

33. Managing collective memory through funeral events: an experience design perspective

Chantal Laws

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0059-6014>

Abstract

This chapter adopts an experience design perspective to explore how collective grief and mourning are configured through funeral events. Funerals can be conceived as a novel form of dark events, sitting slightly outside the established dark tourism conceptual framework due to their typically closed nature and more individualised, private and personal scale. Through a focus on the transformative design aspects, funerals are recognised as events that encompass the real and imaginary and are therefore dimensionally complex events with diverse experiential elements. They provide an opportunity to further extend the field of dark events beyond an explicit tourism and leisure lens, and illuminate the power, influence and discursive practices inherent in lifestage events that Critical Event Studies (CES) perspectives encourage us to explore further. Whilst focusing on the theoretical elements to frame this development, the discussion also incorporates research undertaken by the author and colleagues which draws on professional experiences of funeral events organisation.

Keywords: collective mourning; creative event design; funeral experiencescape; transformation.

Introduction

The emergence of dark events as a discreet field of dark tourism experience (Stewart & Stone, 2022) and the concurrent development of Critical Event Studies (CES) approaches to event phenomena (Spracklen & Lamond, 2016) has stimulated new themes for exploration. Amongst these is a focus on events management at the end-of-life course (Laws & Deverell, 2019) and exploration of death events in international contexts (Lamond & Dowson, 2021). These studies weave together existing research from a wide range of theoretical perspectives to configure funerals as “experientially complex and diverse” events that “traverse the real and the imaginary” (Lamond & Dowson, 2021, p. 3).

There has been a noted change in prevailing social attitudes towards the experience of death (Stone, 2019), and an understanding that a ‘good death’ (Edwards, 2022) can involve creative design of the funeral experience (Laws & Deverell, 2019). This illustrates a move through what has been defined as an experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) towards drivers for transformational experience (Vlachos, 2020; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). This economic transition is seen to have influenced consumer choice at the individual level (Holloway, et al., 2013) and opened the previously taboo aspects of the death-care industry through de-sequestration (Stone, 2012). New entrants to the funeral or death care industry are aware of the changing discourse of dying, death and bereavement (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2016) and have adopted more open and co-creative approaches to client support (Singh, et al., 2021; Rugg & Jones, 2019). Nevertheless, as identified by Lamond and Dowson (2021) the broader societal influences inherent in any exploration of death necessitate recognition that “history is (re)written in and by memorial structures, spaces and practices, by acts of remembrance” (Harju, 2015, p. 130) and may be problematic in terms of the ideologies that are privileged and sustained.

To explore such tensions, this chapter first sets the scene with a historical overview and exploration of current trends and preferences, before turning to consider how funerals can be conceptualised within a dark events framework. This exploration will take place within the cultural context of the global north, and with examples drawn from funeral events in the United Kingdom specifically. The emphasis will be on funeral events as agents of transformative experience. This requires consideration of how elements in the design of the funeral experiencescape contribute to positive engagement with collective memory making. We will close with a reflection on how the mediation of death in society is continuing to shape the funeral events of the future, particularly how digital life and death, and hyper-mediation, point to further shifts to come.

Funerary practices: Historic and contemporary perspectives

In the immediate UK context, discourses around end of life (EOL), death and death rites are heavily influenced by affects derived from nineteenth century funerary practices. From a socio-historic perspective these can be understood as a pragmatic response to increased industrialization and urbanisation of everyday life, which brought new tensions and challenges for public health alongside the more existential questions posed by new scientific and philosophical discoveries. In her exploration of London's dead Arnold (2008, p. 1) reminds us that cities are "one giant grave" that provide a fascinating mirror to study human growth and change. In the Victorian era, the increasing commercialisation and professionalisation of deathcare in major cities, with management of the deceased and their family taken out of the home and into the care of the undertaker, partly as a response to the "chronic and insanitary conditions" of city centre burial grounds (Arnold, 2008; Nash, 2012, p. 112). Funerals became displays of social and cultural capital, particularly as a distinctionary practice by the burgeoning and aspirational middle classes.

The Victorian mode of mourning and accompanying funerary paraphernalia (Nash, 2012) continues to resonate as a "proper" form for funeral events, particularly in terms of behavioural norms for attendees. Yet, funerary practice was already shifting, as the pragmatic need to manage space for the dead continued. As Leaney (2020) outlines, in crowded European capitals this became so acute that alternate methods of disposal were introduced. According to Davies and Mates (2016) the mid-nineteenth century witnessed the intellectual birth of modern funerary practice - cremation - and the later twentieth its real implementation and growth.

