



Historical geography I: What remains?

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Abstract

This report uses the First World War as a way to open up current debates into issues of bodies, selves, battlefields, memory and death in historical geography and beyond. Sweeping through a range of scales, from the global nature of imperialist practices to the intimate spaces of the psyche, this report highlights the contributions that historical geographers are making to these studies and the creative approaches taken. The aim is to expose the need for historical geography to engage with the darkest corners of human experience, in relation to conflict, so as to learn from the past in present insecure times.

Keywords

bodies, conflict, death, First World War, historical geography, memorialization, scale

Introduction

Few years can justly be said to have transformed the Earth: 1914 did. (Ham, 2014: n.p.)

A grisly tableau was the first thing to greet them – mangled bodies were strewn around, many of them no more than limbless torsos, like tailor's dummies, their clothes blown off... A stretcher-bearer, lacking as yet any live casualties, was picking up limbs – arms and legs that were sticking out of the rubble. He looked as if he was intending to piece the dead together again at a later date. Did someone do that, Ursula wondered? In the mortuaries – try and match people up, like macabre jigsaws? Some people were beyond re-creation, of course... (Atkinson, 2013: 389)

August 2014 marks the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, a time when worlds were destroyed and remade, and lives were changed forever by the force of the conflict. Reverberations of this event are still

felt strongly in the present day, haunting lives and landscapes. During the First World War, almost nine million men were killed in action, six million civilians died in incidents relating to conflict, and nearly 20 million individuals suffered injuries (Kramer, 2008: 251). This overwhelming scale of death, destruction and despair fundamentally changed the way that individuals viewed bodies, selves and landscapes.¹ The above description of the gruesome aftermath of bombing in London, taken from Kate Atkinson's novel *Life After Life* (2013), forces the reader to consider the difficult question of 'what remains?' – a haunting shadow that hangs over all historical geography research. In relation to war, this is often most

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pertinent to those who have lost their lives in battle and their deathly shadows that sweep across a range of commemorative landscapes. However, it is also present in the bodies and minds that, despite their best efforts, travel through the different spaces of their worlds battered, bruised and sometimes broken by the conflict they have felt and/or encountered. As the world remembers and commemorates the First World War, through a series of high-profile events (see: www.1914.org), the sub-field of historical geography continues various quests of critical reassembly (relating to conflict) which, just as Atkinson's 'macabre jigsaws' suggests, work within the boundaries of what gets left behind and at the limits of historical re-creation.

In the first of these three reports outlining current endeavours in historical geography and related fields, I will review published work relating to three intertwining research themes: bodies and battlefields, minds and institutions, and memory and memorialization. Using the centenary of the First World War as a pivot, and in line with a 'new wave' of First World War studies adopting a multidisciplinary agenda to address the multitude of experiences and perceptions of the many individuals involved in adjusting to and enduring conflict (see Wilson, 2011), this report demonstrates the 'kaleidoscopic complexity' (Saunders and Cornish, 2014: 6) of this area of study with reference to historical geography and beyond.

Distance and scale

In his 'memoiristic' essay discussing 50 years of Canadian historical geography, Wynn (2012) asks for the sub-field, once again, to push back 'against the idea that historical geography has neither contemporary relevance nor something distinctive to say about a world we have lost' (p. 21), insisting instead upon the importance of engaging with the past in various ways. Historical geography, Wynn (2012: 21) notes, is

'neither a thing of the past, nor a field facing life-threatening crisis', but it is changing and there are fresh issues requiring consideration. Using the work of intellectual historian Mark Phillips (2011), Wynn suggests that developing a more nuanced view of 'historical distance' can chart a route-way to a more varied and inclusive historical practice. For Phillips (2011: 14):

Scientific time may be measured by abstractions, but history's movements are neither neutral nor uniform. Though time is often compared to a river... it might equally be imagined as a city street, where the traffic changes its rhythms at different times of the day, and where the flow of present purposes rubs up against structures built by earlier generations. In narrative, as in a streetscape, heterogeneity produces a variety not reducible to a single optimum viewpoint – what some have wanted to call a *truly* historical perspective. Rather, historical distance emerges as a complex balance that has as much to do with the emotional or political uses of the past as with its explanatory functions or its formal design. (quoted in Wynn, 2012: 22)

Historical distance, if thought in these terms, is intimately bound to the ways in which people and worlds collide (Phillips, 2011: 22) over time and space, often in the most spectacular of ways, and a range of historical geography work has recently sought to investigate these collisions in relation to war, conflict and their devastating aftermaths.

