Architecture and Interpretation

Essays for Eric Fernie

Edited by

Jill A. Franklin, T. A. Heslop & Christine Stevenson

THE BOYDELL PRESS

First published 2012
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-184383-781-7

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mount Hope Ave, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Designed and typeset in Adobe Arno Pro by
David Roberts, Pershore, Worcestershire

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Towards a Cultural Geography of Modern Memorials

Andrew M. Shanken

It is virtually impossible to move through a European or American city without passing memorials that prompt us – if we notice them at all – merely to scratch at some fading memory. Instead of recalling civic or national heroes, important events, or victories in battle, we see the erosions of time, the way they make way for the daily pulses of urban movement, or how commerce corrals them into corners where they can grow old invisibly. Even the most familiar memorials, ones that we use repeatedly or ritualistically to cultivate a sense of collective recall, constantly confront obsolescence and alienation. Who are these strangers and how did they get that way? How, moreover, are we to understand them in their ever-changing states?

Memorials and cities have a conflicted relationship, the latter often sacrificing the former to its changing speed, scale, material reality, or, just as importantly, modern disregard. This disregard has taken the shape of movements against traditional memorials, even against the project of memorialization itself. At other times it has overflowed into outright disgust, ending in acts of iconoclasm or wilful destruction.[1] Most often, it takes the form of neglect, arguably the most damning dismissal of all because it entails forgetting – the precise thing memorials are supposed to ward against. Neglect, however, is difficult to study, and even harder to historicize. Beyond the mere process of forgetting, which one can find in literal deterioration, as when nostalgic patina turns into irreversible destruction, neglect is also quite literally a passing matter.

Scholars neglect neglect because its resists the archives. The same forces that cause memorials to disappear from view obscure their history and meaning. The fading of a memorial's intended potency might be seen as the negative trace of human disregard or disdain, a change in social meaning writ passively on the memorial, which could be as difficult to hide as outright iconoclasm. For those pursuing the most recent turn in cultural geography, the problem would be to plumb the ineffable, to get at

Thanks to Jacob Hellman, Seth Lunine, Richard Walker, Ceil Friedman, Victoria Teicher, Francesco Ceccarelli, Richard Tuttle, and Dana Arnold for their generous help with this essay.

[1] The destruction of memorials is a topic in its own right. It provides an almost incidental sub-theme of Sergiusz Michalski's *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870–1997* (London, 1998). See also Yvonne Wheelan, 'The Construction of Destruction of a Colonial Landscape: Monuments to British Monarchs in Dublin before and after Independence', *Journal of Historical Geography* 28:4 (2002), 508–33.

the social and emotional context of our encounter with the material world.[2] But this is also an opening for traditional methods in architectural history. Aside from their ethnography, the formal and urban realities of neglected memorials, as rooted in their history, offer important clues about how they have lapsed into oblivion.

Boundaries

Many memorials become strangers in their own gardens. A woebegone obelisk that sits astride a playground in Oakdale, California is one example (fig. 1). Erected as the monumental centrepiece of Dorada Park by the Ladies Improvement Society in 1929, it marks the succession of American wars, from the Revolution through the First World War. As was common with early twentieth-century beautification projects, Oakdale used the memorial as a pretext for civic improvement, but it did offer a public setting for commemorative activities. Unlike other towns, however, it never updated the memorial to reflect later wars, which turned the obelisk from an *aide mémoire* into a rough exotic amid swings and benches. Now an eye-catcher, as much because of its state of disrepair as its anomalousness, it is dwarfed by the palms and vast industrial structures that have grown up around it. From the road, even the playground equipment manages to make it look small (fig. 2).

Such subversion recalls Maria Kaika's interest in what happens when infrastructure fails, and especially her work on the domestication of water as it moves from its origins in some natural source through the complex, invisible networks of treatment, conveyance, and delivery, as if by magic, into our sinks, showers, and toilets. When this system fails, when sewage backs up into our sinks, for example, the home instantly becomes 'other', as the unwanted seeps in and transmogrifies the familiar and protected into something monstrous. The domestication of water – the visual and olfactory separation of home from the infrastructure on which it is predicated – is overturned and our understanding of the home as distinct from unruly nature is thrown into doubt. Home is violated, our faith in the system that kept it separate compromised. Kaika writes that the simultaneous

> need and denial of the connection of the home to socio-natural processes turns the material manifestations (networks, pipes, etc.) of this connection into the domestic uncanny that surfaces during moments of crisis. In these moments, the continuity of the social and material processes that produce the domestic space is

[2] This essay offers a few possibilities for how to study memorials in terms of recent work in cultural geography. For a thorough account of the sources of this emerging analytical framework, see Nigel Thrift, *Spatial Formations* (London, 1996) and *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London and New York, 2008). The work of Raymond Williams, Bruno Latour, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are all central, as is the work of Peggy Phelan in performance studies.

1 Oakdale, California: War Memorial; Ladies Improvement Society, 1929

> unexpectedly foregrounded, bringing the dweller of the modern home face to face with his/her alienation.[3]

The argument hinges on the observation that the *idea* of the home maintains a boundary, holding the domestic sphere apart from unwanted processes, or parts of nature itself, even if the house is ultimately dependent on the nature from which it hides.

If memorials are seen in terms of a commemorative infrastructure, or even as the fixtures that emerge out of the commemorative processes of society, they too may become a kind of boundary (as opposed to merely an

[3] Maria Kaika, 'Interrogating the Geographies of the Familiar: Domesticating Nature and Constructing the Autonomy of the Modern Home', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28 (March 2004), 265–86 (at 266).

