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Memorial landscapes: analytic questions and metaphors

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Abstract Over the past two decades, geographers have probed the intersection of collective memory and urban space. Their sustained interest in the subject reflects an understanding of the social condition of commemoration and the important role that space plays in the process and politics of collective memory. Along with other critical social scientists, geographers envision these public symbols as part of larger cultural landscapes that reflect and legitimate the normative social order. A review of the extant literature indicates that geographers scrutinize memorial landscapes through three conceptual lenses that may be understood via the metaphors of 'text,' 'arena,' and 'performance.' These metaphors are in turn mobilized through a series of analytic questions that serve to identify the interests served and denied by landscape 'texts,' the 'arenas' in which they are produced, and the ways in which they are enacted via 'performance.' This article's synopsis of the subfield's predominant metaphors and its attendant questions contributes to the ongoing cultural geographic project of articulating and implementing methods for interpreting landscapes as open-ended symbolic systems.

Keywords Collective memory · Commemoration · Landscape · Memorial · Space

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Intersections

That landscape and memory are mutually constitutive of one another is a fact well-established by several decades of careful research and original scholarship into the politics of collective memory and urban space (Foote 2003; Hayden 1997; Lowenthal 1975; Till 2005). Their pairing, however, has brought with it a vexing methodological challenge: if memory and landscape are socio-spatial *processes* to explore and chart—as opposed to *things* readily dissected and possessed—how are we to make sense of their potent yet ambiguous intermixture? The dilemma is nicely illustrated by Montgomery, Alabama's memorial scene. Among the city's network of intersecting streets lies the junction of Jefferson Davis and Rosa Parks Avenues; the former named after the lone president of the failed Confederate States of America and the latter commemorative of the woman whose polite refusal to relinquish her seat sparked the most famous campaign for racial equality in the United

States. Granted, the presence of a street dedicated to Jefferson Davis is not particularly surprising in a southern city. Between 1880 and 1920 Confederate partisans recast the South's memorial landscape in their image (Gulley 1993; Radford 1992; Winberry 1983). The statuary and plaques that dominate the nearby capitol's grounds attest to their industrious efforts to ensure white supremacy's past and future. That Rosa Parks—the very embodiment of African American transgression and resistance to such claims—should be commemorated as well is becoming less surprising as the Movement's legacy is increasingly enshrined in public space (Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

The intersection of Parks and Davis Avenues symbolizes the powerful convergence of collective memory and urban space that marks Montgomery as the birthplace of two intertwined American revolutions—the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, a mere city block from the capitol building where Jefferson Davis was sworn into office is the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where Martin Luther King, Jr. served as pastor and led the year-long boycott that successfully desegregated the city's buses in 1956. A decade later the victorious Voting Rights March paraded past the church on its way to the state capitol. Masses of tourists—prompted by local, state, and federal agencies devoted to economic development—will soon make the same journey along the heritage trail that marks the March's route from Selma to Montgomery. Nearby, Maya Lin's *Civil Rights Memorial* stands in quiet witness to lives taken in the struggle. Historic markers note that the street linking the capitol and King's former church played host to the city's slave market and the first public performance of 'Dixie.' Thirty minutes by car to the west are the rolling fields of Lowndes County in which activists from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organized the original Black Panther Party. Thirty minutes in the opposite direction are the manicured lawns and studious buildings that constitute Booker T. Washington's legacy at Tuskegee. The sheer density of sites related to the quest for and against citizenship in a diverse society makes Montgomery's memorial landscape a rich mosaic of complexly nested tiles. These sites are produced by, and are in turn productive of, partisan views of collective memory and urban space ostensibly related to the past but the results of which are directly implicated in the shaping of alternative futures. They are, in effect, materialized discourses emplaced in the landscape (Schein 1997).

The intersection of two streets with such symbolically heavy and diametrically opposed loads bespeaks the complex politics of collective memory associated with urban space. In the particular case of Montgomery, one icon fought to leave the United States while the other fought to be fully included in it. Now—as if such pairings were perfectly natural—they are enshrined in the city's collective memory as cross streets. Confronted with the memorial landscape's duplicitous condition of interpretation (Daniels 1989), its restless reworking by capitalized socio-spatial relations, and the circumstances of its more-than-representational affective order, how are students of collective memory and urban space to understand this scene—repeated in unceasing variety in myriad cities the world over? More to the point, how might they best problematize these sites, in effect prying them open and exposing the absences, inclusions, and marginalizations implicated in the role played by collective memory and urban space in the production of a normative social order?

