



MAKING PLACES, MOLDING MEMORIES

Making Places, Molding Memories: Political and Race-based Origins of Monuments, Memories, and Identities

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This volume of *Historical Geography* showcases scholarship orbiting three general but interrelated topics—monuments, memory, and identity—as they relate to the place-making process from multiple perspectives. Collectively, four contributors highlight how various guises of political ambition and policy took shape on the cultural landscape and how those manifestations have been integrated into society as public memory.

The colonization of foreign lands by Europeans left an indelible imprint on the land and in the memories of those experiencing its far-reaching impact.¹ As an inherent part of colonization, the place-making process was conducted by its agents through varying methods of control, ranging from a dominating military presence and strict legal system to the introduction of informal cultural institutions and subtle forms of anti-conquest.² The racialized ideologies embedded in these practices resulted in colonial spaces which either disassociated Indigenous societies or integrated the Indigenous through assimilation. Alan Baker notes that such ideologies “exert their authority and find expression not only in language but also in landscape. Non-verbal ‘documents’ in the landscape can be powerful visual signs.”³ Interpreting these landscape documents from various perspectives, including nationalism, identity, memory, and hegemony, is something geographers do very well. Tim Edensor, Stephen Daniels, David Harvey, Nuala Johnson, Stephen Legg, Brian Osborne, and others have noted how places and scenes have been used to symbolize national sentiment and identities.⁴

The erection of monuments is a common method of canonizing the memory and ideology of a nation on the landscape. Ranging from the

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sublime to the mundane, memorials often commemorate persons and/or historical events that have collectively admired significance.⁵ Similarly, many scholars have documented the contested memories and meanings that many monuments harbor between classes, genders, ethnic, and racial groups.⁶ Indeed, racism can be so ingrained in society and the landscape that it is unnoticed by those of the dominant culture,⁷ and a number of geographers have noted the various roles that monuments, domestic architecture, flags, and other forms of iconography have played in preserving white hegemony in the American South.⁸ In the eyes of many, protests against the display of such Confederate iconography are viewed as direct challenges to white memory and to a racialized social hierarchy under white control. As Derek Alderman, Owen Dwyer, Joshua Inwood, and others document, the topic of public memory and the politics of commemorating the Civil Rights Movement also reveals racial cleavages in Southern society, as the erection of memorials dedicated to preserving African American history provide counter-narratives which contest memorials to the Lost Cause.⁹ The insightful research mentioned here has taught us much about how we honor what we value as a society, but there are many untold stories and perspectives we can share. The essays comprising this special issue contribute in many ways to existing research and enhance our understanding of how various types of political ambition influenced individual and collective identities, the shifting meanings of commemorative sculpture, and place-based memories.

In the first essay, "Ornithology on 'The Rock': Territory, Fieldwork, and the Body in the Straits of Gibraltar in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Kirsten Greer examines the interconnectedness of nineteenth-century British military culture and the practice of ornithology as agents of colonial place-making at Gibraltar, the symbolic gateway to Britain's once vast empire. In documenting ways in which imperialist and masculine identities were maintained among soldiers, Greer provides a noteworthy example of how the British developed a racialized environment on "The Rock."

C Drew Bednasek's essay, "Remembering the File Hills Farm Colony," heeds the call of Indigenous scholars by providing an insightful counter-narrative to imperial memory by telling the stories of Indigenous participants in an early twentieth-century governmental assimilation program on Saskatchewan's Peepeekisis Reserve.¹¹ These contributions exhibit the many forms which ideologies associated with colonialism take and add to an expanding array of scholarship in this field of historical geography.

Seth Dixon's essay, "Mobile Monumental Landscapes: Shifting Cultural Identities in Mexico City's 'El Caballito,'" contextualizes the relocation of a statue of King Carlos IV throughout Mexico's capital between 1796 and the 1970s as a reflection of intense debates involving the colonial, national, and Indigenous identities of Mexicans. Dixon's empirical method stresses the importance, and the rewards, of deciphering complex historical layers of public meaning in constructing narratives of public monuments and their social spaces.

In the final essay of this special issue, Chris Post examines the

memorialization of John Brown, the stout abolitionist most known for his involvement the infamous "Bleeding Kansas" era of that state's territorial history. By viewing this movement through a dual lens of reputational politics and the concept of symbolic accretion, Post presents a fascinating account of how the politics of John Brown's legacy has shaped public memory and influenced the erection of monuments in the communities Osawatimie, Kansas and the Quindaro neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas. Collectively, these geographically eclectic essays reinforce the often undervalued role that memorials and place-based memories play in the development of individual and group identities.