As historical geographers address the force of such collisions in increasingly insecure times (see Philo, 2012a), recent focus has turned, once again, to the importance of scale for drawing out networks of power across particular times and places. In a feature issue of the *Journal of Historical Geography*, on the historical geographies of moral regulation, Legg and Brown argue 'that geographies of moral regulation can be both intellectually and empirically extended by work that carefully traces the temporal and spatial scales of moral regulation' (2013: 134).

Using Foucauldian theory, the papers in this issue explore the latent possibilities for exposing the scalar networks of moral regulation (Legg and Brown, 2013: 134). Beckingham's (2013) paper highlights two such scalar trajectories – the imaginative, or discursive, and the practical – in his exploration of the emergence of child protection work in Victorian Britain, while Mooney (2013) demonstrates the under-examined consequences of shifting geographies of risk in relation to the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis in Edwardian England. In Howell's (2013) summary, he argues that, rather than giving up on the insights generated by moral regulation, we should 'recognise that moral regulation does not define and map out specific "moral terrain" so much as it creates – and dynamically recreates – spaces, places and scales as a necessary consequence of its being just such a mode of regulation' (p. 201; emphasis in original). The importance of scale in human geography is retained in this work and, for Howell (2013: 193), it is the active production of scale in the particular moral projects suggested in the papers that captures how the practice of moral regulation is not simply a concept to consider in the past but one that is with us strongly in the present.

As Legg (2009: 237) has noted previously, scale becomes far more than 'a narrative for describing the world', but rather a way of looking at how people connect to their place and discipline their bodies in relation to broader scales of belonging (see Beckingham, 2013: 141) over which individuals often have very little control. The centenary of the First World War creates an opportunity to foreground precisely this scalar politics and vulnerability by considering the force of conflict through a variety of scales, also highlighting the role of 'geography' in understanding the complexities of experience. This report aims to use the First World War as a way to open up current debates into issues of bodies, selves, battlefields, memory and death in historical geography and beyond. Sweeping through a

range of scales, from the global nature of imperialist practices to the intimate spaces of the psyche, this report highlights the contributions that geographers are making to these studies and the creative approaches taken. The aim is to expose the need for historical geography to engage with the darkest corners of human experience, in relation to conflict, so as to learn from the past in present insecure times.

Bodies and battlefields

In their introduction to the edited collection *Bodies in Conflict* (2014), Saunders and Cornish note that 'in war, bodies are put at hazard' (p. 2), while recent work into 'military landscapes' (see Woodward, 2014) has sought to explore the material and experiential effects of conflict (e.g. Pearson et al., 2010).² Fluri (2011: 282) notes that '[b]odies represent the most immediate and delicate scale of politics as corporeal sites and markers of gender and national identity', and attention has been given to a range of bodies involved with the living *in*, fighting *for* and producing *of* such military landscapes. Connections between soldier and landscape have been seen as reassembled in the construction and articulation of military identities in specific times and places (see Atherton, 2009; Woodward and Winter, 2007). Wilson (2011) discusses the varied processes by which British soldiers on the Western Front gave meaning to the war-ravaged landscapes that they encountered. Using soldiers' letters, diaries and recollections, Wilson (2011) shows that, by attributing new names and associations to the areas experienced, a new geographical understanding was formed that became critical to the soldiers' lives and identities. Flintham (2014) reflects upon the complex connections between military and civilian space. Drawing upon fieldwork on the island of Foulness, Flintham (2010: 82) questions 'how militarised space is conceived and produced in three dimensions and how it exists in parallel with civilian space', and in doing so recognizes the agency

of the civilian body (human and social) in defining the limits of military space and being controlled by it.