One strategy in this task of denaturalization is to multiply the number of analytic moments that can be brought to bear on a memorial scene. Toward this end, we take stock in this article of the metaphors and questions that geographers have used to explore the socio-spatial relations that are co-constitutive with memorial landscapes. A review of the extant research shows that geographers analyze memorial landscapes through three conceptual lenses. The 'text' metaphor emphasizes a critical reading of the histories and ideologies given voice and silenced in the content and form of memorials as well as the dynamic nature of (re)inscribing memory into space. The 'arena' metaphor focuses on the capacity of memorials to serve as sites for social groups to actively debate the meaning of history and compete for control over the commemorative process as part of larger struggles over identity. The 'performance' metaphor recognizes the important role that bodily enactments, commemorative rituals, and cultural displays occupy in constituting and bringing meaning to memorials, suggesting that the body itself is a site of memory.

In this synoptic review, we encapsulate these three metaphoric perspectives on the memorial landscape.

To their description we add a sample of characteristic questions that may be deployed to mobilize each metaphor as an analytic frame.[1] A generation of geographers has labored to extend and deepen these metaphors, carefully interpreting landscapes in order to identify the interests served and denied by landscape *texts*, the *arenas* in which they are produced, and the ways in which they are enacted via *performance* (Cosgrove 1985; Duncan and Duncan 1988; Duncan 1990; Jackson 1994; Mitchell 2000; Natter and Jones 1997). The following discussion of the analytic metaphors and their attendant diagnostic questions reflect the manner in which cultural geographers study memorial landscapes as open-ended symbolic systems, paying close attention to the complex interactions among text, arena, and performance.

The socio-spatial condition of commemoration

Consideration of these questions and the metaphors that inspire them presupposes a theoretical understanding of collective memory as a socio-spatially mediated political process. The study of memorials is of increasing interest to geographers as well as scholars from a wide range of fields in the humanities and social sciences. Informing much of this interest is an understanding that memory and its manifestations cannot be fully explained in terms of cognitive psychology (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). While the cognitive mechanics of remembering and forgetting are a matter of brain chemistry, environmental conditions, and individual predilection, what comes to count as being worthy of commemoration is socially mediated (Schwartz 1991). Many of our recollections of the past are collective memories that are constructed and transmitted to us through a variety of cultural practices. What is commemorated is not synonymous with what has happened in the past. Rather, the commemorated past is socially defined as memorable and significant.

The social or collective interpretation of the past is constituted, in part, through the construction of material sites of memory, generally termed 'memorials.' The conventional distinction between monuments and memorials—the former supposedly characterized by triumph and the latter embodying loss—is somewhat unhelpful (Young 1993). Monuments are one kind of memorial text, taking their place alongside a wide range of media designed to facilitate remembering and forgetting of the past. Typically situated in public space, memorials include a host of material culture elements associated with collective memory, e.g., street signs, historical markers, landmarks, statuary, preserved sites, and parks. Together, they constitute what may be termed the memorial or heritage landscape.

Memorials are important symbolic conduits not only for expressing a version of history but casting legitimacy upon it as well. They give the past a tangibility and familiarity—making the history they commemorate appear to be part of the natural and taken for granted order of things (Azaryahu 1996; Foote 2003). Memorials wield further social influence by serving as tourist destinations, civic gathering places, and settings for everyday activity. The power of commemorative place naming, for example, comes from the manner in which history is inscribed into our daily vocabulary, both verbal and visual. Appearing on road signs, addresses, advertising billboards, and maps, the past is constantly made part of one's spatial and historical frame of reference, contributing to the creation of a larger "city text" (Azaryahu 1996). Like all cultural landscapes, memorials have a normative power, at once reflecting and reproducing social ideas about the past, and thereby shaping the future (Harvey 1979; Schein 2003).

Memorials influence how people remember and interpret the past, in part, because of the common impression that they are impartial recorders of history. Their location in public space, their weighty presence, and the enormous amounts of financial and political capital such installations require imbue them

[1] The inspiration for this synoptic treatment of the memorial landscape via its metaphors and attendant questions lies with three sources: first, the seminal volume, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (Meinig 1979), and in particular Peirce F. Lewis's essay "Axioms for Reading the Landscape;" second, Stephen Daniels and the late Denis Cosgrove's chapter, "Spectacle and Text: Landscape Metaphors in Cultural Geography" published in the collection *Place/Culture/Representation* (Duncan and Ley 1993); and third, the provocative questions that Denis Wood and his colleagues' put to a series of maps in their booklet *Seeing Through Maps* (Wood et al. 2006). Further encouragement came in the form of the collection of essays dedicated to Yi-Fu Tuan and edited by Adams et al. (2001).

with an air of authority and permanence. Naively understood, they appear to be above political bias and worthy of admiration, a lasting and official witness of the past. Further, their apparent permanence suggests the possibility of anchoring a fleeting moment in time to an immovable place. Composed of seemingly elemental substances—water, stone, and metal—memorials cultivate the appearance that the true past is and will remain within reach.