Whilst interment and cremation remain the only options for legal disposal of a body in the UK, the dominance of cemeteries and crematoria as memorial sites and venue spaces is shifting. The rising interest in natural death, sustainable funeral practices, humanist services and personalisation of the funeral event as a transformative experience has opened new venues (Laws & Deverell, 2019). For example, according to the Natural Death Centre/Association of Natural Burial Grounds (2024) there are now over 270 sites operating in the UK. The ANBG Code of Conduct (2014) requires that member sites must allow families to organise a funeral themselves, without the services of a funeral director if they so wish. This demonstrates a more open and inclusive practice which reflects a shift in prevailing attitudes towards funerals. Theos (a Christian thinktank) recently reported that the demand for funeral event planning, with a focus on secular "celebration of life" events and a related decrease in demand for traditional (religious) funerals, had perhaps missed a more notable trend. Their survey identified that less than half of respondents were certain that they wanted a funeral at all (Pennington & Mladin 2023). Data collected by British Religion in

Numbers (BRIN) showed an increase from 3-20% in direct cremations - held without any service at all - between 2019-2023 (Field, 2024). Cost of living factors are identified as a significant driver for this, with costs having increased 126% in the twenty years of BRIN data collection. Further research collected by BRIN in 2017 also recognised a similar level of uncertainty around the need for a funeral event with 34% of those surveyed identifying as Undecided/no ceremony/decision withheld, just behind the 36% of respondents opting for a Christian funeral, with 13% wanting a humanist ceremony. This would seem to reinforce the argument put forward by Stone (2012) and others, that engagement with death remains a dark and disconnected experience in contemporary society and that current funeral provision may indeed be disenfranchising for many.

Defining funeral events

As understanding of what constitutes a funeral event is shifting, it is helpful to consider the defining characteristics. Funerals can be identified as: “all activities taking place from the point immediately after death up to and including decisions on the erection of any grave marker or the disposal of cremated remains but not extending to longer-term commemorative practices” (Rugg & Jones, 2019, p. 12). Lawton (2016) identifies three aspects - the service itself, interment, and memorialisation - whilst Singh, et al., (2021) recognise how funerals function as a mechanism to maintain social order; support well-being in the wider community and societal context; and offer the opportunity to engage in shared common experience. In this way, funerals retain the typical characteristics of events, in that they are “purposeful and social in nature, bringing people together for a range of experiences and exchanges, bound by time with a beginning and end, and usually taking place in a specific area” (Getz, et al., 2021, p. 109).

Funerals are the last in the cycle of life stage events that are often referred to in popular journalism as *hatches, matches and dispatches*. These three milestones mark the major life happenings where humans are most likely to intersect with institutions of religion or state (van Gennep 1919). Here, events are used to mark the social transition to a new status (Shanahan & Elder, 2002) and ameliorate for the necessary disruptions to life course that such experiences may bring (Janusz & Walkiewicz, 2018). Lamond and Dowson (2021) recognise such interactions as constituting an evental landscape (MacKenzie & Porter, 2016) where an event holds more than a singular narrative. Funerals, as the final life course event, present a uniquely liminal moment where the “disruption of order, chaos, and uncertainty occasioned by death and dying” (Janusz & Walkiewicz, 2018, p. 154) and funeral rites mark the transition from “person to ancestor, from present world to beyond” (Andrews & Leopold, 2013, p. 36).

Ritual elements are highlighted by Richards, et al. (2014, p. 4) who state that events act as “catalysts, symbols, conduits, and lenses that enable people to function within and reflect upon their own role in society”. Laing and Frost (2016) further recognise the continued significance of ritual practice in modern events, identifying life stage events as an area where the contrast between traditional and contemporary approaches is continually expressed as shifts in dominant ideologies play out. Adding to this, Dowson (2021) highlights that evolving social norms are influencing the practical delivery of events with a spiritual, religious or sacred focus, where social activities that provide opportunities for *communitas* - of the type that Turner (2012, p. 12) defines as “coming at the direst moments of the life of a person” and rites of passage involve formal event organisation processes, e.g. hired venue space. Extending this, Laws and Deverell (2019) identified these influences as being characteristic of the professionalisation of the events management offer for EOL. In review,

Dowson (2021) further recognises that Falassi's (1987) typology of rituals is helpful to understand the production of such events through identification of the ritual aspects that characterise sacred time, as opposed to ordinary time/everyday life. In Table 1 below, these ritual aspects are mapped to possible elements of funeral event design.

