhoek's colonial cemeteries were considered places of perpetuity. However, the motives underlying this perpetuity were to claim a landscape as a home to legitimise and develop colonial identity and a sense of belonging. Silvester has discussed how memorials and prominent tombstones, especially those belonging to the German Schutztruppe, assumed a crucial role in upholding German settler identity and served as symbols strengthening a collective memory that emphasised the sacrifice of the German community.^{27, 28} These war memorials became the structuring device for the city's public realm.

The politics of death in modern Namibia continue to be used to embed claims of belonging and exclusion on the landscape. The burial, and sometimes re-burial, of persons of importance are used as rituals to establish authority over specific regions.²⁹ Repetitive commemorative practices associated with these dead can re-frame historical narratives and lead to official recognition of a group's belonging to one place over another. Ritual re-burial lies at the heart of Windhoek's largest independent memorial, Heroes' Acre. The 700-acre war memorial, designed by North Korean firm Mansudae Overseas Projects, honours those who fought for the country's independence.³⁰ The complex, located far from the city's outskirts, surrounded by ornate fences and patrolled by AK-47-wielding soldiers, is a



Fig. 6 Heroes' Acre war memorial with the tombs on platforms ascending to the obelisk and statue of the unknown soldier. [Photograph: Stephanie Roland, 2019]

memorial space not intended for the public. Instead, this enormous landscape of death is used to re-frame the country's fraught and complex history of resistance into a contemporary politically expedient narrative. The cemetery directs political love and admiration at a chosen elite, while the design abdicates care for the public, diverging from Namibia's constitutionally enshrined democratic values.

Burwood, Melbourne: Forgotten love of an ordinary cemetery

As illustrated in the discussion of Namibian cemeteries, notions of perpetuity from nineteenth-century Paris also underpinned colonial cemetery design in Australia. Melbourne's Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust considers "the maintenance of cemeteries which have minimal space available, low visitation rates and require ongoing maintenance and focus on heritage"³¹ a key part of their remit. The Trust acknowledges declining visitation and ongoing maintenance costs. Cemeteries designated as sites of perpetual remembrance thereby eventually transform into abandoned unhomey spaces within urban areas.

A paradox prevails within cemeteries. When a loved one dies, the site anchors a profoundly poignant experience. A cemetery is a place of acute importance and is often a moment of acknowledging and releasing the departed especially during the burial rites. Afterwards, a process of abandonment begins, initiating the

gradual neglect of the cemetery itself. Academic Bruce Hannon calls this process the rate of forgetting.³² Cemeteries experience gradual abandonment because memories of the departed aren't solely tied to their burial sites. As memories of the burial fade, so do the emotional ties to the cemetery. When the youngest individual holding a profound emotional connection to the interred dies, personal and meaningful connection to the cemetery is also often severed, decreasing the likelihood of regular visits, care, and maintenance to graves. This phenomenon is echoed by Foucault in his conception of heterochronism, where he links space and the cadence of time, the moment of an individual's loss of life linked to the "quasi-eternity in which he incessantly dissolves and fades away."³³ The cemetery gradually declines in personal significance and meaning as time passes. Scholar Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, on the other hand, notes "the process of forgetting" as a romantic progression where the cemetery acquires a historical and antiquarian dimension, becoming a "relic in its own right" and therefore worthy of preservation, love, and care.³⁴

A typical example of an abandoned cemetery is Burwood Cemetery, located fourteen kilometres east of Melbourne's central business district. It was initially known as Nunawading General Cemetery, established in 1858, coinciding with the area's early colonial settlement. The settlement's name shifted from Ballyshanassy to Norwood, and eventually to Burwood in 1879. The cemetery's design is based on British colonial traditions, developed from Père Lachaise. The importing of a landscape treatment and aesthetic by early settlers overlooked the presence of First Nations people by refusing to engage with existing culture and rituals.