The subtle power of memorials is that they often communicate seemingly authentic and unproblematic representations of history. In reality, authenticity is not an inherent quality or condition but a notion open to social control, negotiation and contestation (DeLyser 1999). Memorials narrate history in selective and controlled ways—hiding as much as they reveal. Consequently, the social process of remembering is accompanied, simultaneously, by a process of forgetting—an excluding of other historical narratives from public consideration and recognition (Chang and Huang 2005; Legg 2007). Because memorials typically reflect the values and worldviews of government leaders and members of the dominant class—who else has the social capital to install such costly tokens?—they tend to exclude the histories of minority and subaltern groups or appropriate these histories for elite purposes (Monk 1992; Peet 1996). Although not readily apparent on their surface, memorials bear traces of deeper stories about how they were created, by whom, and for what ideological purpose. The analytic questions and metaphors highlighted in this article are a method for interrogating these hidden, obscured traces.

Memorials obviously represent history, but it is wrong to see them as completely couched in the past. They are also mirrors of more contemporary events, issues, and social tensions. Rather than having a fixed, static meaning, memorials are in a constant process of *becoming*, as present social needs and ideological interests change (Lowenthal 1975). They fall in and out of public favor as opinions about the past shift and with the rise and fall of political regimes, which often use public symbols to legitimate certain nationalistic interpretations of history. The rewriting of history is often carried out through a re-scripting of the identity and meaning of places of memory (Till 2003). While much of this rewriting is done by those in power, it is also undertaken by everyday people seeking to turn the memorial landscape into a site for struggle and resistance, particularly in a post-colonial context (Whelan 2002). Consequently, some geographers suggest that studies of public memory should move beyond the dichotomy of 'elite' and 'popular' politics to consider the multiple agendas, conflicts, and negotiations that characterize the process of remembering the past (Forest et al. 2004). A city's memorial landscape represents "more than the impress of state power or elite ideologies," but embodies "many interwoven layers of power and overlaps with issues of race, gender, class and local identity politics" (Whelan 2005, p. 70). Indeed, there is increasing evidence of traditionally marginalized groups building counter monuments that challenge the dominant historical narratives that frequently exclude them. Despite the impression that memorial landscapes are somehow frozen in time, they are perhaps better seen as open-ended, conditionally malleable symbolic systems, ones that are fashioned here-and-now in order to influence a near-at-hand tomorrow.

Geographers have made significant contributions to the study of memorials by recognizing how collective memory is shaped by the politically contestable nature of place. Where the past is remembered is not incidental but actively shapes the process of commemoration (Benton 2006; Dwyer 2002; Johnson 1995). Every memorial's placement and relative location may confirm, erode, contradict, or render mute the intended meanings of the memorial's producers. A memorial's placement refers to the specific condition of its site, e.g., its visibility, accessibility, symbolic elements, and its adjacency to other parts of the landscape. In contrast, a memorial's relative location or situation is typically examined more broadly in relation to the rest of the city or countryside. Relevant issues here include its location vis-à-vis the area's mosaic of class and identity based antagonisms; its proximity to power-filled sites such as the central business district or other memorials; the flow pattern of those who visit—and just as importantly, those who do not.

Further, public commemoration is not simply about determining the appropriateness of remembering the past in a certain way; it also involves social negotiation and struggle over *where* best to emplace that memory within the broader cultural landscape. Sometimes memorials become embroiled in controversy when antagonistic memories are perceived as

infringing upon one another's symbolic space (Leib 2002). The importance of location in shaping the meaning and politics of commemoration is well illustrated in the context of ongoing efforts to celebrate the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Because of white opposition, African Americans have struggled and often been unsuccessful in commemorating the Movement within the traditional core of urban memorial space. For the most part, Main Street, the county courthouse, and city hall remain devoted to remembering white-dominated historical narratives. Many of America's roadways named for Martin Luther King, Jr., are side streets or portions of roads located within poor, black areas of cities, although this marginality is not seen across the board in every city (Alderman 2006; Mitchelson et al. 2007). The placement of these memorials reinforces the importance of traditional racial boundaries and has, in some instances, changed a street's symbolic meaning from a point of African American pride to yet another reminder of continued inequality and injustice (Alderman 2000).

Approaches to studying memorial landscapes

Memorial landscape as text

Geographic interest in memorials has grown out of a specific concern for how the past is framed and constituted as well as a more general concern with methods for interpreting cultural landscapes. In particular, there is a well-established tradition in the field of analyzing the landscape as a symbolic system that is written and rewritten, read and erased by 'authors' and 'readers' within their own specific socio-spatial contexts (Barnes and Duncan 1992; Duncan 1990; Duncan and Duncan 1988; Duncan and Ley 1993; Meinig 1979). Importantly, the text metaphor allows for the recognition that landscapes, while initially authored, are in turn reproduced by the myriad social actors who subsequently interpret these sites. In this view, a landscape is not imbued with meaning once and for all; rather, meaning is produced intertextually and recursively in and through a discursive social order (Daniels 1989). Given the allusions to literacy and comprehension shared among conventional notions of commemoration and reading, the text metaphor has become a dominant model for interpreting memorial landscapes.