While focus has been placed on the figures traditionally associated with conflict, such as soldiers and civilians, Forsyth (2013, 2014) has used an historical-cultural lens to investigate the role of camoufleurs in the militarization of particular environments. Through her study of The Desert War and of the work of prominent zoologists Professor Graham Kerr and Dr Hugh Cott, Forsyth shows how camouflage should be interpreted as simultaneously a creative and a violent (indeed 'offensive' and not merely 'defensive') technology. For Forsyth (2014: 261), 'the study of desert camouflage reveals how knowledges are enrolled by the military to recreate spaces to become sites of military geographies' (see also Clayton, 2013) and the space of the desert therefore becomes transformed from 'a natural environment to a dangerous and deceptive battlefield' (2014: 250). Similarly, Gough's (2010) work seeks to expose the battlefield as a 'phantasmagoric' place. By examining the Western Front through the lens of artists such as Stanley Spencer, Gough (2010: 280) suggests that 'the battlefield was in fact a crowded emptiness, crowded with soldiers hidden in noisome labyrinths and "occupied" forever after by the bones and bodies of the dead'.

The battlefield has also become an important focus in discussions surrounding national identity construction. Using the memory scape *Reflections at Bukit Chandu* in Singapore, Muzaini and Yeoh (2005) highlight the contentious nature of such sites as they are appropriated and 'read' by those 'outside' and 'within' the state. Such landscapes, the authors argue, 'not only commemorate war sites but are themselves "fraught battlefields" of collective memory' (Muzaini and Yeoh, 2005: 360). Yet what can often be forgotten in the consumption of such landscapes is that in these sites and spaces bodies have experienced intense pain

and injury; they have been bleeding, bruised, fractured, and broken. For Scarry (1985), this human pain is central to war and yet its affects are incredibly difficult to communicate and comprehend, and for those working on the battlefield of the past it becomes an increasingly difficult element to trace. In order to explore the often 'unspeakable geographies' of the body (see Davis and Dwyer, 2007: 259), some geographers have moved towards more interpretive approaches to research, such as engaging with literary texts (e.g. Pile, 2011).³ Noxolo (2014) highlights how literature can be not only an expression of experience but offer meanings for that experience (p. 296). In relation to postcolonial fiction, particularly the African novel, Noxolo, using Eze (2008), notes that 'literary texts "extend the problem of truth in history from questions about recovered facts of the past to the issue of tradition as in itself a form of historical experience"' (quoted in Noxolo, 2014: 296).

A range of bodies (and body parts) returned from the battlefields of the First World War, and human geography has begun to focus more explicitly on engaging with one particular type: the corpse. Young and Light (2013) argue that the corpse is a neglected form of 'the body' in geographical inquiry, forming an important link between the living and the dead. In their exploration of the mobilities of the corpse of Dr Petru Groza between 1958 and 1990, Young and Light (2013) highlight the various forms of agency displayed by the corpse and the 'dead body politics' involved in its treatment. For the authors, 'corpses play a significant role in broader processes as parts of complex assemblages of memories, representations, embodied performances and the material culture of death' (Young and Light, 2013: 144), which have the potential to reveal a set of underexplored geographies of war and conflict. Yet for some individuals, their corpses were unable to be returned from the battlefield or the civilian rubble due to the horrifying force of modern industrialized warfare, and geographers must

also extend their scope to consider the fragments or absence of human bodies (see Moshenska, 2014) and their significant geographies.