2 Oakdale, California: War Memorial

object) fraught with complexity. Perhaps this is why ageing memorials have been dismissed as useless, extravagant, and wasteful, a form of urban clutter: pejoratives meant to disparage memorials for the odd, inverted existence they often live out.[4] The Oakdale obelisk might be understood in these terms. Its flaking surface and decrepit, muddy base betrays the ruinous commemorative infrastructure. The patchy, improvised restoration veils this neglect only imperfectly, instead reminding us that we have forgotten to remember, and signalling a temporal, aesthetic, and commemorative rupture, if not a failure of civic culture (fig. 2). The new, clean industrial and recreational infrastructure provide the setting in which it moulders. This has not prevented the town from using its form suggestively

[4] See Andrew M. Shanken, 'Planning Memory: The Rise of Living Memorials in the United States during World War II', *Art Bulletin* 84 (March 2002), 130–47.

in its playground equipment. The loving effort to make it fit points out just how odd the ageing memorial had become. It has been massaged back into the ensemble of public space, a forgiving formal response to the break in the memorial infrastructure and emotion.

A similar process explains how 'Peace', a World War I memorial in Danville, Illinois, became an 'unattractive back', transformed from a civic monument into an urban eyesore. A letter published in *Architectural Forum* in 1945 derided this memorial for turning its back to the city (fig. 3).[5] Making the sculpture the butt of a joke did more than dismiss the frontality of Classicism or its inappropriateness as a mode for modern memorials: it revealed the futility of our attempts to fix cultural ideas in material terms. In revealing Peace's profane nature, the writer drew attention to two important elements of the transformation: the memorial turned 'its unattractive back to everyone entering the city. Loredo Taft was the designer but I have seen him blush as he looked at it.'[6] The writer thus tied the formal shortcomings of the memorial to disgust, linking its failure to the flow of people into the city. As a failed faucet for commemoration, one revealing its rump instead of some noble quality, it encountered the everyday infrastructure of circulation awkwardly. While this hardly makes Peace into an overflowing toilet, the effect of shame is not so different: Taft's blush stands in for the embarrassment of all of the citizens. The rupture of the memorial infrastructure, due to its outdated form and increasingly improvident placement, created a new flow of sentiment.

3 'Unattractive Back': Danville, Illinois: Peace Monument; Loredo Taft, sculptor

Profane memorials

The sense of memorials as infrastructure that can break down helps explain why some of them become favourite hangouts for adolescents. In Verona, Italy, while conventional teens write love notes to Juliet Capulet and stick them on the wall of her house with chewing gum or place them in her tomb,

[5] 'Unattractive Back', *Architectural Forum* 82 (January 1945), 38.

[6] Ibid., 38.

4 Verona (Italy): Michele Sanmicheli Monument; Guido Troiani, sculptor, 1874

disaffected teens flock to an unmarked statue on the Piazza Pradaval, which they have layered with their graffiti – the equivalent to the missives to Juliet (figs 4 and 5).[7] Monuments like this, in their subverted state, attract groups who valorize their own marginality. In their everyday life, such memorials are not unlike the introduction of children into the flow of adolescence, from the private, sheltered, and highly controlled world of the home to the public, exposed, and more chaotic stage of adulthood. The personal transition thus finds a spatial or formal analogue, which they mark up with the insignias of their emerging individuality, thereby elevating or individualizing the forgotten or ignored memorial whilst elevating and individualizing themselves.

The point of connection between the memorial and the adolescents who make it their own is the sense of the memorial as a boundary, often literally, but certainly metaphorically, dividing the mundane and the heightened. In fact, the Piazza Pradaval is a well-known site for drug dealers and the homeless. The memorial, which sits on the edge of the site, allows teenagers to enter this urban scene tangentially, to dip into it visually, to act out in their own way, using the monument both as a link and as a haven that keeps them separate. But the memorial draws lines in another, more subtle way, namely as a shape-shifter. Since many memorials are only 'on' at special times, hibernating from their commemorative duties and resting in the form of civic ornament, their status is changeful or transitory. Being neither this nor that, they represent something ambiguous, something at times to be ignored, especially in the rush of everyday life. In this role, they become anarchic places for acting out, a place in-between for a population in between childhood and adulthood. It is this status that invites graffiti, which tags them as forsaken or neglected ground. Thus the areas around them take on some of the same qualities of the memorials themselves.

[7] Similar monuments can be found throughout Italy and Europe. I have Ceil Friedman to thank for identifying the monument as erected to Michele Sanmicheli (*c.* 1484–1559). His Porta Nuova (1533–51) lies at the head of the Corsa Porta Nuova, on which his statue by Guido Troiani was placed in 1874. By 2008 the inscription naming Sanmicheli had worn away.

5 Verona: Michele Sanmicheli Monument

This betweenness might be seen as awkward, a social problem for adults, and thus adding a repulsiveness to a site meant to harbour higher sentiments. In turn, the process might be part of a course of decadence, a change that runs counter to many preconceptions of what a memorial should be, namely permanent, unchanging, dignified. However, this betweenness is also a positive asset, since it shelters (most often harmlessly) a segment of the population without a strong institutional or commercial base in the city. It gives them a boundary with which to play, in breaking modest taboos through the use of graffiti on a public monument, and performing their adolescence publicly, but under the symbolic shadow of a neglected monument. This is to say that the cloak of invisibility that overtakes memorials over time extends to these people, so that they behave as if they are almost invisible in its orbit. In this way, the profane memorial again acquires an aura.

