Chapter 21

Public Memory

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Introduction

Roland Barthes observed in relation to the Eiffel Tower that it "is the only blind point of the total optical system of which it is the center and Paris the circumference" (Barthes 1964: 237). When speaking of the power of this public icon to capture the popular imagination both as a viewing spot for structuring the panorama that is Paris itself, and as symbolizing the city in a single sign, Barthes draws our attention to the significance of public monuments in the constitution of individual and collective meaning. Not all monuments have the iconic status of Paris's chief visual symbol, but the role of public sculpture and monumental architecture in framing the geographies of everyday life and in anchoring our collective social memory cannot be underestimated. While statues and the attendant grand architecture are found in cities of the ancient world, the massive proliferation of statuary and spectacular ritual that accompanied the nation-building projects of the past 200 years has become, in recent decades, a principal focus of scholarly attention.

These spaces of public display and ritual are what Boyer refers to as "rhetorical *topoi* . . . those civic compositions that teach us about our national heritage and our public responsibilities and assume that the urban landscape itself is the emblematic embodiment of power and memory" (Boyer 1994: 321). Rather than treating monuments as innocent, aesthetic embellishments of the public sphere alone, recent scholarship has emphasized the political and cultural meaning attached to them in the making of social memories. Indeed there is increased attention paid by cultural geographers to the *spatiality* of public monuments and ritual, where the sites are not merely the material backdrop from which a story is told, but the spaces themselves constitute the meaning by becoming both a physical location and a sightline of interpretation (Johnson 1994, 1995, 2003; Till 1999; Leib 2002).

Maurice Halbwachs (1992) observed that in the earliest religious rituals the most successful ones had a 'double focus' – a physical object of veneration and a shared group symbol superimposed on this object. Barthes also claims a 'double movement' where "architecture is always dream and function, expression of a utopia and instru-

ment of convenience" (Barthes 1964: 239). Similarly when speaking of landscapes geographers have noted their duplicitous character materially experienced through the visual and other senses while simultaneously functioning as social symbols (Duncan 1990). Cultural geographers have been concerned centrally with the symbolic dimension of public monuments and their connections with social memory and identity politics. In this chapter I wish first to identify the relationship between time, representation and social memory. This will be followed by a discussion of the spatiality of memory and the role of geography in the construction of collective cultural identities. The final section of this chapter will examine how social memory is mediated by taking a selection of different examples of landscapes of mourning.

Time, Memory and Representation

The transmission and translation of meaning across time and space is central both to the rituals of everyday life and to the exceptional moments of remembrance associated with birth, death and other key events in personal and collective histories. Memory as re-collection, re-membering, and re-representation is crucial in the mapping of significant historical moments and in the articulation of personal identity. Consequently there are active practices of agency at work. As Jonathan Boyarin (1994: 22) has put it "memory is neither something pre-existent and dormant in the past nor a projection from the present, but a potential for creative collaboration between present consciousness and the experience or expression of the past."

Maurice Halbwachs' work *On Collective Memory* was the first critical attempt to give some sort of definition to the idea of social memory. For Halbwachs, collective or social memory was rooted in his belief that common memories of the past among a social group, tied by kinship, class, or religion, links individuals in the group with a common shared identity when the memories are invoked. Social memory is a way in which a social group can maintain its communal identity over time and it is through the social group that individuals recall these memories. But as Withers (1996: 382) has commented, this analysis itself is "rooted in that concern for continuities evident in the *longue durée* tradition of French *Annaliste* historiography and in acceptance of a rather uncritical, 'superorganic' notion of culture." While Halbwachs is right to socialize the concept of memory his analysis fails to historicize memory and embrace the notion that the very concept of the 'social' itself has a history and indeed a geography.

Conventionally the 'art of memory' since Romanticism has been ideologically separated from history in Western historiographical traditions where memory is subjective, selective and uncritical while history is objective, scientific and subject to empirical scrutiny (Yates 1978). With the demise of peasant societies, the social historian Nora (1989: 13) suggests that true memory "which has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories" has been replaced by modern memory which is self-conscious, historical and archival. More recent work on social memory has emphasized its discursive role in the articulation of an identity politics and in particular the role of elite and dominant memory, mobilized by the powerful, to pursue specific political objectives. The distinction between 'authentic' and modern memory is particularly persuasive when connected with a

style of politics associated with nation-building programs. The development of extralocal memories have been intrinsic to the mobilization of an 'imagined community' of nationhood (Anderson 1983), and new memories necessitate the collective amnesia or forgetting of older ones. In particular where elites are concerned Connerton (1989: 51) suggests that "it is now abundantly clear that in the modern period national elites have invented rituals that claim continuity with an appropriate historic past, organizing ceremonies/parades and mass gatherings, and constructing new ritual spaces."