In a manner analogous to inscribing words on a page, the textual approach to studying memorials understands commemoration as the process of manifesting stories on and through the landscape. In the case of Australia and the United States, for example, memorials have traditionally been built or 'written' in ways that ignore or misrepresent the history of indigenous peoples. In these narratives, white explorers and colonizers are cast as civilized heroes while natives are depicted as primitive and inferior, if they are shown to exist at all. The monuments found in Adelaide's Prince Henry Gardens—one of South Australia's most important symbolic sites—show clear evidence of this type of symbolic marginalization (Hay et al. 2004). All of the statues, busts, and memorials that geographers have examined honor people of European, immigrant origin. Commemorative texts can also take on other societal antagonisms. For instance, only a few of the monuments located at Prince Henry Gardens commemorate women. In addition to being historically incomplete, these exclusions assist in reproducing the social and cultural order, contributing to the further subordination and invisibility of subaltern groups. How history is written and made socially important through the landscape is not simply a matter of semantics but vital to achieving fairness and preventing the "symbolic annihilation" of marginalized social groups and their historical identities (Eichstedt and Small 2002).

When interpreting memorials as texts it is important to note the dynamic, hermeneutic condition of the 'writing' process. As was the case when paper was scarce and commonly reused time after time, memorial landscapes can take on the appearance of a palimpsest in which elements of past and present writing can be seen. This susceptibility to over-writing, embellishment, and erasure can also be thought of in terms of what has been called symbolic accretion (Dwyer 2004; Foote 2003). In a manner analogous to the geologic processes of sedimentation, uplift, and erosion, memorials undergo symbolic accretion over time as different historical meanings are layered onto them, thus challenging the notion that these symbols have a final, established meaning. Symbolic accretion often involves grafting a memorial with commemorative themes that ally with or confirm its original meaning. Yet, accretion can also be used to append alternative,

potentially antagonistic narratives to memorials in ways that disrupt or contradict dominant interpretations of the past. Symbolic accretion is not only a way of analyzing the stratigraphy of ideologies conveyed on and through memorial landscapes. It also represents a political strategy used by groups to raise the visibility of their commemorative vision via an established memorial presence.

The once-celebrated Liberty Monument in New Orleans, Louisiana, offers a case in point (Dwyer 2004). Erected in 1891 to commemorate the White League, a paramilitary organization that spearheaded the drive to disenfranchise African Americans in Reconstruction-era Louisiana, the Liberty Monument was removed from the city's main thoroughfare in 1989 under the pretense of street repairs. Civil rights activists had long argued that the monument celebrated an illegal action and was an offense to the city's black majority. Following the protests of an odd coalition of white supremacists and historic preservationists, the monument was re-erected but this time at a new, less prominent location. Importantly, the re-placed monument included a new plaque, one that called into question the memorial's original inscription by praising those who died fighting the White League.

The White League presumably did not envision that its monument would one day become a rallying point for civil rights activists, an anti-monument to white supremacy. Yet such a turnabout is not uncommon inasmuch as a memorial's articulation of the past is in part a function of its audience. Similar to the interpretation of a book, 'readers' of monuments will react differently to what is ostensibly the same story. The fracas over the Liberty Monument demonstrated that insofar as a memorial claims to present *the* authoritative version of history, it furnishes different audiences with the raw material for a new round of criticism regarding what is 'true' or 'real' concerning the past. Beneath the appearance of historical consensus and stability, memorials—and by implication the meaning and significance of the events they represent—are the product of and conduit for ongoing debate.

This textual approach to memorial landscapes mobilizes a series of characteristic questions that seek to understand what historical discourses are represented and given authority via the landscape. These questions include:

1. Where is the memorial's 'plot'? Having located the main theme, who or what do you find there? What is relegated to the margins? Who is cast in the memorial's leading role? Are women included among any of them? Who is pictured as leading? Who follows? Who is pictured sitting? Who exists as an individual? Who is lumped together in a mass? Who is missing or invisible?
2. Can a relationship be inferred between the memorial's message(s) and the institutions promoting it? How is this site publicized: through word-of-mouth or via mass media? Who promotes this site: the news media? The local chamber of commerce? With regard to way finding, is the route to the site marked in an official manner or must visitors know what to look for? Is the site part of the city's established tourism circuit?
3. Regarding the memorial's spatial context, in what kind of neighborhood is the memorial placed? What surrounds the memorial: Interstates and warehouses? Abandoned apartment blocks? A bustling business district? Gentrified lofts and condos? Do people comfortably walk the area or is the streetscape hardened and defensive?
4. To what extent, if any, is this memorial connected to its environs? Is there any advertising for other historical sites in the area? Are there bicycle trails and walking paths? Does the landscape invite visitors to explore the immediate surroundings? Or, is it walled off from its neighbors?
5. How prominent are commercial activities on and near the site? How does the presence of vendors and shops affect the experience? Likewise, who benefits from this memorial? Do local restaurants and shops appear to prosper? Who bears the inevitable costs of increased traffic, noise, and litter?
6. Analogous to the differences between prose and poetry, how is the memorial's space organized? For instance, how does the site's layout influence the direction and pace of a visitor's experience? Is it subdivided into different kinds of thematic spaces (e.g., contemplative, conversational, commercial)? Or, is it more free-form and less

programmed? Does it engage senses beyond the visual? Does it *require* close scrutiny or *invite* it?