Minds and institutions

For the many living individuals who do return from battlefields of war, their sense of belonging is often intimately bound to a range of institutional spaces and their particular practices. Historical geographers have long paid attention to these institutions, from those created to repair the bodies of the wounded to those specifically existing to treat the mind (e.g. Ogborn and Philo, 1994). For example, Hyson and Lester (2012) investigate Indian military hospitals, specifically the Royal Pavilion complex in Brighton, during the early years of the First World War, asking how the awareness of connections and movements within the networks linking hospitals, their staff and patients to India affected British imperial actions and representation. Recent attention has also turned to the specific micro-spaces of the larger institutions designed to treat those encountering the differing wounds of war. Carden-Coyne (2014) examines soldiers' agency within the unique system of military medicine during the First World War through their diary entries recounting physical pain, and highlights the networks of exchange that occur between individuals, spaces and institutions (see also Moss and Prince, 2014).

McGeachan (2013), in her geographical biography of the Scottish psychiatrist RD Laing, traces the distinctive space of the insulin coma ward at the Royal Victoria Military Hospital in Netley during the 1950s. In the darkened wards of this military hospital, bodies and minds were subjected to experimental treatments designed to 'cure' 'diseases' of the mind in carefully demarcated hospital spaces. By opening up these experimental spaces for further examination, McGeachan (2013) argues that new insights into the interpersonal relations

between patients, psychiatrists and the hospital can be illuminated. These psychotherapeutic relationships are taken further by Callard (2014), in her work on the historical and geographical specificity of psychoanalytic consulting rooms. In this piece, Callard suggests a turn towards examining a historical geography of the psychoanalytic setting, asking '[w]hat would it take to fill out the historical geography of the psychoanalytic consulting room?' (2014: 78). Centring on the multiple dualisms between mind/body interactions, these studies spy, through an historical lens, a variety of scalar spaces, from the grandest of institutional locations through the most mundane of consulting sites to the most intimate inner spaces of fear and despair.

Philo (2014), in a theme issue of *Social & Cultural Geography* addressing 'insecure bodies/selves', discusses the 'alternative spatialities of being-in-the-world for someone experiencing extreme body/self fragmentation' (p. 285; see also McGeachan, 2014).⁴ For many who experience war – first-hand or otherwise – the inescapability (and sometimes the uncontrollability) of their traumatic recollections forces alternative ways of navigating and occupying the spaces and places of their inhabited worlds. A figure often used to highlight these shifting terrains is the shell-shocked soldier. Cases of shell-shock first began to appear in late-1914 in the troops of the British Expeditionary Force during the retreat from Mons (Howorth, 2000: 225) and changed how mental illness, particularly in relation to psychological medicine, was not only treated therapeutically but also institutionally. For many encountering the shell-shocked soldier, they recall the 'veritable hell' (Smith and Pear, 1918: 13) of their worlds and the painful structure of their nightmares: 'it was absolutely terrifying when he woke up, screaming and screaming and screaming' (quoted in Howorth, 2000: 225).⁵

Bonikowski (2013: 14) discusses the 'trace' of war that attempts to somehow capture an experience that repeatedly marks the body and mind.

Soldiers experiencing shell-shock were often viewed as inhabiting a space between the living and the dead, with photographs appearing from the battlefields showing the twisted limbs and blank faces of men scarred by conflict experiences, suggesting ‘a haunting excess written on the surface of the body but pointing to a deeper, invisible disturbance’ (Bonikowski, 2013: 2). Shell-shock is often defined as a traumatic event that inscribes itself and becomes stored in the body, returning through the mechanisms of flashbacks, repetition compulsions and psychosomatic illnesses (Kaes, 2009: 4; see also Howorth, 2000), and recent geographical work has focused on trauma of varying kinds (see Tamas, 2011, 2014; Pain, 2014).⁶

Traumatic experience, notes Bondi (2013: 13), has an ‘intrinsically unchangeable quality to it and feels forever in the present . . . locking the sufferer into a world of unchangeable repetition, trauma estranges and isolates the traumatized, rendering them unable to fully inhabit the world of ordinary human connections’. Through investigations into Freud’s early work on trauma, specifically through a patient called Emma, Blum and Secor (2014) identify and illuminate the centrality of spatiality in understanding trauma. For Blum and Secor (2014: 105), trauma is topological, ‘which is to say that the “origin” of trauma is not a single event localizable in time and space, but rather a topological constellation in which ordinary ideas of space (such as distance or location) are distorted and subject to ongoing transformations’ (see also Pile, 2014). It is therefore this complex erasure of time and distance, between the then and now, in trauma and its aftermaths that historical geographers have sought to investigate in relation to conflict through various guises.