The democratization of political power in the nineteenth century shifted the focus from sculptural icons alone to a whole suite of associated collective rituals, with actors and spectators actively becoming involved in the re-presentation of the past. The erection of a monument to the French-Canadian politician Sir George Etienne Cartier (1814–73) is indicative of this process. Osborne (1998) has demonstrated how the memorialization of Cartier was used to embody the idea of a French-Canadian who combined loyalty to empire, nation, and race. The siting of this memorial in Montreal's Fletcher's Field–Jeanne Mance Park, near the interface of the city's English-speaking and French-speaking populations, was emblematic of the larger symbolic message encoded in the statue. In an elaborate unveiling ceremony in September 1919, representatives of the Canadian government, the Governor General, consuls from Canada's wartime allies, religious and industrial leaders, in addition to thousands of spectators and performers attended. As Osborne (1998: 439) has claimed, Cartier was "a figure who triangulated the values of a loyal French Canada, an expansionist Canada and an ever present Empire." In the second decade of the twentieth century this was an important unifying symbol for the Canadian state. A large-scale monument, accompanied by an elaborate unveiling spectacle transformed a popular recreational space in the city of Montreal into a site for narrating an official, elite view of Canada's history.

The role of re-membering the past – the putting together of its constituent parts into a single, coherent narrative – has been profoundly significant for the emergence of a popular nationalist identity. The deployment of the body as an analogy of the nation-state – a genealogy of people with common origins – coexists with a claim that the state acts as a guarantor of individual rights and freedoms that transcend historical time and the constraints of the past. Paradoxically, then, in the context of national identity, social memory as mediated through political elites both legitimates and simultaneously denies the significance of remembrance of things past.

While at its most basic level, memory can be said to operate at the scale of the individual brain and thus we avoid a concept of memory that suggests it has a super-organic quality, it is also necessarily the case that memories are shared, exchanged and transformed among groups of individuals. In this sense there are collective memories which arise from the inter-subjective practices of signification that are not fixed but are re-created through a set of rules of discourse which are periodically contestable. Till's (1999) analysis of the changing past that the Neue Wache memorial in Berlin represented is a compelling example. Originally built in 1816–18 under King Frederich Wilhelm III as a palace guard, the Neue Wache, located in Berlin's historic district has undergone a series of transformations. During the Weimar Republic it became a memorial to German soldiers killed in the First World War. The interior was redesigned to accommodate this new function by placing a large

silver and gold plated oak wreath on top of a block of black marble and illuminating it by a beam of light emerging from a circular skylight. Under the Third Reich the building was redefined again as a memorial to represent a thousand years of German identity rather than a single historical moment. The historic meaning of the building was further transformed with the partition of Berlin and its location in East Berlin. Renovations in the postwar period under the German Democratic Republic (GDR) led the space to be rededicated to the victims of fascism. The interior room was remodeled to represent it as a site of antifascism. It contained the coat of arms of the GDR, an eternal flame and buried urns containing relics of soil from the concentration camps. For the 150 years or so of its existence, then, the past to which the Neue Wache made reference was reformulated several times over.

The real controversy over whose past the site would represent came with the redesigned building unveiled in 1993 as a new national memorial in a reunified Germany. Till (1999) disentangles the deep fissures that the debate about the new role of the building provoked. The interior was once again remodeled with an enlarged reproduction of Käthe Kollwitz's original 1937 statue *Mourning Mother With Dead Son* occupying the central space. While there was much public discussion about this rededicated building Till points out that West German interest groups' opinions were privileged overall. Three issues anchored the discussion. The first rotated around the tension of creating a 'national' memorial in a state with an uneasy relationship with the notion of the 'nation' and its underlying associations with extreme nationalism. The second concern was with the iconography of the statue itself. The implied Christian representation of suffering embodied in a Pieta style figurative monument and the construction of the past implied by that caused offence to the non-Christian population. The gendered depiction of suffering expressed through a representation of the 'universal' mother, although receiving less press coverage than other issues, also indicated a particular reading of the historical record. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, opponents of the redesigned Neue Wache questioned the manner in which the place remembered the dead. By dedicating it to *all* war dead it blurred the distinctions between victims and perpetrators. This suggested a leveling effect of death, which transcended the individual and collective identities of different social and religious groups. Critics feared that this mode of representation was in danger of collapsing difference, and relativizing historical and moral responsibility. In a compromise move, the Kohl administration added a plaque that listed separately different groupings killed in war. Through this fascinating case study Till has emphasized how the past at this site got reinscripted several times over. The debate in the 1990s brought into sharp focus the contested arenas of historical interpretation that undergirded the Neue Wache site. And even though she observes that "these discussions are still largely informed by a West German cultural hegemony" (Till 1999: 276), even within that context issues of historiography, gender and religion repeatedly surfaced.