7. Metaphorically, how does a particular memorial mark time and space? For instance, does it parse time into centuries or seasons? While centuries march into the future like an ascending arrow, seasons cycle through alternating periods of death and rebirth.
8. Consider the memorial's spatio-temporal scope. Does it recall a local, particular event? Or, does it claim to be timeless and universal? How does it connect, if at all, to related struggles elsewhere and at other times? If it was a map, how much 'territory' would it cover and what connections would it make? What connections are obscured? In what way does the memorial and its location within the larger urban mosaic of symbols reaffirm or challenge traditional territorial and identity boundaries? In what way does the memorial rewrite place identity?
9. How does this site of collective memory compare to other memorial texts? Memories are embedded in a host of media, e.g., cemeteries, attics, jewel boxes, scrapbooks, dances, music. What kind of repository does this memorial most closely resemble? In what way, if any, does it differ from them?

In line with these text-inspired questions, a memorial landscape can be examined as if it was an odd sort of book in which each page reflects the handiwork of many authors. Like words inscribed on a page, different stories are made manifest in the landscape. Varying in their particulars but united by common themes of valor, loss, and fidelity, memorials are intended to be 'read,' to convey a story into the future. Of course, not all texts are equally endowed: some enjoy extensive promotion while others languish for want of attention. Making sense out of the interplay of authorial intention and audience reception begins with careful observation of the artifact itself. The questions listed above seek to clarify the relationship among parts and whole, text and context that condition memorial landscapes.

Memorial landscape as arena

Recognition of the multiple ways in which memorials can be authored, read, and acted upon leads to an examination of the politicized nature of collective memory. This approach utilizes the metaphor of 'arena' to direct attention to the political struggles and debates that frequently revolve around the representation of the past through the landscape (Alderman 2002a, b; Burk 2006a; more generally, see Daniels and Cosgrove 1993). While collective memories are subject to constant reconstruction and reinterpretation, the process is not without constraints. The ability to commemorate the past is limited by competition and conflict among parties of social actors wishing to narrate the past differently. The contest over whose conception of the past will predominate lies at the core of the politics of memory. In this respect, memorials are places for social actors and groups to debate and negotiate the right to decide what is commemorated and what version of the past will be made visible to the public.

In emphasizing how memorials act as arenas for the politics of collective memory, it is important to recognize that historical representation is not only a product of social power but also a tool or resource for achieving it. The transmission of a commonly accepted conception of history is vital to establishing a political order. By the same token, challenging the dominance of existing ideologies or ways of seeing the world requires the creation and diffusion of alternative interpretations of the past. It is little wonder, then, that wholesale changes in the memorial landscape often accompany major shifts in political ideology and power within countries (Johnson 1995). The memorials of an earlier regime are replaced by commemorative icons that mythologize a new set of heroes, military campaigns, and ideological causes (Light 2004). Accompanying these changes are decisions about what to do with now de-legitimized memorials: should they be destroyed, stored out of sight, or relocated to places that encourage public contemplation rather than emulation? Nowhere has this process been made more apparent than in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism (Foote et al. 2000). While these commemorative alterations are often represented in the media as dramatic and victorious in tone, the image belies the political struggles inherent in reinventing national history and tradition. In post-Soviet Russia, political elites competed among themselves and the larger public over the control and transformation of memorials from the previous communist era. These places

of memory served as arenas for state leaders vying for greater prestige and influence in the new political order (Forest and Johnson 2002).