Burwood Cemetery is located on an elongated basin and is organised along an axis. This axis is consolidated by the primary vehicular access and framed by the main entrance and exit. Burwood primarily contains four religious groups: Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Church of England. The four denominations are arranged in small groups along the primary access. The cemetery has monumental graveyards, limited and narrow lawn sections, small niche walls, and two domestic buildings next to the main entrance for conducting services. The location has minimal vegetation, marked by sparse tree lines along the primary entrance and the eastern and western boundaries, and is predominantly constructed with concrete and stone.

The site was originally on the city's outskirts, surrounded by farms and market gardens. Over time, Burwood Cemetery has become walled-in, surrounded by two suburbs with residents whose families were not buried there. Having reached full capacity in 1980, the cemetery's visitation has steadily declined. Currently, most visitors to Burwood are labourers dedicated to weed control, endeavouring to eradicate the limited signs of life struggling to endure amidst the concrete pathways and stone structures of the monumental graveyards.

Burwood's distinctive topographical position saves it from total obscurity. Its location at the lowest point of a basin allows for views over the cemetery walls from the surrounding urban fabric. This topography offers vistas of Burwood to those living in the surrounding areas (Figs. 7 and 8). Demonstrations of love for the dead and ritual remembrance practices are usually private. Cemeteries like Burwood often feature encircling walls or fences that set them apart from their (urban) surroundings, resembling the walled garden or *hortus conclusus*.³⁵ Within

these walls, a parallel and somewhat detached reality exists. Walled gardens are spaces designed to be experienced from the inside. “The *hortus conclusus* unites within itself a marvellous assemblage of disparate aspects. It seeks to understand the landscape it denies, explain the world it excludes, bring in the nature it fears and summarise all this in an architectural composition.”³⁶



Fig. 7 Views across Burwood Cemetery from surrounds at the north-east boundary. [Photograph: Isabel Lasala, 2023]



Fig. 8 Porosity and visual permeability of Burwood Cemetery's western boundary. [Photograph: Isabel Lasala, 2023]

Burwood's enclosure is, in many ways, its most prominent feature, delineating the separation between the realm of the living and that of the deceased. The barrier is experienced from the “outside” as a low brick wall with a chain link fence with different levels of porosity indicative of the different relationship between residents and the cemetery along different edges. The topographical concavity of the site has allowed for visual connection, a form of interaction that undermines total abandonment.

Like many cemeteries, Burwood is made of stone, concrete, and marble, creating an arid and uninviting atmosphere. Evident decay signals a place that is difficult to love. Burwood's monumental graveyards do not have the same colour and finish they used to have, and their sharp edges have dulled. Some plaques have cracks and, at some points, have even broken or collapsed (Fig. 9). Once-vibrant flowers expressing love have rotted away and been replaced by plastic as lasting expressions of love, leaving even fewer living entities in the cemetery (Fig. 10). Despite sparse trees and narrow lawns, the only thriving things in Burwood are the weeds and mosses, surviving despite consistent poisoning (Fig. 9). This unwanted weathering affords opportunities that have been described by landscape architect Julian Raxworthy as “the veridic, [...] a new practice for working with plant material in landscape architecture and gardening” that focuses on the plants' growing process rather than on plants' mature stage.³⁷

The veridic suggests that Burwood's deserted landscape, marked by neglect and decay, has the potential to transform into a thriving habitat for spontaneous vegetation. This transformation could breathe life into an area once frequented by visitors. The site's abandonment and lack of foot traffic create optimal conditions for the natural resurgence of greenery in these barren spaces of death. As these spaces rewild, Burwood's dry expanse could gradually evolve into a lush sanctuary for living creatures. People walking along the surrounding walls could observe the vegetation from above and be inspired to revisit the resting places of their loved ones.