Thus although there is a considerable literature emphasizing the politics of memory especially where dominant groups in society are concerned *vis-à-vis* their shaping of interpretations of the past, it is increasingly clear that the social process involved in memorialization is hotly contested with respect not only to form and structure but also to the meaning attached to a representation. Popular memory can

be a vehicle through which dominant, official renditions of the past are resisted by mobilizing groups towards social action and also through the maintenance of an oppositional group identity embedded in subaltern memories. The deployment of local and oral histories in the formation of group identities can be a powerful antidote to both state and academic narratives of the past; especially where marginalized groups are concerned (Samuel 1994). The controversies surrounding the remembering of the Holocaust through the conversion of death camps into "memorial" camps to the genocide of the Second World War is a case in point. In Auschwitz, for instance, the competing aspirations of Polish nationalists, communists, Catholics and Jews to control the representation of the Holocaust there has influenced the physical structure of the site and the meaning attached to it by these various groups (Charlesworth 1994). In this sense rather than treating memory as the manipulative action of the powerful to narrate the past to suit their particular interests, a fuller account might follow Samuel (1994: 17) who suggests that one "might think of the invention of tradition as a process rather than an event, and memory, even in its silences, as something which people made for themselves." If memory is conceived as a recollection and representation of times past, it is equally a recollection of spaces past where the imaginative geography of previous events is in constant dialogue with the current metaphorical and literal spatial setting of the memory-makers.

Space, Memory, and Representation

The role of space in the art and the act of memory has a long genealogy in European thought. In the ancient and medieval worlds memory was treated primarily as a visual activity, one that focused on images more than written texts. The immense dialectical variation amongst linguistic groups and low levels of literacy perhaps account for the primacy of the visual image over other types of representation. Visual images, like the stained glass window and other religious icons, came to embed a sacred narrative in the minds of their viewers. They became mnemonic devices in religious teaching where sacred places became symbolically connected to particular ideal qualities.

Networks of shrines, pilgrimage routes and grottoes, sited for commemorative worship, formed a sacred geography where the revelations of a Christian God could be remembered and spatially situated (Carruthers 1990). Mappamundi too played a role in positioning the human within a sacred cosmology. The mapping of the narrative of Christianity through a predominantly visual landscape formed the basis of memory work through the Middle Ages.

While during the Renaissance and Enlightenment the conception of memory work changed scale (to the astral) and focus (towards the scientific rather than the religious), and was expressed, at times, architecturally by viewing the world from a height, it was during the period of Romanticism that a more introspective, personal, and localized view of memory came into focus. Memory in this guise came to be seen as the recovery of things lost to the past, the innocence of childhood and childhood spaces for instance, and it divorced memory work from any scientific endeavor to make sense of the world or the past. It transformed the role of memory to the scale of the individual and perhaps created the pre-conditions for divorcing

history from memory and separating intellectually the objective spatial narratives of history from the subjective experience of memory-places. But Samuel (1994: X) persuasively argues that "far from being merely a passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past, [memory] is rather an active, shaping force; that it is dynamic – what it contrives symptomatically to forget is as important as what it remembers – and that it is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some kind of negative other to it."

By treating memory as having a dialectical relationship with history, in constant dialogue with the past, we begin to see how the dualistic thinking underwriting the division of history and memory becomes more problematic. This is particularly the case in relation to the spatiality of history and memory. The gradual transformation of a sacred geography of religious devotion to a secularized geography connected with identity in the modern period destabilizes the rigid lines of demarcation drawn between objective/subjective narration; emotional/abstract sources of evidence; local/universal ways of knowing. Treating memory as a legitimate form of historical understanding has opened new avenues of research where subjective renderings of the past become embedded in the processes of interpretation and not as a counterpoint to objective facts. Nation-building exercises; colonial expansion of the non-European world; regional, ethnic and class identity formation; all embrace an imaginative and material geography made sacred in the spaces of remembrance and continuously remade, contested, revised and transmuted as fresh layers of meaning attend to them. Geographers, historians, anthropologists and cultural theorists are increasingly paying attention to the processes involved in the constitution and rooting of memory spaces, and especially to the symbolic resonances of such spaces to the formation, adaptation and contestation of popular belief systems. We come to understand their role through what Halbwachs (1992: 172) refers to as the "semiotics of space," that is, through treating space itself as a signifying system rather than just a material backdrop to interpretation.