Commemoration is especially controversial and open to debate when it involves remembering trauma, atrocity, and violence (Dann and Seaton 2001; Ashworth and Hartmann 2005). While some places of tragedy are obliterated, others go through a process of sanctification in which people make them into sacred sites, not in a strict religious sense but in terms of creating an emotionally charged memorial (Foote 2003). Public remembrance of atrocity is necessary as a tool for facilitating social compensation to victimized groups, moral reflection among the larger society, and public education. Memorials related to the Holocaust are instructive here, particularly in light of the competing historical meanings and interpretations that have been projected onto them (Charlesworth 1994; Young 1993). Despite Auschwitz's significance to Jews, Catholics in Poland have waged a controversial appropriation of the camp's symbolic space since the 1970s. The martyrdom of Polish Catholics displaced representations of Jewish victimization. Atrocity is a difficult commemorative topic because it requires identifying victims, perpetrators, and heroes. While these roles would appear to be clearly set, they can be defined in quite fluid and sometimes opposing ways. Buchenwald became the site of such debates following revelations that the former Nazi concentration camp had also been used as a Soviet detention camp for Germans after World War II and that Nazi perpetrators were among the victims of the Soviet camp (Azaryahu 2003). As evident when examining Berlin's memorial landscapes: "The legacies of National Socialism in contemporary Germany continue to be negotiated through parliamentary debate, media representations, public art competitions, tourism, and popular protest actions" (Till 2005, p. 17). The political challenges of remembering atrocity and trauma are increasingly felt in the American South. Accompanying efforts to commemorate the Civil Rights Movement are campaigns, many led by African Americans, for the region to curtail its long tradition of whitewashing the history of slavery and to symbolically excavate the struggles and contributions of the enslaved (Alderman and Campbell 2008).

As such, representations of collective memory become contentious because of the close connections between memory and identity (Anderson 1987; Daniels 1993; Johnson 1995; Lowenthal and Prince 1965). How we imagine ourselves in the present is intimately linked to how we remember and represent ourselves in the past, providing justification for why we should be recognized and respected publicly. Heritage is inherently dissonant or open to discord or disagreement. Expressing one's heritage invariably means that another, different identification with the past is disinherited, excluded, or degraded (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996).

Memorials play an important role in constructing a 'sense of belonging' to a national heritage, although these commemorations can be a site of tension between nationalism and other competing lines of identity (Fenster 2004). The memorial landscape can also express notions of regional identity, thus providing an avenue for debate and reinterpretation. Recent public controversy in the southeastern United States over the public display and meaning of the Confederate battle flag provides an example. The Confederate flag, which was used by slave-holding southern states during the U.S. Civil War, has become a lighting rod for competing interpretations about the symbol's meaning and, ultimately, the historical reasons for why the South seceded from the Union (Leib et al. 2000). For their part, many white southerners see the flag as a symbol of their ancestors' heroic fight for independence from an intrusive federal government, hence suggesting that slavery was not the 'real' reason for the Civil War. On the other hand, many African Americans view the flag as a symbol of racism and a commemoration of past efforts to preserve slavery and white supremacy. They argue that the presence of these Confederate memorials not only marginalizes blacks from any meaningful discussion of the South's history but also contradicts ongoing efforts to construct a more empowering image of southern history built upon civil rights and social justice. In this respect, the Confederate flag functions as an arena for struggles over racial identity as black and white southerners compete to decide whose interpretation of the past will prevail.

The arena metaphor, with its emphasis on contest and spectacle, prompts us to consider more closely how people present or display their connections with the past to the larger public. Among the questions that disclose these processes and relationships are:

1. Whose experiences does this memorial reflect? Conversely, what aspects does it ignore or deny? What is said and not said about the past? Whose histories and identities are remembered or forgotten through the spatial inscription of memory?
2. To what extent does a memorial silence certain accounts of the past while giving voice to others? What does the differential treatment of histories indicate about power relations and patterns of inequality within society? In what manner do commemorative silences perpetuate these unequal power relations into the future?
3. Who claims responsibility for this memorial? Were they the winners or losers of the conflict in question? Was it designed to commemorate loss or achievement? In light of the memorial's core themes, what did they want their audience to remember? Is there anything they apparently wish to forget?
4. Was this memorial the outcome of local initiative? How much political and economic capital did its producers wield? To what extent, if any, did they draw on national or international support?
5. From what source(s) does this memorial's authority issue? How did its authors seek to persuade the audience that their account of the past remains credible? Is the site hallowed by dint of sacrifice? Grand size and sweeping layout? Folk authenticity? Has it been endorsed by celebrities and dignitaries? Inescapably, even the plainest descriptions—'such-and-such happened here on this date'—embody a rhetorical appeal, e.g., the disinterested reporter. What about this site is designed to persuade?
6. To whom did the memorial's designers direct their message? Does the memorial's orientation relative to the city provide any clues? Does the memorial issue a summons to the city's power brokers, or does it celebrate their efforts? Does it offer inspiration to the poor and downtrodden, or ignore them? Does it look beyond the city altogether, perhaps toward the country or humanity as a whole? Does it claim international importance? Or, is the memorial's reputation wholly local?
7. Is the tone of this memorial official or vernacular? Does it assume the demeanor of a disinterested reporter or triumphal partisan? In light of its tone, can the background of the site's producers be surmised? Whose 'voice' predominates? How might a [blank] have done things differently? What difference would it make?
8. Similarly, was this memorial designed to issue definitive answers or raise questions? Is this memorial the beginning or end of a struggle? What kind of 'ending' have the designers given this memorial? What, if anything, is left unfinished?