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Notes

1. For a primer, see Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith (eds.), *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) and Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan (eds.), *Post-colonial Geographies* (London: Continuum, 2002).
2. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) and R.D.K. Herman, "The Aloha State: Place Names and the Anti-conquest of Hawai'i," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89:1 (1999): 76-102 for noteworthy examples.
3. Alan R.H. Baker, "Introduction: on ideology and landscape," in Alan R.H. Baker and Gideon Biger (eds.), *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the Meanings of Some Places in the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.
4. See Tim Edensor, "National Identity and the Politics of Memory: Remembering Bruce and Wallace in Symbolic Space," *Environment and Planning D* 29:2 (1997): 175-194; Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); David Harvey, "Monument and Myth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69:3 (1979): 262-281; Nuala Johnson, "Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography, and Nationalism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13:1 (1995): 51-65; Stephen Legg, "Contesting and Surviving Memory: Space, Nation, and Nostalgia in Les Lieux De Mémoire," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23:4 (2005): 481-504; and Brian S. Osborne, "Constructing Landscapes of Power: The George Etienne Cartier Monument, Montreal," *Journal of Historical Geography* 24:4 (1998): 431-458.
5. Recently published examples include Paul Cloke and Eric Pawson, "Memorial trees and treescape memories," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26:1 (2008): 107-122; Dydia DeLyser, "'Thus I salute the Kentucky Daisey's claim': gender, social memory, and the mythic West at a proposed Oklahoma monument," *Cultural Geographies* 15:1 (2008): 63-94; Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*

- (Chicago: Center for American Places, 2008); and Joshua F.J. Inwood, "Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Park," *Cultural Geographies* 16:1 (2009): 87-109.
6. For an overview, see Katharyne Mitchell, "Progress Report: Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory," *Urban Geography* 24:5 (2003): 442-459. Recent works include Adrienne Burke, "In Sight, Out of View: A Tale of Three Monuments," *Antipode* 38:1 (2006): 41-58; DeLyser, "'Thus I salute the Kentucky Daisey's claim'"; Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*; Steven D. Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5:3 (2004): 347-355; Inwood, "Contested memory in the birthplace of a king"; Soren Larsen, "The Future's Past: Politics of Time and Territory among Dakeh First Nations in British Columbia," *Geografiska Annaler Series B: Human Geography* 88:3 (2006): 311-321; and Richard H. Schein (ed.), *Race and Landscape in the United States* (London: Routledge, 2006).
 7. Richard Delgado, "Introduction," in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), xiii-xvi.
 8. Harold E. Gulley, "Southern Nationalism on the Landscape: County Names in Former Confederate States," *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 38:3 (1990): 231-242; Steven Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93:3 (2003): 657-686; Jonathan I. Leib, Gerald R. Webster, and Roberta H. Webster, "Rebel with a cause? Iconography and public memory in the Southern United States," *GeoJournal* 52:4 (2000): 303-310; Gerald R. Webster and Roberta H. Webster, "The Power of an Icon," *Geographical Review* 84:2 (1994): 131-143; and John J. Winberry, "'Lest We Forget': The Confederate Monument and the Southern Townscape," *Southeastern Geographer* 23:2 (1983): 107-121.
 9. Scholarship in this realm is particularly strong. For examples, see Derek H. Alderman, "Creating a New Geography of Memory in the South: (Re) naming of Streets in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Southeastern Geographer* 36(1996): 51-69; Derek H. Alderman, "A Street Fit for a King: Naming Places and Commemoration in the American South," *The Professional Geographer* 52:4 (2000): 672-684; Owen J. Dwyer, "Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement: Place, Memory, and Conflict," *The Professional Geographer* 52:4 (2000): 660-671; Owen J. Dwyer, "Symbolic accretion and commemoration," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5:3 (2004): 419-435; Inwood, "Contested memory in the birthplace of a king"; and Jonathan I. Leib, "Separate times, shared space: Arthur Ashe, Monument Avenue and the politics of Richmond, Virginia's symbolic landscape," *Cultural Geographies* 9:3 (2002): 286-312.
 10. Wendy S. Shaw, R.D.K. Herman, and Rebecca G. Dobbs, "Encountering Indi- genuity: Re-imagining and Decolonizing Geography," *Geografiska Annaler Series B: Human Geography* 88:3 (2006): 267-276; Jay T. Johnson, Garth Cant, Richard Howitt, and Evelyn Peters, "Creating Anti-colonial Geographies: Em- bracing Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights," *Geographical Research* 45:2 (2007): 117-120.