In many ways ‘trauma is . . . the history that keeps on happening’ (Gutorow et al., 2010: 4), and work on imperialism and its legacies shows this insight most profoundly. Wood (2014), in his examinations of Jean-Baptiste Debret’s visual poetics of trauma, explores the subjects

of time and urban slavery. Wood (2014) argues that Debret was fascinated with what slaves did with themselves when they were forced to do nothing: ‘the horrifying and almost wholly neglected aspect of slave life-waiting’ (p. 41). The life of the urban and domestic slave is often imagined as somewhat easier than the hard physical slog of the sugar plantations and mills, but Wood (2014: 42) argues that, ‘viewed from another angle[,] this existence might be worse, indeed might amount to a living death’ due to their lives being so intimately bound to the temporal and spatial routines of their owners (see also Stewart, 1995). By examining the visual archive of Debret, Wood (2014: 43) exposes the ‘full force of the terror of waiting’ for enslaved individuals. In *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man’s World* (2011), Schwarz demonstrates that the afterlives of empire remain strongly felt and experienced long after rule itself has gone. Bailkin (2012) also tracks the afterlives of empire through a collection of everyday stories that attempt to recast the genealogy and geography of welfare. Colonial memories are shown in these works to return as ‘disruptive shocks’, and the ‘spectral reappearances’ of once pertinent figures, places and ideas (Craggs, 2013: 61) demonstrate the continued reverberations of past trauma on the present.

Memory and memorialization

The elusive nature of memory, as seen in the previous section, can be its alluring quality in historical studies. Yet the intrinsic spatiality of memory has led many geographers to explore its expansive domains (e.g. Meusburger et al., 2011; Jones and Garde-Hansen, 2012). Morin (2013: 5) reminds historical geographers that they must keep issues surrounding ‘the psychic or psychoanalytic costs of remembering and forgetting traumatic events (at individual, familial, and social scales)’ as a key concern in the sub-field; and in relation to war and

conflict this caution can be viewed most profoundly in the increasing attention given to memorials and commemorative practices. The enormity of lives lost in the First World War changed the cultural landscape of grieving dramatically, with a diverse range of memorials erected to honour and remember the 'fallen'. Memorials and other commemorative practices bring together bodies and battlefields in death, as in many ways 'memorials were markers for absent bodies' (Scates and Wheatley, 2014: 530) that have often perished on various battlefields. However, questions remain over the afterlives of these presences in a range of landscapes and the multiple ways in which the living continue to confront the dead (see Horne, 2014).

Memory is often explored through the social and cultural practices, enactments and activities that demonstrate emotional bonds connecting communities to their landscapes and environments (see Meusburger et al., 2011: 4). In relation to war and conflict in the geographical literature, memory is often connected to repeated commemorative processes and through the (re)creation of different types of monuments. Johnson's work (see 1999, 2003) broadly examines the role of space in the expression and performance of public memorials, and recently she has sought to examine closely the role of memory, reconciliation and forgetting in a post-conflict society where acts of extreme violence are still temporally close in public consciousness (Johnson, 2012). Using philosopher Paul Ricoeur's (1999) framework for understanding the ethics of memory, Johnson (2012) focuses upon 'the actions, or the "uses and abuses" to which memory is put' (p. 239) to explore the dialectical relationships between memories and acts of remembrance in relation to the 1998 bombing of Omagh. Similarly, McCarthy (2012), in his analysis of the multiple ways whereby Dublin's 1916 Easter Rising has been (re)interpreted over the last century, tracks how memories (and myths) shape Ireland in the present through an

intriguing interplay between historiography and commemoration.