Spontaneous dialects

Insights from linguistics offer another way of understanding the ambiguous status of some memorials. While the move to see the built environment in purely linguistic terms is now dated, the metaphor can still be useful for understanding conventions of commemoration, especially spontaneous memorials.[8] Any geographical event will assert language in space. Sometimes this is a form of creole, as with this surfer's memorial in Carpinteria, near Santa Barbara, California, where local, regional, even tribal forms blend with Christian iconography (fig. 6). A temporary thatched cabana for an anonymous surfer, presumably at the site of his demise, the memorial anchors a homemade cross in the breakwater of boulders. A framed photograph of the surfer, identified simply as EP, is nailed into the pillar where Christ's head would be; gnarled sticks take the place of Christ's arms. Heineken bottle tops are crucified on the crossbeam, acting both as ornament and as a surfer's covenant with play. Frolicking dolphins, the frequent playmates of surfers in Southern California, recall the Ichthys, the secret acronym of Christ adopted by the Early Christians (fig. 7).[9] Just above EP's photograph, a lantern awaits the candles of mourners, a beacon to the lost surfer, but also a source of the transfiguring light that would make him, like Christ, the light of the world. The blue paint likens the sea that was his passion to the passion of Christ.

This highly personalized vernacular memorial, so deeply rooted in Christian iconography, is neither temporary nor permanent: a bench allows visitors to contemplate the sea, and the level of wear suggests that it

[8] James S. Duncan, *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1990). Also Richard Peet, 'A Sign Taken for History: Daniel Shays' Memorial in Petersham, Massachusetts', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86:1 (March 1996), 12–43.

[9] Iota Chi Theta Upsilon Sigma: Jesus Christ, Son Of God, Saviour.

6 Carpinteria, California: Surfer's Memorial to 'EP'; anonymous

7 Carpinteria, California: Surfer's Memorial to 'EP', detail

was already old in 2005, when this photograph was taken. Various addenda, pebbles, graffiti, and the palm fronds that lie atop the shelter, suggest that it is informally maintained and that officials allow it to remain on this otherwise immaculate beach.

One way out of the stiffness of the linguistic metaphor, which stops far short of explaining a memorial like this one, is to see memorials in terms of 'linguistic communities' that stage geographical events. Through the memorial, they assert their beliefs, myths, and ideologies in material form, sedimenting them into 'more permanent forms.'[10] As Tim Cresswell argued about the Beat Generation's valorization of movement as a 'challenge to the moral authority of place', so might spontaneous memorials be seen as a rejection of the moral authority of official memorials – their inability to act quickly, to remember accurately or intimately, to represent directly, empathetically. It is an outcry by people who do not feel heard by official processes of memorialization.

The process of 'speaking out' through the memorial may not be detectable merely through visual analysis. For instance, a memorial grew up spontaneously on College Avenue in Berkeley, California, after a woman named Meleia Willis-Starbuck, a Berkeley resident, was murdered there in July of 2005 (fig. 8). Formally it resembled many spontaneous memorials, but people at the memorial expressed a decisively geographical language. When I first encountered it, a group of her friends had gathered and were directing the creation of the memorial. Not knowing about the murder yet, I approached to ask what was being memorialized. One of the grim guardians asked me if I was a friend of Meleia's, and when I shook my head, no, he turned his face away and dismissed me with a wave of his hand. In his mind, this was not my memory, and I had no right to the sidewalk. My mere inquiry was a trespass, which demonstrates the degree to which this group had taken ownership of the space. Spontaneous memorials resist institutionalization by insisting on different norms and forms of commemoration and by temporarily requisitioning public space as a way of defining their community. The relationship between the spontaneous memorial as a spontaneous dialect and its spatial claims gets to the heart of the political power embedded in language. By speaking its own dialect, the Willis-Starbuck memorial was able to fashion enough political capital to commandeer the sidewalk temporarily, to carve out a bit of public space for a private affair.

In this regard, spontaneous memorials almost constitute an oxymoron: memorials are usually intended to help make permanent something that otherwise might slip out of view, but the impromptu memorial, like any utterance, often lasts less time than the memory of the event. As important as their spontaneity is, so is their temporal status: they are usually

[10] Tim Cresswell, quoted in Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (London, 1992), 161.

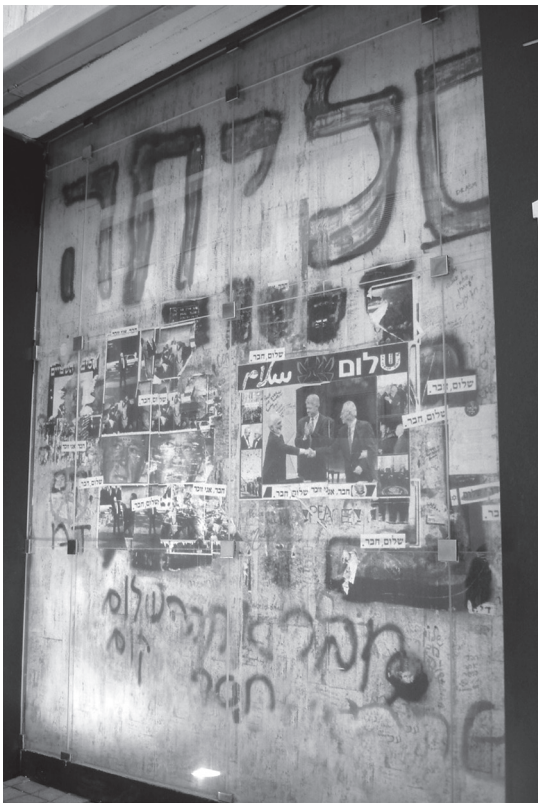
8 Berkeley, California: Meleia Willis-Starbuck Memorial, 2005

9 Tel Aviv: Yitzhak Rabin Memorial

short-term memorials. So they must be seen, at least in part, as a different sort of gesture and not strictly as memorials at all, or perhaps as a blurring of boundaries between memorials and those spontaneous social actions with which they share affinities: happenings, dance and rap contests on the street, Critical Mass stagings, and the impromptu political and social gatherings driven by internet or texting. Spontaneous memorials are as close to the carnivalesque described by Bakhtin as to the more sombre world of formal memorialization. Their form often reflects the first, assuming the form of a Mummers Parade, while their comportment reflects the second, showing their liminal status.