Key rites identified by Falassi (1987)	Application to stages of the funeral event experience
<i>Rite of valorisation (the time or place when the festival begins)</i>	Funeral attendees gather at a prearranged time/location. This may be the deceased's home, or another resonant place, and there may be a processional journey to the location for the ceremony (if different). The funeral venue stands apart from daily time/space and is experienced as unlike usual life.
<i>Rites of purification (involving the actual or ceremonial cleansing of a community)</i>	Physical treatment of the deceased's body releases funeral attendees from mortal connections. This can be the act of burial / cremation itself, or a later action e.g. scattering of ashes.
<i>Rites of passage (the transition from one life stage to the next)</i>	The deceased's body is transitioned out of the physical realm, marking a final passage and transformation into death and the realm beyond.
<i>Rites of reversal</i>	Normal family dynamics are disrupted; an outsider (the celebrant) assumes responsibility for funeral attendees during the ceremony, acting as guide and emcee.
<i>Rites of conspicuous display (sacred processions, public worshipping of specific deities, etc.)</i>	Mementoes, floral tributes, special garments (favourite football team etc.) and expected funeral attire mark the funeral as time apart, signifying to others that participants are engaged in a sacred task.
<i>Rites of conspicuous consumption (abundance or even excess of food and drink)</i>	After the funeral, attendees gather for a communal meal which may be either a private or public setting. The shared consumption may be antithetical in some regards, but the shift in location can signal a lightning of mood and the return of usual dynamics (e.g. choice of location and who prepares the food).
<i>Ritual dramas (acting out of stories important to the community)</i>	Invited speakers mark the deceased's life, often using elements of performance (humour, storytelling, dance and music) to animate the ritual drama. This can be the celebrant and/or other family members or friends.
<i>Rites of exchange (the exchange of information, gifts or mutual visits)</i>	The giving of flowers, or donations to a relevant cause. Contributing to a Book of Remembrance and/or digital memorial.
<i>Rites of competition (including</i>	Can include the physical effort of carrying a body

<i>athletic or sporting competitions, but also music and dance)</i>	and/or taking responsibility for ashes and might also incorporate, playing a favourite game, singing songs and dancing.
<i>Rite of devalorization (to mark the end of the festival time and the return to normal time and space)</i>	A clear end to the funeral gathering may be pre-determined or attendees move on having satisfied the ritual elements outlined above. A core group (often the closest family members) remain to close the event. There may be some resentment of continued socialising and a need for personal time to reflect and process the funeral experience away from a wider social group.

Table 1: Falassi's Typology of Rituals applied to aspects of funeral event experience

The role of funeral event rituals is further highlighted by Prickett and Timmermans (2022, p. 245) who argue that they (in line with Durkheim's (Durkheim & Swain, 1915) concept of collective effervescence) provide opportunities of social interaction where "we gain reason, a sense of self, and our most basic ability to relate to one another through ritualized moments of shared purpose." They further note that funerals represent a double movement of the rite of passage - holding on through remembrance of what has been lost and letting go by disposing of the bodily remains - which reinforces the social bonds forged in the shared experience as well as recognising the liminal process inherent in that passage. Turner and Abrahams (2018, p. 95) note that liminality is often likened to "death ... to invisibility, to darkness ..." and it is to this connection between darkness and funeral events that we now turn.

Funerals as dark events

Current understanding of dark events is fluid due to the emergent nature of the field. The term *dark event* was initially applied to commemorative events associated with historical darkness (Frew & White, 2015) and has received increasing attention across a range of event-specific (as opposed to tourism-focused) research. Recent publications have addressed the need to synthesise existing knowledge and provide a more robust frame for future research into dark events, and this publication is part of that continued effort. In particular, a thanatological perspective (Fonseca & Testoni, 2012) assists in mapping the shift (identified by Stone & Sharpley, 2008) of death events from a domestic experience, hosted within families and communities and marked by communal rituals, to something that is managed by professionals, and staged in private settings. This latter phenomena of professional intervention in death rites are key to understanding how funeral events configure transformative spaces for collective memory. Yet, as Kennell and Šuligoj (2024) identify, thanatological approaches have rarely engaged with the commercial or economic aspects that an event offers and may perceive the commercialisation of death as somewhat distasteful.

Funerals can be conceived as a novel form of dark event due to their typically closed nature and more individualised, private and personal scale. Yet, as noted by the editors of this volume, some private dark events, such as funeral ceremonies, have become more open, with the intent to spread cultural awareness and encourage cultural exchange. This blurring of boundaries between individual grief / mourning experiences (Silverman, et al., 2021) and the more public commemorations of death (Frost & Laing, 2013; Zerubavel, 2011) afford an opportunity to explore how communal acts of mourning shape collective remembering (Wagoner & de Luna, 2021; Bailey & Walters, 2016). Collective memory has clear relevance

to any discussion of dark events yet remains a diffuse term with a range of definitions (Bachleitner, 2022; Halbwachs, 2020; Harju, 2015; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008; Nora, 1989).