The difficulties inherent in commemorating violent acts and the death and/or destruction of people and places are well documented in the geographical literature, as shown above, but further attention to the control and restriction of such practices has been recently illuminated (see work relating to the 'anti-monument' movement, e.g. Carr, 2003). Work on cemeteries and their subsequent transformations (see Brown, 2013) demonstrates that the resting places of the dead and their relationship with the living is not always an easy one to navigate. Philo (2012b), for example, highlights the 'troubled proximities' associated with on-site asylum cemeteries. Through a specific focus on the often neglected asylum cemetery, Philo (2012b) recognizes the unease that can arise 'between asylums and cemeteries when thrown into proximity' (p. 93; emphasis in original).

Changing perceptions and valuations of the dead due to specific commemoration practices can also be viewed here, since many cemeteries have become lost, forgotten or left to ruin in the contemporary landscape (see Gandy, 2012). The affective power of ruin landscapes (see Ross, 2014) and their ability to serve as 'emblematic sites at which to re-examine and recast our relationship with the past, and our understandings of temporality' (DeSilvey and Edensor, 2013: 471), have been explored at length by a range of geographers (see Edensor, 2011; Garrett, 2011). In relation to war and conflict, geographers have examined restored sites with grave histories, such as the ruins of an Auschwitz gas chamber (Trigg, 2009), and the ambiguous remains of the Second World War and Cold War military infrastructures (Davis, 2008). Attention to these ruins and their afterlives comprises a challenge to dominant modes of thinking of the past, exploring the abject aspects of human experience so often hidden beneath the hegemonic heritage narratives of such sites and historical events (DeSilvey and Edensor, 2013).

While critical attention has been given to particular sites that commemorate the dead in multiple guises, such as cemeteries, it has also focused inwards on the emotional and affective aspects of such material memorial scapes (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010). Therefore, turning the attention to the complex fluxual relationships between the living and the remains of the dead, Maddrell (2013: 503) notes that ‘we all experience the absence of the deceased and negotiate living with that absence in different ways, in and through a variety of place-temporalities’. There are multiple functions of memorials, especially in relation to war and conflict, and this ‘impulse to memorialize the dead’ (Maddrell, 2013: 509) can be read in various ways. In the West, Maddrell (2013: 509) suggests that memorials act as a ‘spatial fix’, a concrete place in the landscape where the dead can be eternally ‘located’ (see Maddrell, 2009) and therefore ‘found’ and the loss of this person publicly ‘tabulated’ (see Klaassens et al., 2009).

Issues of erasure in historical studies are always pressing, but within historical studies surrounding conflict they become incredibly pertinent. Echoing previous points about trauma, people being unable to forget is as important as the complex processes of remembering. Through his work with individuals experiencing the Second World War in Malaysia, Muzaini (2014) discusses the importance of paying attention to forgetting in geographical inquiry. By focusing on the material and embodied practices of his participants to obscure or obliterate their memories of war, Muzaini demonstrates how bodies can be affected by the return of the past in the present. Memories of warfare can be too violently painful to relive, but may be triggered through the senses, and Muzaini (2014: 9) argues that ‘these senses are evidenced to be capable of bringing images of the past within the present, as if “haunting” rememberers of something they would rather forget’.

It is not only the dead that can capture historical scholarly attention. Memorials to the

‘unknown soldier’, where piles of anonymous remains can stand for many others, or to ‘the missing’, such as empty tombs and cenotaphs, scar the landscape as a reminder of what and whom is forever lost. The figure of the ‘missing’ person has recently come into focus with work on the ‘geographies of missing people’ (e.g. Parr and Stevenson, 2014). However, the ‘missing in action’ can be seen as separate from other categories of missing people as questions of ownership over bodies (or body parts) are wrapped up within deeper military narratives of heroism and sacrifice that place such individuals in a strange position.