Fig. 9 East-west corridor between rows of monumental graves at Burwood Cemetery. [Photograph: Isabel Lasala, 2023]

Fig.10 Narrow corridor between rows of monumental graves adorned with plastic flowers at Burwood Cemetery. [Photograph: Isabel Lasala, 2023]



Conclusion: Missing you already

This paper has explored four cemeteries in three case study cities through Foucault’s lens of heterotopia, analysing the tensions and ambivalences that exist in public spaces that are at once ordinary and known, but also disturbing in their juxtapositions of memory and time. The four cemeteries are products of very different cultural processes but can trace their origins to Roman burial traditions reformed in the eighteenth century and exemplified by Père Lachaise in Paris. Their duplicitous meanings have been discussed by tracing their origins, the colonial power relations that were expressed in their physical and symbolic design, their modern-day political interpretations, and the ways in which their relevance and meaning can change over time.

Reading cemeteries as architectures of love and landscapes of care has allowed this paper to compare the many ways in which the dynamics of that love change

over time, drawing together diverse geographies, places, processes of memory and identity practices through that discussion. Like love, building a cemetery is a time-bound practice, and unlike some aspects of human love, it can extend across more than one human lifespan. Cemeteries thus embed the worldviews of people who built them, but not necessarily those who inherit them. Cemeteries displace the present world for past worlds, and this can become another source of tension and loss, the uneasiness of the Foucauldian world within a world³⁸ that describes the homes of the dead.

The status of perpetuity conferred upon cemeteries has been discussed as a colonial tactic that asserts ownership over land, but also, as in the case of Veronica Street Cemetery, leaves inconvenient deviant historical traces in the landscape despite attempts at erasure. Burwood Cemetery, on the other hand, faces obliteration through neglect and indifference. Despite being the more physically weathered and overgrown, Veronica Street shows traces of care that suggest that people remain attached to this place, whereas the care of Burwood is primarily institutional. These differences reflect their respective societies' different ways of reckoning with their colonial pasts, and the ways these histories have shaped cultural, social, and state dynamics. Heroes' Acre war memorial is an example of how the perpetuity of cemeteries is used as a political tool to shape collective memory and civic belonging. Like Père Lachaise, Heroes' Acre bestows upon its interred a form of national (political) celebrity status. Unlike Paris, Heroes' Acre does not welcome the public; instead, it suggests a historical narrative that stands above its citizens in radical isolation. Heroes' Acre, as the newest cemetery discussed in this paper, is also in many ways the most heterotopic, reflecting a version of history that becomes through this telling more clear and real than the layered and contested history of the city.

Memory, deeply intertwined with politics, undergoes constant reconstruction and redefinition to align with contemporary goals, often to promote contemporary national aspirations. Cemeteries can be mechanisms for conveying society's values during a given period, offering spaces for contemplation while also serving as reminders of past violence. They are metaphorical landscapes of signs, where physical elements like tombstones and inscriptions signify historical, cultural, and social relationships. Some colonial cemeteries highlight the tensions between their origins and their current perceptions as unwelcoming places, or places where memory is discouraged.

Cemeteries are places of love, memory, and resignation for some, and for others, only practical burial places and sanitary responses to the deposition of the deceased. The process of grieving and overcoming pain can lead to personal growth, facilitated by spaces conducive to memory and reflection. However, these places face the threat of disappearance if they fail to provide suitable environments for engaging with memory. Despite embodying both emotional and physical decay, cemeteries represent hope through ongoing preservation efforts amidst loss and destruction. The challenges to their physical permanence reflect broader dynamics within these landscapes, defining their complex relationship with settlements and cities, perpetually engaging in an uneasy dialogue between the past and present.