Funeral events and collective memory-making

Collective memory, as first proposed by Halbwachs (1992), is differentiated by being an active past which forms our contemporary identities. It is “a result or a product of participatory, active remembering that members of the relevant community engage in, thereby (re)creating the past in a collective, negotiatory fashion. Memorialisation is a process of signification ... [and] ... memorials and remembering are sustaining activities” (Harju, 2015, p. 132). The spaces and places for funeral events demonstrate a tension between Nora’s (1989, p. 9) idea of a ‘site of memory’ (an intentionally created environment where memory is deliberately secreted as history) and a real environment (informed by local customs and celebrations, storytelling and proximate familial ties) where “memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images and objects” and bonds us to the eternal present.

The framing of events as an experiencescape (O’Dell & Billing, 2005) or eventscape (Brown, 2019) draws on the work of Tuan (2001) to understand that places are not merely a location, but are settings endowed with meaning, or as Massey (2005) argues are constructed by the congruence and interweaving of social relations at a particular locus. This social and relational understanding of place recognises that space is animated by actors, buildings, objects and technical processes being brought together to configure particular kinds of performance at certain sites/times, which are all elements that can be intentionally designed and managed as an event. As such, funeral events function as spatio-temporal agents (Maddrell, 2016) that situate physical and social death in the now (Bailey & Walter, 2016) thus allowing “for an aesthetic, sensuous and poetic mode of being in the midst of everyday life” (Hallberg & Harsløf, 2013, p. 447), and through the ritual and liminal actions discussed earlier, open up places of individual and collective transformative experience (Zamfirache, 2021; Lamond & Moss, 2020; Richards, 2014) through intentional experience design.

Funerals as transformative experience designs

Event experience design is often framed by our understanding of late twentieth century society, particularly in the global north, as being dominated by an experience-driven economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Design is an established element of events management research, although as set out in Getz’s typology of event studies (2007) it has been considered as a basic component of the body of knowledge (Robertson, et al., 2018). Where events management research focused on the life course was able to demonstrate early innovation is in recognising the intrinsic importance of well-designed environments for the success of the event, as well as the uniquely personal and high level of client input expected into that process. This professional complexity, and rich socio-cultural context, has been highlighted in dedicated academic texts (e.g. Daniels & Wosicki, 2021) which have encouraged further focused research on all aspects of life course events. As Kennell and Šuligoj (2024, p. 103799) identify “where dark tourism and dark events research can both be extended is in the understanding of experiences” and that the emerging area of event experience design, knowledge on the psychology of participation and the need to consider diverse groups are all important themes. This view is further supported by Lamond and Dowson (2021) who recognise the experiential complexity and diversity of death events and by Harju (2015, p. 16) who notes that “memorials, commemorative practices and rituals, as well as temporary commemorative artefacts of funerals have been studied extensively, but their value as signifiers in the event experience has more limited consideration to date”.

Interest in event experience design has increased due to a further shift to a transformation economy (Vlachos, 2020; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Pine and Gilmore (2013, p. 32) differentiate the quality and value of transformative experiences as ones that “matter more over time, that are cause for reflection, that integrate into a person’s life over time – that are, in short, meaningful experiences”. They further posit that such transformative encounters change participants in a profound and ongoing manner. For funeral events, this economic transition has progressed hand in hand with attitudinal shifts, notably through de-sequestration as identified earlier in this chapter (Stone, 2019). Global organisations such as Death Cafe (deathcafe.com) with their mission to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives, as well as more coverage in popular media, e.g. the Death Studies podcast (Michael-Fox & Visser, 2021) are influencing awareness of event design choices at the individual level (Holloway, et al., 2013).

As Laws and Deverell (2019) have identified, this has not only affected demand but is having a noticeable impact on professional practice with new entrants to the funeral or death care industry building awareness of the changing discourse into their business offer (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2016). This differentiated approach, offering more open and co-creative approaches to client support (Singh, et al., 2021; Rugg and Jones, 2019) is further evidence of the customisation of experience vital in a transformation economy. In fact, many practitioners now share their experience more widely in professional and academic fora, often using social media as a platform for wider communication. As a final point on evolving professional practice, it is important to reflect that, as noted by Kennell and Šuligoj (2024), the commercialisation of dark events is perceived by some commentators as anti-authentic. However, from a practitioner perspective (see Deverell, et al., 2019) effective and authentic management is necessary to provide empathetic and appropriate services for EOL events, and specifically in the context of this chapter, to funerals.

Experience design elements in funeral events

The first and largest design element is the venue for the event, with issues around physical structure, layout and the atmospheres produced (Steadman & Coffin, 2024). Deverell, et al., (2019) note that the funeral event is created through welcoming people into both a physical and a psychological space. Rather than being neutral it exists in a network of relationships, is underpinned by beliefs and is regulated. The spaces available for funeral events raise questions as to how well these can support the emotional and ritual process.