The short-term memorial has recently assumed a more prominent and permanent place. To take one example, in Tel Aviv (fig. 9), the Rabin Memorial is an amalgam of permanent features (boulders etched with words, a bust on a pedestal) bedecked with spontaneous elements (wreaths, signs, messages), all of which is surrounded by a formal chain that both symbolically marks off the memorial from trespass and, by lying low to the ground, provides easy access for spontaneous addenda. Off to one side, curiously, behind protective glass on an adjoining building is a permanent display of the spontaneous offerings that transformed the otherwise barren corner of this plaza just after Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995 (fig. 10).[11]

[11] For another example, see the Katrina Memorial (2006) in Biloxi, Mississippi. On Rabin, see Vared Vinitzky-Seroussi, 'Commemorating a Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's



10 Tel Aviv, Yitzhak Rabin Memorial: detail of framed photograph of spontaneous memorial, created in 2005

The Surfer, Willis-Starbuck, and Rabin memorials share a range of conventions with many other spontaneous memorials: the contribution of flowers, notes, memorabilia and personal items, photographs, all gathered into an assemblage that transforms the site into something else. Not quite a form of synecdoche, since the part does not represent the whole, the assemblage recreates the lost love object through personal effects. If traced, these objects might diagram a life's network, another metaphor that moves beyond the linguistic and sensual. The Rabin Memorial, in particular, acknowledges the power of spontaneous accumulation, and tries to capture it, both by subtly encouraging more of it to occur and by creating a permanent display of the original geographical event. From the start it has many of the formal elements that grow by accretion around other memorials: the abstraction of stone, the figural bust, and the impromptu offerings left at any memorial that has not lost touch with its people. The process by which spontaneous memorials are becoming part of official practice might be likened to the way neologisms from vernacular culture find their way into the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

In this way, spontaneous memorials can be persistent, which is to say, permanent in both intention and practice. Is the recent proliferation and elaboration of spontaneous memorials, when taken collectively as a phenomenon, a speaking out against memorial conventions, a declaration of independence of sorts, in which dominant conventions are questioned publicly and a new language is born? And is the memorial mania, the recent surge (or splurge?) of official memorials, its counterpoint, a reassertion of official processes, if not official forms, of memorialization?[12] Language, in other words, may help explore the relationship between spontaneous and other kinds of memorials.

Memorials', *American Sociological Review* 67:1 (February 2002), 30–51.

[12] See Erika Doss's *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago, 2010) as well as her essay (2008) of the same title, accessed 10 October 2008 at < http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/memorialmania.cfm>.

11 London: Royal Artillery Memorial, from Wellington Arch; Charles Sargeant Jagger, sculptor, 1921–5

Speed

Spontaneous and permanent memorials divide along lines of speed, a matter of recent interest in geography. As an analytical framework, speed reaches beyond the fact that spontaneous memorials fill a gap left by the slow process of official memorialization: like anything else, memorials fall out of tempo with the times. A more literal and urban understanding of speed provides a different perspective on memorials. Pace alters place. From Haussmann's Paris to the New York of Robert Moses, many of the great planning schemes act upon the pace of the city. Some cultural geographers understand these changes in speed in terms of how bureaucratic elites assert power.[13] The approach reveals the extent to which the modern faith in technology to create a more just and bountiful world can in fact set up the conditions for 'differential mobility' that reinforce hegemonic relationships in the city. In the case of something as complex as a city, however, speed is too complicated a variable to submit to hegemonic control: just watch how different populations treat traffic lights. Instead, the speed of any place within a city results from a complex of factors, only some of which issue from the hands of planners, bureaucrats, or other powerbrokers.

Within this urban complex, including the subjective realities of people

[13] Phil Hubbard and Keith Lilley, 'Pacemaking the Modern City: The Urban Politics of Speed and Slowness', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004), 273–94. For a more theoretically complex example, see Derek McCormack, 'Diagramming Practice and Performance', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005), 119–47.