Edkins’s (2011) work, *Missing: Persons and Politics*, begins with reference to documents found in the United Nations archives in New York. While foraging through reports of efforts made to trace services in concentration camps and death marches, Edkins (2011: vii) stumbles across a file containing records of a train accident where intimate details, such as fingerprints and samples of clothing, of three unidentified people who died in the accident are recorded. For Edkins (2011: vii–viii), this find was exceptionally moving as not only did the documents symbolize that ‘out there in the world was someone, maybe, for whom those traces would have significance’, but they also, more importantly, recognized that ‘someone, somewhere, had taken the trouble to produce these records . . . here, in this archive, that one counts, as a person, not an object, on the assumption that someone, somewhere, may be looking for them’. Material objects, such as the archival documents noted by Edkins, can prove invaluable for locating (traumatic) memory and to aid in memorializing the precious aspects of life that have been or may be lost (see Lovell, 2013). For the many who have watched in horror as their loved ones leave to journey into battlefields far from their homes, observed those around them die or experienced the agonizing eternal wait for news about a missing person that never comes, the remains, in whatever form they materialize, of these people

and moments matter. In recall, time and distance fuse together in swirling patterns that lead to many individuals being unable or unwilling to move on or away from the traumatic past event that haunts their waking and sleeping lives.

Heffernan (2011), in his work on the US Naval Memorial in Brest, explores the possibilities of an 'eventful' historical geography by drawing attention to a particular event and a particular location, and therefore recognizing the significance of deeper structural forces and individual events. Heffernan's (2011) attention to the differing ways in which memories of traumatic events become articulated in time and space demonstrates the transformative nature and function of memorials in a continually changing world. Commemorative sites once functioning as memorials to one event can be associated anew with battles that arise from their (re)construction and destruction, and Heffernan (2011: 225) notes that, although 'the commemorative impulse remains as powerful today as it has ever been, it is certainly no less contentious' (see Kelman, 2013).

The event of traumatic experience is also viewed from a different perspective by Gregory (2011), who explores the natural history of destruction by examining past and contemporary bombing campaigns. Discussing Jörg Friedrich's critical work *Der Brand* (2002), that charts the history of air war, Gregory (2011: 262) argues that 'the critical force of Friedrich's project to the way in which his rendering of the processes through which these spaces were performed disrupts the objectivist language of Science with the force-field of affect and unbuttons the framework of History through the irruption of memory'. By beginning his narrative 'when the bomb hits the ground' (Friedrich quoted in Gregory, 2011: 262), Gregory seeks to deploy Friedrich's work to get 'beneath the bombs' so as to 'recover those spectral faces in the spaces in which and through which they were erased' (2011: 262).

While Gregory confronts the possibility for a 'natural history' of the destruction of cities, Fedman and Karacas (2012) stress the important role of investigating wartime maps and the people that made and used them in the reality of total war. For the authors, maps provide 'a visual means through which to circulate ideas about enemy space, the ethics of warfare, and newly realized capacities for destruction' (Fedman and Karacas, 2012: 328); and, through tracing the cartography of aid raids on urban Japan in the Second World War, they successfully demonstrate new ways of connecting maps and their makers into the broader histories and geographies of warfare.

Conclusions: What remains?

What's the cause that you, and Siegfried Sassoon, and I... can't get away from the war? Here are you riddled with thought like any old table leg with worms; [Sassoon] yawning about like a ship aback; me in the ranks, finding squalor and maltreatment the only experience: what's the matter with us all? It's like the malarial bugs in the blood, coming out months and years after in recurrent attacks. (Lawrence, 1923, as quoted in Cabanes, 2014: 197)⁷