As identified earlier, by necessity the majority of funerals in the UK take place in crematoria. With their original focus on the efficient disposal of bodies, they are not naturally suited as flexible ceremonial spaces. Many funeral professionals describe them as fusty and functional, with the atmospherics of reading rooms in public libraries or waiting rooms in airports. Storch’s (as cited in Deverell et al., 2019) research with funeral celebrants generated a near-universal opinion that many crematoria are not adequate for modern event expectations with, for example, fixed seating and restricted access to the coffin. As reflected in Figure 33.1, this can be contrasted with the approach in natural burial grounds which are intentionally designed to encourage movement, easy access to the coffin and connection to the outdoors.

<Insert Figure 33.1 here>

Figure 33.1: Left - Interior of Woking Crematorium Chapel, the first UK custom crematorium built in 1878 (Jack1956, 2018) via Wikimedia Commons under the Creative Commons CC 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication and Right - Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve, Warwickshire, UK **Photo© Ian Capper (cc-by-sa/2.0) (2022).**

Logistically, traditional venues are also problematic due to the tight turnaround times for each party's service. This causes issues for both the opening and closing of the event, with waiting space often only available in the car park beforehand and a brisk pace to move attendants on to the courtyard to free up the inside space to be reset. This restricts the elements of personalisation that can be added to small and portable items, limits opportunities for griever to participate in shaping the experience and disrupts the time available for emotional engagement which Brown (2019, citing Maguire & Gieger, 2015) identifies as important to complete the experience journey. If transformation is about creating memorable lasting experiences, then any negative components of that experience will detract considerably, a factor which has been widely discussed in the servicescape literature. However, the Cremation Society Survey (2024) does note more recent flexibility in logistical arrangements. In 2007, ceremony times of 30-45 minutes were typical, with 42% lasting no more than half an hour. By 2024, over three quarters of ceremonies lasted between 45-60 minutes and only 7% were of 30 minutes duration. Crematoria are also offering more tailored services, with an increase in weekend operations and services tailored to specific religious groups.

In the UK, changes to legal requirements for weddings and civil ceremonies (The Marriage Act 1994) had a dramatic impact on the growth of the celebratory events industry. Yet, despite much lobbying, there is yet to be an equivalent legislative shift for EOL celebrations and it remains that the only legal requirement is the disposal of a body, so any funeral event is an optional addition. Although there has been substantial growth in natural burial (Clayden, et al., 2010), funerals held in alternative venues e.g. hotels, gardens or village halls remain a rarity (Francis 2004). Deverell, et al., (2019) note the emergence of modern funeral directors who are encouraging a more creative and flexible approach, including advertising or informing clients on the availability of alternative venues, including at home. The impact and ritual significance of an appropriate venue setting is summed up in one of the responses to Storch's research into a UK ceremony:

“going to an alternative venue is fantastic because you're going to a venue that perhaps meant something to the person. A few weeks ago, we did the whole coffin and ceremony at a seafront restaurant because the mother who had died lived locally and her girls remembered being brought up and going to the beach...it was amazing because the coffin was in front, mourners were gathered in a semi-circle of chairs and were looking out at Brighton beach and it was just stunning. And that meant so much.”

Our language for grief and mourning remains rooted in traditional norms and expectations, whilst our lived experience of death and dying continues to evolve. O'Connor and Kasket (2022) identify that digital life and death are both subverting and fossilising normative expectations of death and grieving. Work by MOTH (2024) engages with this need for a new death design discourse, and presents a provocation for how to “create a collective digital vocabulary of pictorial signs ... To re-imagine how we talk about death, dying and grief in the digital realm.” This is most simply conveyed by the difference between the basic black

heart emoji and an extended emoji lexicon proposed at the recent DeathxDesignxCulture conference (Falmouth University, 2024) (see Figure 33.2 below). The *Little Rotter* motif speaks particularly to DEAD GOOD's advocacy for de-carbonised funeral design, reminding viewers "that it's OK to decay" (Dead Good Sisters, 2024). Other elements of funeral event experience could be similarly challenged, and a design rather than process-led approach to their event management would reflect recent progress elsewhere in the event experience design literature (Celuch & Neuhofer, 2024; Berridge, 2020).

<Insert Figure 33.2 here>

Figure 33.2: *Little Rotter* motif, created by Lindsey Vigurs, Artist and Death Educator, DEAD GOOD CIC (2024) as featured in the Symbols of Death exhibition, Falmouth University.