In particular, studies have focused on the role of commemorative spaces and memory making in the articulation of national identity. In the context of the United States, the intersections between vernacular and official cultural expressions have been demonstrated to create a series of commemorative sites and rituals which attempt to combine some of the divergent sources of memory (e.g. local, ethnic, gender) with nationalizing ones. The vocabulary of patriotism is particularly important "because it has the capacity to mediate both vernacular loyalties to local and familiar places and official loyalties to national and imagined structures" (Bodnar 1992: 14–15). Similarly, because of the divergent allegiances generated by specific sites of memory, they operate multivocally and are read in divergent and at times contradictory ways. The commemoration of the American Civil War points to the underlying fissures evoked by remembrance of a divisive episode in a state's history. The spatiality of memory is not only mirrored in the physical distribution of commemorative sites but also in the interpretative apparatus embedded in them. For instance, the commemorative statue to General Lee in Richmond, Virginia focuses on his role as an American hero who fought out of loyalty to his home state and obscures the larger political and racial politics, which undergirded the war (Foster 1987). The equestrian statue on Monument Avenue was part of a larger speculative real-estate venture where an expensive residential subdivision of property was

laid out along the long avenue. Linking business, art and memory-work the "legitimation of Lee in national memory helped erase his status as traitor, as 'other,' leaving otherness to reside in the emancipated slaves and their descendants, who could not possibly accept Lee as their hero" (Savage 1994: 134).

Discussions of nation-building projects and the memory spaces associated with them have been analyzed as a form of mythology – a system of story-telling in which that which is historical, cultural and situated appears natural, innocent and outside of the contingencies of politics and intentionality. Drawing from semiology and linguistics such work claims that "the apparent innocence of landscapes is shown to have profound ideological implications . . . and surreptitiously justify the dominant values of an historical period" (Duncan & Duncan 1992: 18). Cultural geographers have extensively explored the promotion of specific landscape images as embodiments of national identity and historians have paid attention to the evolution of particular festivals, rituals, and public holidays (sometimes religious) in the evolution of the 'myth' of nationhood. The materiality of a particular site of memory sometimes masks the social relations undergirding its production by focusing the eye on its aesthetic representation independent of the sometimes less visible ideas (social, economic, cultural power relations) underlying the representation. It is often then in the realm of the ideas, however contested and contradictory, that the meaning of memory spaces are embedded. What idea or set of ideas are stimulated by memories made material in the landscape?

The emphasis on visual interpretations of the memory landscapes that undergirded medieval sacred geographies continues to animate discussions of landscape interpretation today. The treatment of a landscape as a text which is read and actively reconstituted in the act of reading reinscribes the visual as the central action of interpretation (Barnes & Duncan 1992). While offering a more nuanced understanding of landscape and the possibility of decoding the messages within any space, the text metaphor may overemphasize the power to subvert the meaning of landscape through its reading without necessarily providing a space in which to change the landscape itself. Hegemonic and subaltern readings may in other words take precedence over hegemonic and subaltern productions (Mitchell 2000). The focus on the metaphor of the text also tends to underestimate the aural dimension of texts where, in the past, reading was a spoken activity. Reading texts aloud where the sounds, rhythms and syntax of the words are collectively absorbed directs attention to the social nature of interpretation which embraces senses other than the purely visual. Treating the landscape as a theater or stage broadens the imaginative scope of interpretation by suggesting that life gets played out as social action and social practice as much as it does by the reading implied by the text metaphor. As Cosgrove (1993: 1) argues "landscapes provide a stage for human action, and, like a theater set, their own part in the drama varies from that of an entirely discreet unobserved presence to playing a highly visible role in the performance." This notion of landscape as theater could be further extended not solely as the backdrop in which the action takes place but as actively constituting the action. The stage acts more than as the context for the performance; it is the performance itself.