12 London: Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Walk

within it, objects may be pacemakers. Any given memorial might have multiple gears. When turned on it should slow us down, if only inadvertently. Confronting a memorial in use, we might pass through the invisible narthex (paving, plantings, changes in height or scale) that separates it from the everyday, slowing to join an idling crowd. Even if we are not part of the commemoration, the puddle of people might force movement around it to break, as might happen at Hyde Park Corner on Remembrance Day, which alters the high-speed pass-through for bicyclists and walkers, if not for cars (fig. 11). Often this process is intentional and planned, as when cities close down certain areas to traffic during commemorative events. Such shifts in speed will consequently alter the way we encounter and perceive the memorials and the city. The memorial must not be seen simply as a landmark, but also as a speed bump. Even when turned off, so to speak, it often elicits a half-beat of change as people treat it with what Erving Goffman called 'civil indifference', or it might speed us up so that we can better ignore its message.[14]

Even with spontaneous memorials, the effects can radiate powerfully through a city. Just think of how the spontaneous offerings after Princess Diana's death in 1997 altered movement in London; one can imagine the repercussions of a poorly or well-placed memorial. Through memorials and the practices around them, people can be slowed down or sped up, their attention redirected to certain events and places or away from others. In fact, the less conspicuous Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Walk (fig. 12), which meanders through Kensington Park, creates another form of pacing and movement, whereby the episodic appearance of plaques set in the pavement asks one to pause whilst tracing a fixed path (a figure-of-eight, or infinity sign through four of London's parks) in a picturesque setting designed for quite a different method of perambulation. The plaques play connect-the-dots between a number of sites related to Diana's life, drawing out a cultural landscape constructed of her memory, including the Crowther Gates of Kensington Palace, where the spontaneous memorial took shape and the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Playground opened in 2000; Hyde Park; Buckingham Palace; and the Mall. Each of

[14] Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organisation of Gatherings* (London, 1963), 243. See also Joyce Davidson, '"Putting on a Face": Sartre, Goffman, and Agoraphobic Anxiety in Social Space', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (2003), 107–22.

these plaques becomes a potential speed bump that can redirect thoughts and emotions.[15]

Some forms of neglect might be understood as failures of speed. A memorial that loses pace with its city, one that cannot slow it down or slows it down too much, risks becoming invisible or an obstruction. The first degrades slowly. For example, some Civil War memorials in the United States were constructed in cemeteries, placed there to catch the common practice in the nineteenth century of strolling through these picturesque landscapes, when death was the 'sweet hereafter' and cemeteries became their worldly analogues.[16] Once this practice declined, so did the memorial in the cemetery.[17] On the other hand, memorials that obstruct movement come into conflict with everyday processes like traffic and commerce. These memorials are often moved into a slower place, where they can do no harm.

A rich formal (and social) analysis *vis-à-vis* speed emerges with an understanding of the ramifications of memorials that are displaced because they cannot keep pace. What we need is an analytical tool that will allow analysis in four dimensions, since we *move* through memorial spaces. Such a tool must simultaneously account for changes in speed: we see modern memorials by car as often as by foot, a change that overtook some older memorials, but around which some memorials were planned. Some of this has to do with memorials surviving into speedier epochs. Traditions of memorialization invented (or recalled) in the late Renaissance, which created forms and placement strategies, rituals and meanings, were born of one kind of city, and then overtaken by the city of industrial capitalism, with its different scale, speed, urban form, and sense of community or alienation. Just when the City Beautiful monument came to think in Baroque and picturesque terms, marrying the great axes and vistas to the landscape tradition of the cemetery, the car arrived. What were the first memorials built to suit 25 to 60 miles per hour? What are the cultural ramifications of this adaptation?[18]

One of the early memorials to play to the car is the Royal Artillery Memorial (Charles Sargeant Jagger, 1921–5) at Hyde Park Corner, London, which presses up against Grosvenor Place, offering its guarded façade to

[15] The most arresting use of speed in a memorial design is the design by R. Herz and Reinhard Matz for the 1995 competition for a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. They proposed to repave a stretch of the *Autobahn* with cobbles so that traffic would slow and be forced to read street signs given over to commemorating the Holocaust.

[16] See Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York, 1981).

[17] In Oberlin, Ohio, a Harper's Ferry Memorial was erected in the Westwood Cemetery. In 1971, it was moved to the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, where it would play a more visible part in the reordering of Oberlin's relationship to its African-American heritage.

[18] Highway memorials appeared as early as the unexecuted Lincoln Memorial Highway, proposed shortly after the American Civil War, but the movement in the US arose after World War I.

passing cars (fig. 11). This is a memorial whose street face cannot be easily approached by pedestrians, who must view it from the other side of the busy street, or by hugging the curb as traffic passes by. In fact, it takes advantage of a quirky bend in the road, where cars are forced to slow down. A model of a Howitzer, positioned with the flow of traffic towards Decimus Burton's Hyde Park Screen, tops a bus-sized block of stone.[19] The memorial is both sepulchral and directional. It deploys its materiel alongside the street like a fragment of some military supply line, or plays to the street as if it were part of a ceremonial procession, triumphantly entering London through Burton's monumental gateway. Instead of walking with the dead, we now drive with the convoy. The point must have been self-conscious, although little evidence beyond formal and spatial observation backs up the claim: Hyde Park Corner has historically been a well-known traffic knot, with complaints about traffic going back to the Victorian period. Just to place a memorial here in the first place is to throw it to the cars.

Assembling memorials: the additive tradition

Jagger's memorial also forms a terminus, perpendicular to the road, of one side of the memorial axis through the Wellington Arch (Decimus Burton, 1828) in a precinct of other military memorials that includes the Wellington Statue (J. E. Boehm, 1888), the Machine Gun Corps Memorial (Derwent Wood, 1925: fig. 13), and not far away in Hyde Park, the Wellington Achilles (Richard Westmacott, 1822), all held together by the Wellington Arch. Both the World War I memorials are dedicated to specific branches of the military in the Great War and serve as centennial commemorations of the Duke of Wellington. As an ensemble, they create a memorial park and define a triumphal route through the Wellington Arch. Two sides of the area were sealed off in the 1920s, just as motorized traffic began to stress the street pattern. An analysis of traffic studies for the area would require a separate study: suffice it to say that they all took liberties with the memorials.[20]

This entire area around Hyde Park Corner reassembles memorials that had lost their place into a new self-reflective context, creating a memorial precinct. The literature on memorials has yet to grapple with the phenomenon of such modern aggregations, where memorials become their own context.[21] The latest addition to this rabble is the Australian War Memorial to both World Wars (architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer),

[19] In fact, the gun points the other way, but the howitzer typically had a hitch on the opposite side from the gun and thus faced away from the vehicle that pulled it.