Finally, the role of the celebrant as the event designer and emcee cannot be overstated. This individual acts as the scenographer, event manager and chaperone to the grieving party, and as Kuyvenhoven and Deverell (2019) note they work within a complex set of relationships that include being a creative partner, guide and coach at different levels of cognitive, conative and emotive dialogue (Beard, 2014). In this way, they fulfil the role of guardian or spiritual guide that is recognised as being pivotal in theories of narrative structure. This aligns with Austin's (2020) definition of experience as narrative environment, where the human agent provides an animating force, progressing the embodied experience journey through darkness towards resolution. To date, there has been little research into the experience of being a funeral event manager and this is a rich area for further study, not only within the immediate context of dark events.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored historic and contemporary perspectives on funeral events as spaces for collective memory-making through transformative event design, with a focus on experience and practice in the UK context. A recurring theme has been the shifting rhythms of collective memory-making within socio-cultural, temporal and spatial dimensions. Transformative experience design and configuring EOL celebrations, specifically funeral events, as dynamic narrative environments has been proposed as a way to engage positively with the phenomena of dark events. Aspects of experience design, particularly the venue, design vocabulary and human agents, have been identified as key to achieving transformation through the ritual liminal cycle of death in life, allowing participants in grief to move through the emotional journey of experiencing death in a supported, creative and personally meaningful manner.

Several avenues for further research are identified, and in doing so, this chapter recognises that the digital deathscape could significantly impact funeral events of the future. Hyper-mediation and the reach of the global mediascape are also compressing the temporal dimension of dying, death and grieving and therefore opportunities for communal collective memory-making to take place, as witnessed in responses to the death in late 2024 of UK singer Liam Payne in Brazil, South America. The cognitive dissonance created through someone being reported dead whilst still "present" on social media will likely be something we all experience more of in years to come. Intentional design could assist in shaping

space/time that is sensitive to these nuances, providing tailored and authentic experiences that support collective mourning and memory-making through funeral events.

References

- Andrews, H., & Leopold, T. (2013). *Events and the social sciences*. Routledge.
- Arnold, C. (2008). *Necropolis: London and its dead*. Pocket Books.
- Austin, T. (2020). *Narrative environments and experience design: Space as a medium of communication*. Routledge.
- Bachleitner, K. (2022). Collective memory and the social creation of identities: Linking the past with the present and future. *Progress in Brain Research*, 274(1), 167–176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/BS.PBR.2022.07.002>.
- Bailey, T., & Walter, T. (2016). Funerals against death. *Mortality*, 21(2), 149–166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2015.1071344>.
- Beard, C. (2014). Designing and mapping event experiences. In: L. Sharples, P. Crowther, D. May, & C. Orefice (Eds.), *Strategic event creation* (pp. 123-140). Goodfellow.
- Berridge, G. (2020). Designing event experiences. In: Connell, J., & Page, S. J. (Eds) *The Routledge handbook of events* (pp. 378-395). Routledge.
- Brown, G. (2019). *Eventscapes: Transforming place, space and experiences*. Routledge.
- Celuch, K., & Neuhofer, B. (2024). Towards transformative event experiences: State of the art and future research, *Event Management*, 28(3), 485–91. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16990639314792>.
- Clayden, A., Hockey, J., & Powell, M. (2010). Natural Burial: the de-materialising of death? In: J. Hockey, C. Komaromy & K. Woodthorpe (Eds.), *The matter of death: space, place and materiality* (pp. 148-164). Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Davies, D. J., & Mates, L. H. (2016). *Encyclopedia of cremation*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315579504>.
- Daniels, M. & Wosicki, C. (2021). *Wedding planning and management: Consultancy for diverse clients*. (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- DEAD GOOD SISTERS [@deadgoodlegacies]. (2024, 7 August). This is our Little Rotter. One of our DEAD GOOD motifs. De-carbonising funerals is really important to us [Photo]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/C-W50uvNVVx/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==.
- Deverell, K., Laws, C. & Storch, E.L. (2019, 5 September). *Space, place and their impact on the funeral experience* [Conference session]. 14th International Conference on the Social Context of Death, Dying and Disposal - Engagement and Education. Bath University, Bath, UK.

- Dowson, R. (2021). Managing complex issues in religious and spiritual events, festivals and celebrations. In: D.H. Olsen & D.J. Timothy (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of religious and spiritual tourism* (pp. 359-371). Routledge.
- Durkheim, E., & Swain, J. W. (1915). *The elementary forms of the religious life trans from the French*. George Allen and Unwin Limited.
- Edwards, J.E. (2022). *What makes a good funeral?* [Doctoral dissertation. Durham University]. Durham E-Theses Online. <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/14958/>.
- Falassi, A. (1987). *Time out of time: essays on the festival*. University of New Mexico Press.
- Falmouth University (2024, 4-6 September). *DeathxDesignxCulture: Radical Re-Imaginings for the End of Life* [Conference]. Falmouth, Cornwall, UK.
<https://www.falmouth.ac.uk/news/death-x-design-x-culture-falmouth-hosts-conference-exploring-designs-role-death>.
- Field, C.D. (2024). *Counting Religion in Britain, January 2024*. British Religion in Numbers.
<https://www.brin.ac.uk/counting-religion-in-britain-january-2024/>.
- Fonseca, L. M., & Testoni, I. (2012). The emergence of thanatology and current practice in death education. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 64(2), 157-169.
<https://doi.org/10.2190/OM.64.2.d>.
- Francis, J. (2004). *Time to go: Alternative funerals*. Iuniverse.
- Frew, E., & White, L. (2015). Commemorative events and national identity: Commemorating death and disaster in Australia. *Event management*, 19(4), 509-524.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/152599515X14465748512722>.
- Frost, W. & Laing, J. (2013). *Commemorative events: Memory, identities, conflict*. Routledge.
- Getz, D., Abson, E., Antchak, V., Goldblatt, J., O'Toole, W., Page, S., Stadler, R., & Ziakas, V. (2021). *Dictionary of Event Studies, Event Management and Event Tourism*. Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.
- Getz, D. (2007) *Event studies: Theory, research and policy for planned events*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Halbwachs, M. (2020). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hallberg, G.W., & Harsløf, O. (2013). Experiencing everyday life anew: Applied theatrical and performative strategies. In: J. Sundbo & F. Sørensen (Eds.). *Handbook on the experience economy* (pp. 447-463). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Harju, A. (2015). Socially shared mourning: construction and consumption of collective memory. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 21(1-2), 123-145.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13614568.2014.983562>.

- Holloway, M., Adamson, S., Argryou, V., Draper, P. & Mariau, D. (2013). 'Funerals aren't nice but it couldn't have been nicer.' The makings of a good funeral. *Mortality*, 18(1), 30-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2012.755505>.
- Janusz, B., & Walkiewicz, M. (2018). The rites of passage framework as a matrix of transgression processes in the life course. *Journal of Adult Development*, 25, 151-159. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-018-9285-1>.
- Kennell, J., & Šuligoj, M. (2024). Conceptualising dark events: A new framework". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 108, 103799. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ANNALS.2024.103799>.
- Kuyvenhoven, R., & Deverell, K. (2019, 5 September). Creating meaningful and engaging funeral ceremonies [Conference poster]. 14th International Conference on the Social Context of Death, Dying and Disposal - Engagement and Education. Bath University, Bath, UK.
- Laing, J., & Frost, W. (2016). Dark tourism and dark events: A journey to positive resolution and well-being. In: S. Filep, J. Laing & M. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.). *Positive tourism* (pp. 82-99). Routledge.
- Lamond, I.R., & Dowson, R. (Eds.). (2021). *Death and events: International perspectives on events marking the end of life*. Routledge.
- Lamond, I.R., & Moss, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Liminality and critical event studies: Borders, boundaries, and contestation*. Springer Nature.
- Laws, C., & Deverell, K. (2019). Events management for the end of life: Mortality, mourning and marginalisation. In: A. Jepson & T. Walters (Eds.). *Marginalisation and events* (pp. 222-241). Routledge.
- Lawton, W. (2016). *Industry Focus: Death Care*. US Department of Commerce. https://build.export.gov/build/groups/public/@eg_main/@byind/@healthtech/documents/webcontent/eg_main_113189.pdf.
- Leaney, J. (2020). Ashes to ashes: Cremation and the celebration of death in nineteenth-century Britain. In: R. Houlbrooke (Ed.). *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement* (pp. 118-135). Routledge.
- MacKenzie, I., & Porter, R. (2016). Evental approaches to the study of events. In: T. Pernecky (Ed.). *Approaches and Methods in Event Studies* (pp. 25-35). Routledge.
- Maddrell, A. (2016). Mapping grief. A conceptual framework for understanding the spatial dimensions of bereavement, mourning and remembrance. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 17(2), 166-188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2015.1075579>.
- Maddrell, A. & Sidaway, J.D. (2016). *Deathscapes: spaces for death, dying, mourning and remembrance*. Routledge.

- Maguire, L., & Geiger, S. (2015). Emotional timescapes: the temporal perspective and consumption emotions in services. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 29(3), 211-223. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-02-2014-0047>.
- Massey, D. B. (2005). *For Space*. SAGE.
- Michael-Fox, B. & Visser, R. (2021). *The Death Studies Podcast* [Audio podcast]. The Death Studies Podcast. <https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.ro.00014322>.
- MOTH (2024, January 28). *Moth: Design for Life and Death*. moth.org.uk. <https://moth.org.uk/>.
- Natural Death Centre / The Association of Natural Burial Grounds (2014) *ANBG Code of Conduct*. <http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk/uploads/Forms/ANBG%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>.
- Nash, G. (2012). Pomp and circumstance: archaeology, modernity and the corporatisation of death: early social and political Victorian attitudes towards burial practice. In: P. Graves-Brown (Ed.). *Matter, materiality and modern culture* (pp. 112-130). Routledge.
- Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, 26, 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>.
- O'Connor, M., & Kasket, E. (2022). What grief isn't: Dead grief concepts and their digital-age revival. In: T. Machin, C. Brownlow, S. Abel, & J. Gilmour (Eds.). *Social media and technology across the lifespan* (pp. 115-130). Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Dell, T., & Billing, P. (Eds.). (2005). *Experiencescapes: Tourism, culture and economy*. Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Pennington, M., & Mladin, N. (2023). *Love, grief, and hope: Emotional responses to death and dying in the UK*. Theos. <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2023/11/27/love-grief-and-hope-emotional-responses-to-death-and-dying-in-the-uk>.
- Pine, B.J., & Gilmore, J.H. (2011). *The experience economy*. Harvard Business Press.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2013). The experience economy: past, present and future. In: Sundbo, J. & Flemming, S. (Eds.). *Handbook on the experience economy* (pp. 21-44). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Prickett, P. J., & Timmermans, S. (2022). 'If no one grieves, no one will remember': Cultural palimpsests and the creation of social ties through rituals. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 73(2), 244–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12934>.
- Richards, G. (2014). Imagineering events as interaction ritual chains. In G. Richards, L. Marques, & K. Mein (Eds.). *Event design: Social perspectives and practices* (pp. 14-24). Routledge.