NOTES

1. According to Foucault, utopias represent idealised and imaginary spaces, whereas heterotopias are real places that contain multiple layers of meaning and function, often embodying specific contradictions and complexities within society.
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8. Brian Graham and Yvonne Whelan, "The Legacies of the Dead: Commemorating the Troubles in Northern Ireland," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25, no. 3 (2007): 476–95, <https://doi.org/10.1068/d70j>.
9. Katharyne Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory," *Urban Geography* 24, no. 5 (2013): 442–59, <https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.24.5.442>.
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11. David Bunn, "The Sleep of the Brave: Graves as Sites and Signs in the Colonial Eastern Cape," in Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin, *Images and Empire: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, (University of California Press, 2012), 56–89, <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520229488.003.0003>.
12. David Bunn, "The Sleep of the Brave."
13. John M. Gómez, *An Analysis of Roland Barthes's Mythologies*, (London, UK: Macat, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781912281695>.
14. Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); James Stevens Curl, *Celebration of Death: An Introduction to Some of the Building, Monuments and Settings of Funery Architecture in the Western European Tradition*. (London, UK: BT Batsford., 1993).
15. Gypsum, also known as Plaster of Paris, has its origins in the evaporated salts deposited in ancient lagoons which were present in the area that eventually became Paris, approximately 45 million years ago when the region was submerged under a shallow sea.
16. Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, "Texts/ Contexts: Of Other Spaces," 22–27, 25.
17. Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 1981).
18. The story of Abelard and Eloise is a well-known love tragedy. Living in the twelfth century, Abelard was a monk and tutor to Eloise. Their relationship took a romantic turn, resulting in Eloise's pregnancy. In response, Eloise's uncle ordered the castration of Abelard. Although the former lovers were physically separated, they maintained communication through an extensive exchange of letters. These letters spoke about religious and earthly ideas of love and were widely circulated, accounting for the couple's ongoing fame and popularity. Abelard and Eloise had already been buried separately in regional France, disinterred and reburied together and then reburied apart again before they were relocated to provide moral uplift at Père Lachaise.
19. Hugh Meller and Brian Parsons, *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*, (Godstone: Gregg International, 1985).
20. Jan-Bart Gewald, "From the Old Location to Bishops Hill: The Politics of Urban Planning and Landscape History in Windhoek, Namibia," in *African Landscapes, Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by Michael Bollig and Olaf Bubenzer (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 201–24, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-78682-7>.
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25. Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory."
26. Gewald, "From the Old Location to Bishops Hill."
27. Jeremy Silvester, "Sleep with a Southwester: Monuments and Settler Identity in Namibia," in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century, Projects, Practices, Legacies*, edited by Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, (London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 271–86.
28. There were multiple battles and skirmishes, with different groups that were commemorated at different sites in this settler German identity project over the years of occupation.
29. John T. Friedman, "Making Politics, Making History: Chiefship and the Post-Apartheid State in Namibia," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 23–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070500035620>.
30. The cemetery's spatial organisation and material qualities echo its progenitor, Pyongyang's National Martyrs' Cemetery, using marble, stone, polished granite, and paving to sculpt an immutable decay-proof form onto the bushland savannah landscape. Pyongyang's Martyrs' Cemetery puts the Kim family in prime position, developing the Kims' political narrative of a familial lineage of rulers. In Windhoek, this paramount position is taken up with a central statue of the "unknown soldier" bearing an uncanny resemblance to Namibia's first democratically elected president. Several colonial resistance leaders have been re-interred at Heroes' Acre, but the memorial cemetery mainly houses politicians from the ruling Swapo party, with many of its 174 tombs remaining unoccupied.
31. "Strategic Plan FY22-24," The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, https://assets.cffassets.net/ud83ml8x57b0/348BwsbFyFDHd2Sd4OeL8J/e222417aeeb957765e81a4f8f37c019b/GMCT_Strategic_Plan_FY22-24.pdf (accessed 18 February 2024).
32. Bruce Hannon, "The Forgetting Rate: Evidence from a Country Cemetery," *Landscape Journal* 9, no. 1 (1990): 16–21.
33. Dehaene and De Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City*, 20.
34. Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, "Remembering and Forgetting: The Relationship between Memory and the Abandonment of Graves in Nineteenth-and

Twentieth-Century Greek Cemeteries," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14 (2010): 285–301, 286.

35. Laurie Cluitmans (ed.), *On The Necessity Of Gardening: An Abc Of Art, Botany and Cultivation*, (Amsterdam, NL: Valiz, 2021).

36. Cluitmans, *On The Necessity Of Gardening*, 90.

37. Julian Raxworthy and Fiona Harrison, *Overgrown: Practices Between Landscape Architecture and Gardening*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).

38. Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces."