Memory, History, and Colonialism

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Memory, History, and Colonialism
*Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial
and Postcolonial Contexts*

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FOREWORD BY

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GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This is the first volume in a new series of supplements to the *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*. Unlike the *Bulletin* itself, which contains articles and book reviews mainly on topics of German history, the new supplement series will present the proceedings of conferences representing some of the Institute's work on British and comparative European or colonial history. However, the series is also open to smaller monographs on these topics and to other forms of house publication. The supplements will appear at irregular intervals.

I am very pleased to be able to open this new series within the family of GHIL publications with the proceedings of a conference which was held in summer 2006 as an academic farewell to my predecessor as director of the German Historical Institute London, Professor Hagen Schulze. Hagen Schulze has worked extensively on Pierre Nora's concept of sites of memory in the context of German history. This conference took the topic out of its well-established European framework and tested it in a wider colonial and postcolonial setting. I am grateful to Hagen Schulze and Indra Sengupta for editing a selection of papers given at this conference to produce this volume.

I hope that readers of the *GHIL Bulletin* will find this supplement series a welcome addition. Supplements will not be distributed as widely as the *Bulletin* itself. However, they can be ordered from the Institute free of charge. As with the *Bulletin* there will also be an internet version available on our website <http://www.ghil.ac.uk/publications.html>.

Andreas Gestrich

London, March 2009

FOREWORD

Historical research on cultures of national remembrance has boomed over recent years, stimulated among other things by Pierre Nora's monumental, seven-volume work, *Les lieux de mémoire*. This branch of historical research is based on a hypothesis put forward by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who , as is well known, suggested that historical interpretations and patterns of perception arise out of the interplay between personal memory and common, 'collective' memory. The huge significance of such collectively shared memories for the construction of the nation should not, however, be seen as peculiar to the 'nations' which European history has produced since the Middle Ages. Rather, they simply represent one specific form of 'cultural memory' (Jan Assmann) which makes an essential contribution to group cohesion by allowing personal memory to be emotionally linked with the supra-individual memory of the community. In the course of history, national communities have drawn upon commemorative ceremonies and monuments, myths and rituals, and outstanding individuals, objects, and events in their own history to produce a wide network of material and spiritual *lieux de mémoire* in which the common, shared memories of the nation manifest themselves.

Nora's ambitious attempt to create a 'French history of the second degree' by means of the contributions to his edited volumes has evoked a broad international response. It has also stimulated similar undertakings in the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy, and elsewhere. This is in line with Nora's suggestion that such undertakings should be used to establish the 'typical style of relating to the past in each country'. Thus the *lieux de mémoire* projects that have been published so far have one thing in common: they concentrate on collective *national* memories, with the exception of a few — so far incomplete — attempts to take the whole of Europe into account. This is no surprise since Nora's guideline was quite clear: in his view there is no collective memory that goes beyond national boundaries.

Thus the *lieux de mémoire* project in Europe is part and parcel of the European narrative of nation and the *lieux* serve to reinforce national identity. In the case of entities such as empires, the question

of a common national identity of this sort, based on 'shared' *lieux de mémoire*, obviously does not arise. However, the experience of empire (ranging from empire-building to anti-colonial struggles and decolonization) has found expression in a number of *lieux de mémoire* that capture the complexity of public memory and the ambivalence of collective identity in the imperial–colonial context. The aim of this first *Supplement* of the German Historical Institute London *Bulletin,* which includes some of the papers presented at a conference entitled 'Revisiting Sites of Memory: New Perspectives on the British Empire' and held at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, in June–July 2006 as well as a number of additional ones, is to engage with the theoretical premise of Nora's thesis and examine this complexity. Thus we hope to open up what has been a methodological debate among historians in Europe to regions beyond.