[20] For the seemingly endless proposals for Hyde Park Corner, including the relationship of traffic to its memorials, see the papers of the Public Record Office at the National Archives, London.

[21] The exceptions, of course, are those imperial cities given over to national memorials, such as Washington, DC, or Vienna.

13 London: Machine Gun Corps Memorial; Derwent Wood, sculptor, 1925

unveiled on Remembrance Day 2003, and built along the lines of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. The curved wall gently descends into the ground, buffering the memorial against the traffic of the street – much in contrast to its more sociable neighbour, the Royal Artillery Memorial. The wall of the Australian War Memorial pulls the various memorials together formally and completes the context of the area as a temenos. Gone are the original urban contexts of the Wellington arch and statue. They now face inward, playing off of the other memorials, which belong to the official commemorations of Remembrance Day, when they are annually conscripted for official service.

Before the most recent addition, this area still possessed the feel of something arbitrary, part of the nineteenth-century's picturesque scattering of monuments in verdant settings. To be sure, the historical line connecting Wellington to the First World War is clear enough, if long. In an age before the commemoration of the common soldier, Wellington came to embody military heroism, honour, and empire. Modern warfare created a crisis in memorial conventions, exemplified by the contrast between the Machine Gun Corps Memorial and the Royal Artillery Memorial. Although both memorialize soldiers from military divisions who died in World War I, they do so in remarkably different ways. The undersized David, a classical allegorical figure drawn from Michelangelo, offers an abstraction of society's sacrifice of its youth to war, and a biblical reference to an act of heroism that likens David's sling to the new technology of the machine gun – an unlikely image. The Royal Artillery Memorial is much more self-consciously modern. Not only does it nod to traffic, but also it

realistically depicts modern war. Doleful bronzes of men in the uniforms of the day stand guard over the 'tomb' and its life-size Howitzer.[22]

While the shift from the cult of hero worship in memorials to the commemoration of the common soldier on a roll call mounted on a sculptural base may be obvious and near universal in the Euro-American tradition, the fact that they share the same space is of interest because, as noted, they do not share the same commemorative practices. In other words, the original spatial dynamics surrounding the Wellington statue and arch were elided and these memorials were brought into line with the emerging commemorative practices of the twentieth century. The nineteenth-century practice of placing memorials as notes in picturesque settings gave way to the convenience of twentieth-century urbanism.

The history concession – heritage groups and commercial interests who turn tradition into profits – influenced such groupings. Hyde Park Corner makes a tidy stop for tourists, who can take in two hundred years of British military history in one place. English Heritage produces an excellent pamphlet to aid in this process, replete with a map and pithy descriptions of the memorials.[23] The map marks thirteen memorials between Hyde Park Corner and the Victoria Embankment Gardens in that nearly continuous strip of park west of the bend in the Thames that gives this part of London its character. The various Wellington memorials make no appearance, as if they belonged to a cultural phenomenon different from 'Remembrance', the name of the brochure and of the British day of military commemoration.

Eight of these memorials between Hyde Park and the Thames are dedicated to some aspect of the Great War, or were erected in its aftermath.[24] All of them are national memorials, as opposed to the local tributes for which so many towns or areas within cities take up subscriptions. Not one, however, was erected in the immediate wake of World War II. This would have to wait forty-five years, when the Chindit Forces Memorial (D. Price, architect, 1990) was dedicated to the soldiers recruited from Burma, Hong Kong, India, Nepal, West Africa and elsewhere who fought in Burma. In general, astoundingly few memorials are dedicated specifically to World War II, for reasons which have been elaborated elsewhere.[25] Yet this war does appear at Hyde Park Corner, albeit unobtrusively. In 1949 the names

[22] English Heritage, *Remembrance: Twentieth Century War Memorials* (London, n.d.). This small pamphlet is a guide to the memorials in Hyde Park, Green Park, and St James's Park.

[23] Ibid.

[24] These includes the Machine Gun Corps Memorial, the Royal Artillery Memorial, the Cavalry Memorial (A. Jones, sculptor, 1924; moved from Park Lane in 1960), the Guards Division Memorial (G. Ledward, sculptor, 1926), the Imperial Camel Corps Memorial (C. Brown, sculptor, 1920), Sir Edward Lutyens Cenotaph (1920), the Belgian National Monument (Sir Reginald Blomfield, architect, 1919), and the Royal Air Force Memorial (Sir Reginald Blomfield, architect, 1923).

[25] Shanken, 'Planning Memory'.

of the 30,000 soldiers from the Royal Artillery who had died in the war were added to plaques set into the paving of the Royal Artillery Memorial. A corresponding inscription was added to the Royal Air Force Memorial on the Victoria Embankment. The Canadian Memorial (Pierre Granche, sculptor, 1994) at Queen's Gardens at the west end of the Mall is dedicated to the Canadians who served in both world wars, and the Guards Division Memorial, which was damaged by shrapnel in World War II, was emended to commemorate members of the Household Division who died in that war. These quiet addenda, grafted modestly onto the memorials of earlier wars, were probably the most common form of Second World War memorial in the Allied nations, at least in Britain and America.[26] In order to engage with them, however, one must know that they are there, and this suggests one more way that the mid-to-late twentieth century attenuated the geography of memory – if one privileges visuality.