As these questions seek to make clear, memorial landscapes are typically produced by multiple parties. Often it is the case that these parties agree on little more than it being advantageous to erect a memorial. The memorial's location, form, and content, however, remain matters of great debate. The pragmatic union of local businesses and civil rights activists enjoined across the American South to commemorate the Civil Rights Movement offers a case in point. Whatever their motives, the authors have an abiding stake in the place. For some this stake may be economic: Alabama Power and Light is bound to its present locale. As a result it has a ready rationale to improve "*Bomb*ingham's" tarnished image. For others, the memorial impulse reflects a desire to intervene in the politics of the place, to recall what has happened, and, above all, to create a future legacy. That said, and as the questions above aim to disclose, not all parties enjoy equal access to the memorial arena inasmuch as some stories are muted and suppressed while others appear front-and-center.

Memorial landscape as performance

While geographers have most often focused on the textual and contested nature of memorials, some have emphasized the importance of 'performance' to collective memory and urban space (Burk 2006b; Hoelscher 1998, 2003; more generally see Daniels and Cosgrove 1993). The metaphor of 'performance' directs attention to the ways in which memorial landscapes serve as a stage, literally and figuratively, for a wide range of performances such as public dramas, rituals, historical re-enactments, marches and protests, pageants, civic ceremonies, and festivals. It is not just that these performances happen in or at places of memory. Rather, the memorial landscape is constituted, shaped, and made important through the

bodily performance and display of collective memories. For instance, since the late 1970s, the activist organization Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of the Plaza) has carried out collective rituals such as occupying and marching in city plazas (Bosco 2004). They do this in the memory of children abducted and killed by the formerly oppressive Argentine government, forcing the country to come to terms with its troubled past. Through the bodily performances of the Mothers, such as wearing white scarves in remembrance of the diapers of their lost children, ordinary plazas are converted into emotionally and politically charged memorials. The body itself can be viewed as a place for commemoration as well as political expression (Nash 1996; Price 2000).

Performance is particularly important within the heritage tourism industry (Graham et al. 2000). As DeLyser (2005) has shown, host communities are often concerned with projecting a positive image to tourists, one that actively displays a distinctive and engaging local history. In many cases, existing memorials become stages for historical tours and re-enactments that carry out this commodification or selling of the past. The packaging of the memorial landscape through performance is not confined to the drama created by actors and historical guides but includes the everyday, seemingly mundane practices of tourism workers as they simply talk about the past with visitors or physically maintain and service a place of memory (Hanna et al. 2004). With this emphasis on performance comes recognition of the often under-analyzed memorial practices and performances of tourists and their agency in shaping landscapes and the meanings attached to them. Analyzing these performances requires paying attention to small things such as people's photographs, postcards, and stories in addition to more visible commemorative manifestations (DeLyser 2005). Of course, tourist practices can sometimes conflict with the memories and wishes of local inhabitants. For instance, while Western tourists visit Bucharest to gaze upon and consume "communist heritage" tourism, Romanians are reluctant to interpret their harsh history of totalitarianism for foreigners in guided tours and museum exhibits. In this respect, the lack of performance speaks volumes about attempts to erase an "unwanted past" from the memorial landscape (Light 2000).

Festivals and pageants are community performances increasingly used to highlight the historical identity of places. These landscape spectacles appear to be innocent if not often overly commercialized representations of the past. Yet, they—like any memorial—highlight selective visions of the past. In 1996, Bristol, England hosted the International Festival of the Sea in an attempt to market its maritime heritage. Festival organizers excluded certain histories from promotional performances, namely the port city's role in slavery and imperialism (Atkinson and Laurier 1998). Even more striking was the city's forced removal of traveler populations—itinerant groups who roam the countryside—from the festival site for fear of offending tourists. In this case, Bristol's festival organizers presented a 'sanitized' image of the city, prompting us to consider how commemoration involves not only a selective performance of certain historical narratives (over others) but also decisions about who should (or should not) be part of these performances.

By reflecting *and* refracting cultural norms, memorials contribute to continuity *and* change in society. The notion of people acting out the expectations of a place—and thereby confirming or challenging accepted versions of what is socially right and proper—is heightened in places of collective memory. While memorials reflect the interests of their designers, they are rendered silent in the absence of an audience's performance of memory (Cresswell 1996). No memorial speaks for itself; each one is dependent upon its audience to voice—or betray—its vision of the past into the future. Some of the questions that help get at this politics of performing memory include:

1. How are visitors supposed to behave at this place? What kinds of behavioral cues are embedded in the landscape? Do benches and water suggest quiet contemplation? Do stairs and alter-like risers lend a sense of anticipation? Does anything hint at the possibility of noisy expression or a communal experience?
2. Who visits this memorial? In what ways is the audience mixed in terms of age, race, class, and gender? Are different audiences interacting with the site and one another in different ways? Are children welcome? Is it handicap accessible? Multilingual?