Hagen Schulze

Berlin, 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction
Locating *lieux de mémoire:* A (Post)colonial Perspective

INDRA SENGUPTA

This collection of essays addresses some of the major concerns of the use of memory as an analytical tool in historical research by engaging with Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire*.[1] Based on studies of colonialism and postcolonialism, the articles take issue with two claims to exclusivity that Nora made for the approach: its applicability to the nation-state and national identity on the one hand, and its suitability for the French national context alone on the other. While the latter has already been addressed by a number of nation-centred *lieux de mémoire* projects,[2] the former has rarely been called into question. However, arguing for an extended use of the concept does not simply mean uncritically applying it to other contexts, political or otherwise. It implies an intensive engagement with the very categories on which the concept itself rests. The aim of this collection is not encyclopaedic; it is not to identify and document *lieux de mémoire* in colonial and postcolonial contexts, which in any case would be an extremely difficult task. Rather, it is to use the specific parameters of these contexts to enter into a methodological dialogue with the *lieux de mémoire* approach to the writing of history.

In historical scholarship memory as an analytical tool has mostly been used for the purpose of understanding the formation of group identity centred on a common experience or a common notion of the past. As Monica Juneja mentions in her article in this collection, it has

[1] Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1984–92), first English trans. published as *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York, 1996–8).

[2] See e.g. Emil Brix (ed.), *Memoria Austriae*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 2004–5) for Austria; Mario Isnenghi (ed.), *I luoghi della memoria*, 3 vols. (Rome, 1996–7) for Italy; and Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (eds.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, 3 vols. (Munich, 2001–2) for Germany.

been used in the sense of communicative memory to analyse the agency of groups who have shared a common experience of an event (usually a traumatic one, such as the Holocaust). Then there is the older conceptualization of 'collective memory', a term that was coined by Maurice Halbwachs and later further developed by Jan Assmann, who also referred to this as 'cultural memory'.[3] Collective memory is meant to denote the collectively constructed and shared signification of the past; it includes the collective knowledge circulating in a culture, is represented by shared symbols, and is passed on by successive generations. This obviously relates to the broad field of commemoration or the culture of remembrance within a group or a nation and includes 'a range of places, media and practices: museums; intellectual production; emblems; heritage sites; commemorative festivals; and individuals, real and mythical' (Juneja). Again, Harald Welzer, for example, has conceived the term 'social memory' to capture a set of unconscious everyday practices that are shared and passed on by a group, and which, according to Welzer, are to be found in (social) interaction, in texts, images, and spaces.[4] These approaches to conceptualizing memory in historical research are not, of course, mutually exclusive. Jay Winter, for example, in his studies on recollection of the First World War has shown how the various concepts of memory often overlap by analysing the communicative memory of the war generation, the everyday social practice of remembering, and the broader collective and public remembrance of the war within the same conceptual framework.[5]

It was the notion of collective memory on which Pierre Nora substantially based his monumental project on French nationhood and national identity, *Les lieux de mémoire*.[6] The project, published between 1984 and 1992, coincided with the 'commemorative moment' of the bicentenary of the French Revolution and the public celebrations surrounding it. But it was also steeped in what Lawrence D. Kritzman

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[3] Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich, 1992).

[4] Harald Welzer, 'Das soziale Gedächtnis', in id. (ed.), *Das soziale Gedächtnis: Geschichte, Erinnerung, Tradierung* (Hamburg, 2001), 9–21, at 16.

[5] Jay M. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2006).

[6] Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*.

has described as 'a certain French fin de siècle melancholia'.⁷ Real and genuine memory has been lost in modern times, Nora reflected, as history has taken over memory; it is the rupture between the lost world of memory and lived experience on the one hand, and a history-driven modernity on the other that, according to Nora, explains the intense craving for memory and commemoration. '*Lieux de mémoire* exist because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience', laments Nora.⁸ In other words, Nora's concerns are rooted in the present; more specifically, France's present.

Drawing on Halbwachs's theory of collective memory as social frames or *cadres sociaux*, the aim of the *lieux de mémoire* project was to put together a history of France without reference to the conventional tools of the historian, such as the archive, but by drawing on the collective memory of the past, as encapsulated in signs or symbolic sites (hence, *lieux*) which were believed to hold instant signification for the nation. These *lieux de mémoire* were, as Nora's project envisaged them, clear, specific, and fixed. At moments of rupture between the present and the past, it is these 'sites' of memory that, according to Nora, represent a 'residual sense of continuity',⁹ and a critical engagement with them can enable us to understand not only this continuity but also the changes that memory culture has undergone in recent times. Thus it is that, according to Nora, *lieux de mémoire* can serve as an effective analytical tool to understand a nation's—in this case, the French nation's—past.