The concept of public memory has been linked to the development of emotional and ideological ties with particular geographies. Memory is not simply a recollection of times past, it is also anchored in places past and visualized in masonry and

bronze, as well as in song and sound. The ordering of memory around sites of collective remembrance provides a focus for the performance of rituals of communal remembrance and sometimes forgetfulness. The continuous dimension of time is collapsed into a set of key symbolic dates and events and their public ritualization is expressed through what Nora (1989) refers to as "lieux de mémoire" or sites of memory. These sites become the landmarks of a remembered geography and history and they form the intersection between official and vernacular cultures. Public, collective memory then is "the dynamic process by which groups map myths (in an anthropological sense) about themselves and their world onto a specific time and place" (Till 1999: 254). This mapping process becomes part and parcel of the ongoing project of establishing individual and group identities, symbolically coded in public monuments.

The capacity which people have to formulate and represent their own memories, however, is regularly constrained by the discursive field in which they operate and literally the space in which their pronouncements both figurative and literal are made. As Sherman (1999: 7) reminds us, "commemoration is also cultural: it inscribes or reinscribes a set of symbolic codes, ordering discourses, and master narratives that recent events, perhaps the very ones commemorated, have disrupted, newly established, or challenged." If memory is conceived as a recollection and representation of times past, it is equally a recollection of spaces past where the imaginative geography of previous events is in constant dialogue with the current metaphorical and literal spatial setting of the memory-makers. This is clear in the recent debate concerning the placing of a memorial to Arthur Ashe in Richmond, Virginia. In a fascinating analysis Leib (2002) traces how the politics of race informed this debate. In a desire to remember the Richmond-born tennis star, philanthropist, and social activist "both African American supporters and much of the traditional white Southern population in Richmond tried to define and redefine their separate heroic eras (civil rights versus Civil War) within the same public space" (Leib 2002: 287). The proposal to locate the statue in Monument Avenue, the South's grandest Confederate memorial site, brought to the surface the deep tensions that the space represented to black and white occupants of the city. Both groups objected to the location. For African Americans the site in a white, prestigious neighborhood remote from many black children's everyday experiences and representing white Confederate ideology, seemed inappropriate for, what they regarded as, a hero of civil rights. By contrast, whites opposed the location on seeming aesthetic grounds, claiming that a statue of a casually-dressed Ashe would be incompatible with the statues to Confederate soldiers in full military dress. Ashe's statue would detract from the coherent symbolism of the avenue. This white aestheticized argument was supplemented with the suggestion that Ashe had not achieved enough in his life to be located adjacent to Confederate soldiers. While they acknowledged him to have been an excellent tennis player who should be commemorated in the city, a sports' star's achievements could not really be compared with the acts of heroism of a soldier. This argument sought to diminish Ashe's humanitarian actions, educational philanthropy and general political activism. While the city council eventually did decide to erect the Ashe memorial on Monument Avenue Leib (2002: 307) observes "that the meanings of monuments and the landscapes in which they are situated are never settled and are always open to

contestation." And space was absolutely central to the conflict over Ashe. Moreover the geographies of remembrance are perhaps no more potently expressed than in war memorials and the landscapes of remembrance that societies create. I now wish to turn to some of these landscapes and to examine the contradictory memories that they evoke.

Landscapes of Mourning

In the aftermath of the First World War each combatant state attempted to inaugurate a landscape of national remembrance. In France, the issue of public commemoration converged around two areas of dispute. One related to the use of religious or secular iconography in monument design, the other focused on "the negotiation of local and national claims to memory of the dead" (Sherman 1994: 188). The French government agreed, where possible, to pay for the return home of soldiers' bodies, and memorials erected in towns and villages named individual soldiers killed in the community, localizing the act of remembrance.

The symbolic keystone of remembrance of the First World War in the United Kingdom was the building of the cenotaph (empty tomb), designed by Edwin Lutyens, and placed in Whitehall. This was accompanied by the burial of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey: "the unknown warrior becomes in his universality the cipher that can mean anything, the bones that represent any or all bones equally well or badly" (Lacqueur 1994: 158). Not all interests however were satisfied with the cenotaph. The *Catholic Herald* attacked the monument as "nothing more or less than a pagan memorial [which was] a disgrace in a so called Christian land" (quoted in Gregory 1994: 199). In an attempt to take the theological wind out of the sails of the Anglican Church the Catholic Church sought to reinforce their position as the true homeland of Christian morality, tradition and iconography. Nevertheless the cenotaph attracted huge crowds on the first anniversary of the Armistice and it continues to be the national centerpiece of commemorative activity each November. In towns across the United Kingdom smaller scale memorial spaces matched those in the capital. In Belfast, for instance, a catafalque was erected in the grounds of City Hall. The 1919 Peace Day celebrations were held in August rather than July to avoid clashing with the commemorative calendar of Orange Order parades, and the ceremonial centerpiece of the commemoration was the salute from the Irish Lord Lieutenant at the cenotaph.