3. Is there any evidence that locals frequent this place? Are there any photocopied handbills, meeting rooms for gatherings, picnic benches, bus stops, skateboarding, graffiti? Are there panhandlers? Counter protestors? What sort of alternative uses might this memorial support?
4. How do people treat this site? Has it been trashed with litter or seemingly untouched and sterile? Who carries out the work of cleaning and maintaining this place? Are they visible or hidden? If the site is not kept up, what does this suggest about the present condition of its message?
5. What can be inferred from the posture and disposition of the site's visitors? How are they performing this place? Does their behavior suggest the presence of something sacred? A carefree holiday? Boredom? Inspiration? Is anyone outraged or offended by this memorial? If not, is it so bland as to be meaningless?
6. As a public space, how does this memorial compare to other sites? How different is it, say, from a Disneyland-like theme park? A stadium? A church?
7. What sort of commemorative rituals or historical reenactments take place around the memorial? In what ways do these bodily demonstrations support or subvert established social and historical narratives found on the memorial landscape?
8. Is this a site of ongoing activism? Are there signs that some people are trying to align their cause with this site? Have other parties attached their symbols onto this site? Or is it largely ignored as a target for symbolic accretion?
9. Is there any evidence that people visit this site repeatedly? Does this memorial have an implicit 'expiration date' after which it will no longer be relevant? Under what conditions might it become obsolete? Will anyone visit in a generation? How might their experience differ from one today?

These questions point toward a reality in which, just as with a text, visitors will (re)act differently to what is ostensibly the same story. As a result, a memorial landscape's intended message may slip, take-on unforeseen nuances, or even be contradicted outright. No memorial landscape can be considered complete in any final sense; each is susceptible to ongoing interpretation. As such, memorials are places at which cultural norms are reinforced or challenged, reproduced or altered via audience (re)actions. These reactions come in many forms, ranging from the ways visitors behave on site to the stories they recount in the wake of their visit.

Conclusion

Returning to Montgomery, these metaphors and questions lead to several possible interpretations of the scene at Park and Davis Avenues. Approached as a text, might the intersection allude to a willingness on the part of city residents to recognize the complexity of the past? Rather than trying to ignore or sanitize portions deemed offensive, Montgomery is seemingly embracing multiple elements of its collective memory. To do so would certainly give substance to Faulkner's quip that the past is not dead, it's not even past. It would also be refreshingly candid. In the United States' winner-take-all political culture, the abiding juxtaposition of opposing viewpoints might suggest a measure of understanding and respect sorely lacking in other facets of public life. Alabama's ongoing efforts to remake the capitol grounds to acknowledge the enduring presence of African Americans suggests this willingness.

Interpreted as an arena, perhaps it is also accurate that the situation represents an armed truce in which ideological foes have squared-off, bent—literally at right angles—on having their way. Unable to dominate the (re)presentation of history—and unwilling to appreciate the messy, rich diversity of collective memory—the opposing parties have settled into an uncomfortable segregation of the past into black and white histories. Likewise, the presence of the twinned streets speaks to the dawning recognition among the region's tourism industry that there is money to be made via a market segmentation strategy that promotes historical sites that mimic, rather than cross, racial lines (Dwyer 2002).

Finally, conceived of as a performance, how do passersby react to the scene? Interviews and surveys would presumably indicate feelings of pride. It might also be the case that some respondents express apathy

and mourn what they feel is a 'Lost Cause.' Others might find one or both streets offensive. All of these reactions presuppose a degree of historical consciousness but what happens in its absence? Typically, memorial landscapes are meant to broadcast an unequivocal lesson to all who behold them.[2] They are produced to shape the future by literally—if futilely—placing collective memory beyond time's savaging effect. All of these plans are undone if a memorial means nothing to a passing viewer. Might it be the case that the intersection's historical significance is lost on most passersby, their appetite for history dulled by a youthful diet of disconnected historical dates and a parade of (in)famous characters? Those bold enough to propose a memorial must confront the inevitable: once in place, memorials can be ignored.

Of course, this brief deployment of metaphors and questions is only a beginning. Nor are its contents mutually exclusive: one interpretation of a landscape does not preclude the possibility of another. The sum of these different framing metaphors and analytic questions is a shared stance toward collective memory and urban space, one in which they are conceived as doing more than simply reflecting ideas about the past and securing them to the ground. Memorial landscapes extend these ideas into the world and actively participate in how people write, read, debate, and perform collective memory. As such, memorial landscapes are inherently political. They can be manipulated by those social groups in control while also providing a place for resistance and struggle. The 'past' is a potentially contested terrain and where memorials are located—relative to a sense of time and place—plays a critical role in shaping what (and who) is ultimately remembered and forgotten.

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[2] Compare and contrast this traditional orientation of memorials toward the figural and concrete with recent explorations of ambiguity and complexity in the context of Holocaust memorials, several of which radically de-center the locus of collective memory from designer to viewer. For examples, see Till (2005) and Young (2002).

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