As Heffernan (2011: 224) eloquently notes, '[t]hose who die in one conflict are almost always, in one way or another, manipulated by those who survive', and, as the current First World War centenary commemorations continue to occupy a range of media spaces, this remark is worth bearing in mind. Yet, as seen above, the living and the 'not dead', as Simon Armitage (2008) so poignantly calls them,⁸ may also carry a heavy burden to which historical geographers have now lent their attention. Returning to Wynn's (2012) discussion about Phillips's notion of historical distance, he stresses how temporality is 'bound up with other distances that come from our need to engage with the historical past as (simultaneously) a realm of *making*, of *feeling*, of *doing*,

and of *understanding*' (Phillips, 2011:12; emphasis in original). For Phillips (2011:14), historical distance is more than simply the 'bequest of time' and in many ways 'is the work of hands, hearts, and minds (sometimes tugging in the different directions)'. For historical geography scholarship on issues of and around war and conflict, this thinking paves the way forward for a more nuanced engagement with history that attempts to grapple with exactly how individuals are placed in relation to the past.

War has a drenching effect, seeping through the very fabric of bodies and bones into society's largest and smallest of spaces, and therefore scalar discussions become of increasing importance when attempting to seek out the intimate relations between power and place in varying times. Feminist historical geographers, such as Morin (2013) in her work on historical carceral geographies, continue to expose the importance of 'multiple pasts' for the interpretation of historical research. Similarly to Wynn, Morin (2013: 4) supposes that 'there is no point in studying the past unless there is something we can learn from it . . . the past must be relevant, have purpose, and make a difference'. Just as war and conflict are not static, studies into their remnants are ever changing and historical geographers, as shown, are pushing at the edges of these issues and exploring new terrains.

If, as Gutorow et al. (2010: 4) suggest, trauma is the history that keeps on happening, then questions arise as to whether it is possible to go 'beyond trauma' (see Luckhurst, 2010); how do we do this, and what remains if we do? As the centenary of the First World War comes and goes through the passage of time, the research into war and conflict continues to occupy scholarly imagination. The sheer scale of destruction and devastation of war can never be fully accounted, but the processes of shifting through the human, material, social, political and cultural debris will continue in order to seek understanding into the lives and worlds that have been

lost, altered or obliterated. While historical geographers attempt critically to recreate and reassemble the jigsaws of these parts, macabre or otherwise, we must become increasingly intent to take heed of the experiences of conflict in their entirety and determined to face, no matter how difficult, the 'grisly tableau' presented.

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Notes

1. Although this report focuses on the darker remains of war and conflict, a report could equally be written that centres on issues of hope, compassion and resilience in the face of conflict.
2. In contrast, geography has recently made significant contributions to the study of peace and anti-violence (see Loyd, 2012).
3. Others, of course, following a NRT line, have disavowed any attempts as misrepresentation – accepting simply that what cannot be said must remain silently mired in realms of being and practice (see Anderson and Harrison, 2010).
4. Philo (2014) outlines in this piece the study of Roman soldier Leva Zazetsky, a war-damaged individual, which connects to the issues highlighted in this report.
5. These arguments connect into the notion of a space between the war 'outside' and the trauma within (see Shapira, 2013).
6. Importantly, Tamas (2014: 90) notes that prevalence, form, impact and perception of trauma are so complex, individual and heavily shaped by social location that they cannot easily be reduced to a one-size-fits-all model.
7. This quotation comes from *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (2014). This exceptional three-volume work charts new scholarly engagement with First World War studies. Interestingly, these volumes attempt to tell a 'global story' and build issues of scale into the heart of their narratives.
8. Simon Armitage's poem 'The Not Dead' (2008) was written specifically to highlight the 'forgotten' or 'neglected' soldiers from battles out-with the First or Second World Wars. However, the resonances with the many that return from battle and their 'outsider' status is clearly highlighted throughout the passages:

... We are the not dead.
 Neither happy and proud
 with a bar-code of medals across the heart nor
 aid in a box and draped with a flag,
 we wander this no-man's land instead
 creatures of a different stripe – the
 awkward, unwanted, unlovable type –
 haunted with fears and guilt,
 wounded in spirit and mind.
 So what shall we do with the not dead
 and all of his kind?

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