- Richards, G., Marques, L. & Mein, K. (Eds.) (2014). *Event design: Social perspectives and practices*. Routledge.
- Robertson, M., Ong, F., Lockstone-Binney, L., & Ali-Knight, J. (2018). Critical event studies—issues and perspectives. *Event Management*, 22(6), 865-874.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/152599518X15346132863193>.
- Rugg, J., & Jones, S. (2019). *Funeral experts by experience: what matters to them*. University of York/The Good Funeral Guide.
https://pure.york.ac.uk/portal/files/65238326/FINAL_REPORT_Funeral_Experts_by_Experience.pdf.
- Shanahan, M. J., & Elder, G. H. (2002). History, agency, and the life course. *Nebr Symp Motiv*, 48, 145–186.
- Silverman, G.S., Baroiller, A., & Hemer, S.R. (2021). Culture and grief: Ethnographic perspectives on ritual, relationships and remembering. *Death Studies*, 45(1), 1–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1851885>.
- Singh, A., Payne, A., & Fallon, P. (2021). ‘Whose way? my way!’ Evaluating well-being in the co-creation of ‘end of life’ events. In: A. Jepson & T. Walters (Eds). *Events and well-being* (pp. 124–141). Routledge.
- Spracklen, K., & Lamond, I.R. (2016). *Critical event studies*. Routledge.
- Steadman, C. & Coffin, J. (2024). *Consuming atmospheres*. Taylor & Francis.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003288510-1>.
- Stewart, H., & Stone, P. (2022, 5 May). Festivalisation and modelling the macabre. Proposing a typology for dark event tourism (DET) [Conference session]. Dark Tourism Research Symposium: Memory, Pilgrimage and the Digital Realm, Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK.
- Stone, P. & Sharpley, R. (2008). Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 574-595.
- Stone, P.R. (2019). Dark tourism and ‘spectacular death’: Towards a conceptual framework. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83, 102826.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.102826>.
- Stone, P.R. (2012). Dark tourism and significant other death: towards a model of mortality mediation. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 39(3), 1565-1587.
- Stone, P.R. (2006). A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 54(2), 145-160.

- Sundbo, J., & Sørensen, F. (Eds.) (2013). *Handbook on the experience economy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- The Cremation Society (2024) *Annual Cremation Statistics 2024*.
<https://www.cremation.org.uk/Annual-statistics-2024>.
- Tuan, Y.F. (2001). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Turner, V., & Abrahams, R. D. (2018). Liminality and communitas. In: V. Turner, R. Abrahams & A. Harris (Eds.). *The ritual process* (pp. 94–130). Routledge.
- Turner, E. (2012). *Communitas: The anthropology of collective joy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van Gennep, A. (2019). *The rites of passage*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vlachos, P. (2020). Liminality, subjectivity, and aesthetics in event management studies. In: I.R. Lamond & J. Moss (Eds.). *Liminality and Critical event studies: Borders, boundaries, and contestation* (pp. 35-54). Springer Nature.
- Wagoner, B., & de Luna, I.B. (2021). Collective grief: Mourning rituals, politics and memorial sites. In: A. Køster & E. Holte Kofod (Eds.) *Cultural, existential and phenomenological dimensions of grief experience* (pp.197–213).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099420-17>.
- Wertsch, J. V., & Roediger, H.L. (2008). Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches,” *MEMORY*, 16(3), 318–326.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210701801434>.
- Zamfirache, I. (2021). Funerals as a social process: Rituals and symbols in rural and urban funerals. In: I.R. Lamond & R. Dowson (Eds.) *Death and Events* (pp. 13–25). Routledge.
- Zerubavel, E. (2011). *Time maps: collective memory and the social shape of the past*. The University of Chicago Press.