The loaded role that space plays in the constitution of social memory can be seen in the Gallipoli peninsula. Site of the Allied Forces ambitious attempt to seize the Dardanelles and advance into Turkey, the peninsula became a site strewn with memorials, battlefield museums and cemeteries. While the early commemorative work of the 1920s was orchestrated by the Imperial War Graves Commission, by the 1950s the Turkish authorities had constructed a number of modernist structures at Cape Helles. By the 1990s these had been supplemented by a number of more traditional Islamic memorials and "a battle for monumental supremacy [had] been waged" (Gough 2000: 223). Located close together the Turkish and Commonwealth memorial spaces vied with each other for attention. In 1997 the Turkish government announced a competition for a park dedicated to peace at Gallipoli. Design teams were asked to address the larger issues of global peace while at the same time

trying to resolve the antipathy between those national and patriotic interest groups that claimed moral ownership of the space. While none of the submissions fully reconciled the design remit, the winning entry by Norway proposed a network of footpaths that would be created and customized by individual visitors, and complemented by a website. Here an attempt was made to shift the responsibility on to individual visitors rather than imposing an interpretive superstructure. Consequently the design offered "a minimally invasive critique of existing memorial and preserved sites, raising through its website fundamental questions about reconciliation and commemoration" (Gough 2000: 224). While the battles of the First World War provided the impetus for creating a memorial landscape, more recent developments have been animated by the contemporary concerns surrounding global peace rather than national commemorative rivalries.

Although many of the spaces of memory dedicated to the First World War were reinscribed and recoded to accommodate the casualties of the Second World War, the specific circumstances of that conflict produced some different cultural practices. In Japan, for instance, the government designated Hiroshima a 'Peace City.' On August 6, 1945, the city had been almost obliterated by a nuclear bomb and over 80,000 people lost their lives. In subsequent decades the remaining physical and social fabric became the locus for the iconography of the antinuclear movement. The city was reconstructed and a 'Peace Hall' project comprising of a 12-hectare site at the epicenter of the bomb was redesigned to include a Peace Square, Peace Arch, and the preserved remnants of the Industrial Promotion Dome building. In addition, an 87-hectare plot, the 'Peace Park' project, was designed to include children's playgrounds and an International Culture Center. Although the city was promoted as a 'Mecca of Peace,' the uneasy relationship between local and global practices of memory surfaced. Many Japanese were troubled that the influx of tourists and the commercial revenue gained from this mass pilgrimage would profane the memorial space and undermine the sacred memories of the city's citizenry. The tensions between personal memories and public spaces became evident. Nonetheless the city has become the model for other peace projects and it acts "simultaneously as a reliquary, a funerary site, a civilian battlefield, and as a locus of political and social debate" (Gough 2000: 218).

Conclusion

In the past two decades scholars from a variety of disciplines have focused attention on the representation and articulation of social memories through the analysis of a variety of sites of memory. Connecting these public sites to gender, class, religious, national, and ethnic identities has proved a fruitful avenue of research. In particular, cultural geographers have sought to add to this work by underlining the significance of space in investigating and interpreting the sculpted icons and memorial landscapes that surround us. Rather less attention has been paid to the aural and oral dimensions of memory work. The role of music, song and story telling in evoking social memories could be a fruitful avenue for future research. While the monumental architecture and heroic statues of the good and the great may be less fashionable today than in the early decades of the twentieth century, it is evident nonetheless that the drive to construct and represent social memories in the public

sphere continues. While writing this chapter the six-month anniversary of the assault on the Twin Towers in Manhattan passed. In New York City two moments of silence were observed and a ceremony of remembrance was held in Battery Park. Fritz Keonig's 1971 sculpture *The Sphere*, which had formerly stood in the fountain at the World Trade Center, and had survived, was rededicated at that ceremony. On the evening of March 11, 2002, two parallel beams of light, evoking the Twin Towers, were switched on as a temporary memorial radiating across the Manhattan skyline. While these are early acts of remembrance, there is no doubt that further public acts of commemoration will take place and these will provoke discussions about the appropriate ways and means of collectively and individually making sense of the past.

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