More than visual?

Sound has offered a way out of this dilemma. In the Ghetto Ebraico (Jewish Ghetto) of Bologna, klezmer music wafts mysteriously through the crooked alleys. It haunts, surprises, reminds or insinuates. One is awakened from the nostalgic reverie of walking through the gentrified ghetto, long ago emptied of its Jews, to consider the life that once lived here and what happened to it. Culture becomes a mood-altering substance, but this memorial is not visual. Sound, not form, eerily does the work. The music helps create a complex cultural landscape, taken in through the change of scale, which, even by Bologna's standards is constricted and irregular, as well as a lone marker on a building and the presence of the nearby Museo Ebraico.[27]

So intent on presenting a soundscape were its creators, that the brochure and map offer no address. Instead of being directed to a geographical point, in the way a number on a street allows precision, the map provides only a general area defined by echolocation or the abstract radius of sound. This implies a different reach, or a different relationship to space than binocular vision. An image, a two-dimensional memorial such as a plaque, a statue, or even a quarter in a city are perceived visually as objects or spaces that one reels in with the bifocal lines of visual perception, and then explores through sequential movement. Sound is more elusive, more diffuse. It acts on the walls and alleys, porticos and weather in unpredictable ways. The source of the sound in the Ghetto Ebraico was hidden (although

[26] A spate of World War II memorials have appeared in recent years, beginning with the National Memorial to World War II in Washington, DC, and the Australian and New Zealand Memorials at Hyde Park Corner.

[27] The sound memorial, part of the vogue for soundscapes in art and as elements of memorials, was part of a city-wide set of sound installations supported by the *comune* of Bologna and indirectly tourism in 2007. Its intention is further complicated by the fact that it was a UNESCO project, which designated Bologna a city of music in 2006.

only nominally), deepening the mystery. Instead of tracing it visually, we find ourselves in an ever-changing pool of sound – getting closer to the source (the amplifier) doesn't get us closer to 'reading' or confronting the memorial, as it so often does with a physical monument or plaque. The two strategies, employed near one another, demand something more of us.

Much of cultural geography's research on sound attempts to reposition the focus of knowledge away from the iconic towards the sonic. As Susan Smith writes:

> What would happen if we thought about space in terms of its acoustical properties rather than in terms of its transparency or its topology? What would happen to the way we think, to the things we know, to the relationships we enter, to our experience of time and space, if we fully took on board the idea that the world is for hearing rather than beholding, for listening to, rather than for looking at?[28]

Trading in sight for sound, however, runs counter to the way our bodies behave. Instead of sensitivities to sound, per se, we need to develop sensitivities to how our senses work in unison. If this requires paying attention to sound in isolation at first, we should quickly move beyond it. As Bruno Latour might counsel, we must inquire into the source of the sound or where it resounds, and this is a space which, presumably, we can also come to know through other senses.[29] The same may be said for a memorial, especially when understood in terms of commemorative process or its everyday life.

Consider the sonogram, an image composed of sound that allows us to 'see' within the womb. Might such synaesthetic technologies provide models for the experience of space, if not offering new forms for memorials? Does not the sound of a musical performance 'bring the concert hall into existence', as Susan Smith puts it?[30] In the Bologna soundscape, sound abets the visual: one is awakened and lured by sound to an awareness of the space that could not have come through sight alone. Once lured, sight becomes important and works with the continued sonic cues to build up a greater sensitivity to the site. One could imagine this same set of effects brought into being in more ordinary ways. Everything from loudspeakers to traffic to the hushed conversations of visitors is part of a memorial's soundscape, or more broadly speaking, part of the entire sensorial relationship we have with the material world.

Such analysis would come to understand the particular qualities of the different senses, as well as how they act together, picking up on the others' deficits. For instance, unlike the visual, our ears cannot blink: we cannot

[28] Susan J. Smith, 'Performing the (Sound)world', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18 (2000), 615–37 (at 615).

[29] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford, 2005).

[30] Smith, 'Performing the (Sound)world', 629.

refuse sound. To turn away merely alters its path to the ears. As Smith observes, there is 'something in music that always seems beyond listeners' control, and this element of compulsion is one of the things that makes music so powerful.'[31] What are the consequences of this loss of control? Do the senses make way for one another through the sensual vicissitudes of any given space? Does visual occlusion invite a different, expanded role for sound, or the other senses, much as blind people speak of the sharpening of their hearing?

Many recent scholars have challenged the primacy of the visual in knowing the world. As early as 2000 Daniel Z. Sui wrote about geography's 'disenchantment with *visually* evocative metaphors', and painstakingly demonstrated a nascent move to replace them with aural metaphors.[32] Sui notes some of the important distinctions between sight and sound. While sight aims, sound is multi-directional and without a fixed centre. It has no back: 'Sound also tends to entail a fluid event-world in time, which exists only to go out of existence' while 'sight entails a fixed-object world.'[33] The ramifications for how we experience it extend to how we use it within the constant construction of the social. Sound 'tends to create an arena of mutual involvement instead of a division of experience.'[34] For Sui, this leads to a political reality: sound is pluralistic, indeterminate, dynamic, and subjective, and therefore 'counter-hegemonic'. Sight signifies the opposite, a position best embodied in academia's embrace of Foucault's work on the Panopticon.[35]

As non-representational theory recovers from its initial anti-visual bias, we might begin to question whether the corrective 'more-than-representational', as Lorimer awkwardly put it, is enough, or if we can return to more common terms like 'cultural landscape' and 'built environment', fortifying them with a fuller understanding of their sensual realities.[36] While space precludes a full defence of the visual, a more sympathetic view would not oppose sight to the qualities ascribed to sound. It would understand the visual as being part of the same perceptual equipment as hearing, and therefore, also potentially immersive, indeterminate, pluralistic, subjective, and, for what it is worth, capable of being enlisted in counter-hegemonic practices. This is especially important given the growing vogue in memorial design for including non-visual elements

[31] Ibid., 634.

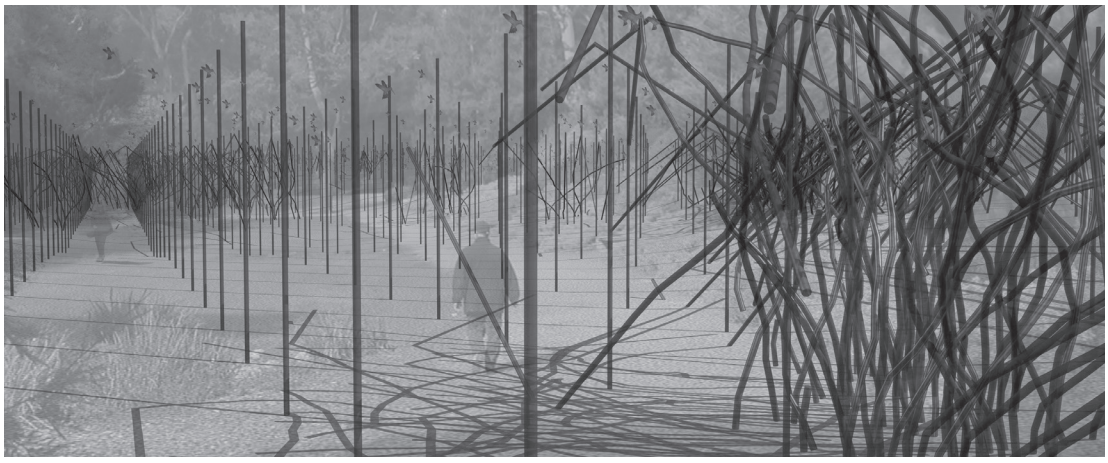
[32] See Daniel Z. Sui, 'Visuality, Aurality, and Shifting Metaphors of Geographical Thought in the Late Twentieth Century', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90:2 (June, 2000), 322–43.

[33] Ibid., 335.

[34] Ibid., 335.

[35] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995). For a recent corrective, see Carla Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States* (Minneapolis, 2007).

[36] Hayden Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography: the Busyness of Being "More-Than-Representational"', *Progress in Human Geography* 29:1 (2005), 83–94.



14 Raveevarn Choksombatchai, competition design for a National AIDS Memorial, 2005

that work seamlessly with the visual. In her prize-winning design for the National Aids Memorial Competition, Ravee Choksombatchai included a soundscape of voices randomly counting numbers in different languages amid a field of dense red strands that rise tendril-like from the ground (fig. 14). The tip of each is filled with sugar water, to attract a swarm of hummingbirds whose 'violently loud hum' would create a canopy of sound above the strands.[37] The memorial, designed for the AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, aimed for full immersion in a sensorial environment of feeding hummingbirds, a soundscape of their hums and numbers, a field of phosphorescent, red strands, and the cool fog trapped in the vale of the grove.

Conclusions

Scholars have looked past the everyday experience of the memorial, in part because they are not supposed to be mundane objects, but also because they are supposed to end up being much more than intended. Cities overtake their memorials. They are made auratic by profane acts, blurred or inverted by urban flows, embroiled in the episodic, and reassembled in ever-changing geographies. They offer a vivid test case for non-representational geography because they come laden with the invisible elements with which recent cultural geographers are enthralled. Memorials present an oxymoron, as well: they possess elements that defy formal analysis, but they remain inscrutable without it. A cultural geography of memorials thus asks if the traditional art-historical tool of formal analysis can be extended to a larger field of observation. That field is not just the physical fact of the city, but also the immaterial reality animated by use (or quieted by disuse). The monument, in other words, cannot act alone. It cannot shoo away the

[37] Neal J. Z. Schwartz (ed.), *Emergent Memory: The National AIDS Memorial Competition* (San Francisco, 2005).

ubiquitous bird on its head, banish the teenagers who deface it, or break up the traffic snarl that consumes it in honking, exhaust, and road rage. These interventions of nature and culture may not have been part of the intention, but they end up being central to the experience of memorials.

The approach demands a reorientation of expectations. Anticipating a barrage of bad memorials after the Second World War, Joseph Hudnut, most famous for bringing Walter Gropius to Harvard, wrote in 1945:

> The sculptors will fill our parks and squares with faithful presentments of our soldiers, explicit of helmet, bayonet, and button, and no homely circumstance slighted. They will try to bring the grim business to your doorstep in a democratic guise. They will not succeed. The war will hide its head behind the common man quite as easily as behind the trophies of conquerors. Do not ask the monument what is hidden. The monument does not remember.[38]

Hudnut was correct. Monuments and memorials do not remember the wars, heroes, and events that they are charged to recall. This responsibility falls to people who use memorials as part of their commemorative infrastructure. But memorials do remember a range of other, everyday behaviours. It is here we must look for the full meaning of memorials in society.

[38] Joseph Hudnut, 'The Monument Does Not Remember', *Atlantic Monthly* 176 (September 1945), 55–9 (at 57).