Nora's understanding of the *lieux de mémoire* approach to grasping a culture's past was, as he repeatedly insisted, that this was a specifically French approach and could only be applied to the French national culture. In his Preface to the first English-language translation of his *magnum opus*, Nora refers to the 'profound connotations—historical, intellectual, emotional, and largely unconscious' that the words *lieu* and *mémoire* had in French, connotations which were related to what Nora describes as 'the specific role that memory played in the construction of the French idea of the nation' as well as to 'the recent changes in the attitude of the French toward their national

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⁷ Lawrence D. Kritzman, Foreword, ibid. i. p. xii.
⁸ Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History', ibid. i. 1.
⁹ Ibid.

past'.[10] This insistence on the 'Frenchness' of the *lieux de mémoire* project did not stop the approach being eagerly adopted and modified by historians of other European national cultures.[11] The question that the papers in this volume raise is whether this approach can be used fruitfully to understand the complexity of the past, the conflicting nature of collective memory, and the problematic questions of collective identity that are characteristic of colonial and postcolonial contexts. Increasingly since the mid-1990s, memory has been used as an analytical tool in colonial/postcolonial historiography. It has been used to understand events, often associated with violence, which marked the colonial experience or the birth-pangs and even subsequent history of postcolonial nation-states.[12] At the same time, the *lieux de mémoire* approach has become the subject of considerable theoretical debate on the relationship between history, especially academic history, the nation-state, and the various social groups which, according to many historians, continue to inhabit the space that Nora has described as lost and forgotten, that is, the space of memory. For many postcolonial historians, the clear distinction that Nora makes between memory (which is lost, a thing of the past) and history (living, and dominating the present) seems to be intensely problematic. They have drawn attention to popular history outside the academy,

[10] Id., 'From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Realms of Memory*', Preface to the English-language edition, ibid. i. p. xv.

[11] Brix (ed.), *Memoria Austriae;* Isnenghi (ed.), *I luoghi della memoria*; François and Schulze (eds.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. Historians of Britain have resisted the temptation to engage in a project of such encyclopaedic scope, but the debate on Englishness and national identity since the late 1980s has resulted in an engagement with the notion of collective memory of the nation(s). One very good example is the unfinished multi-volume work by Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 2 vols. (London, 1994, 1998).

[12] In the case of South Asian historiography the Partition of India and Pakistan, and the violent birth of the two nations from the erstwhile British colony of India, have engendered much engagement with reconstructing the experience of the event by means of memory, akin to James Young's work on the Holocaust. See e.g. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi, 1998); and Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, 2001). An earlier example is Shahid Amin's work on the violent end of the Gandhian non-violent movement of the early 1920s. See Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922–1992* (Berkeley, 1995).

its vibrancy and ability to shape events. It is precisely the elements of modernity such as the nation-state and the mass media, some argue, that have enabled this kind of 'hybrid "memory-history" ' to flourish. As Gyanendra Pandey observes, 'the world today is populated not only by the "historical memory" of various groups, dependent upon museums, flags and publicly funded celebrations. It is also flooded with the mythical histories of nations and states, histories that are themselves an institutional "site of memory", locked in a circular, and somewhat parasitical, relationship with other, more obvious *lieux de mémoire.*'[13] Astrid Erll's article in this collection carefully pares down the way(s) in which medial representations of an event such as the Mutiny/Revolt of 1857 in colonial India have 'pre'- and 're'-mediated the event to show how 'memory-history' is created, nurtured, and acquires tremendous influence and power in modern cultures.

The implicit stability of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* that rests on a clear separation of history and memory is called into question by a number of articles in this supplement. One major critique of the approach that they make is its lack of sensitivity to social agency as well as to the process by which sites of memory are made and change in meaning. Following from Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan's argument of the inherently fluid character of collective remembrance which is the product of interwoven individual memories,[14] both Brigitte Reinwald and Monica Juneja engage with the question of social agency in the making of commemoration and public sites of memory. In her article on the Tirailleurs Sénégalais Brigitte Reinwald, for example, conceptualizes collective remembrance as a 'socially conveyed process', in which the actors (in this case, the West African soldiers in the French army) are what she describes as 'small-scale agents'. By engaging with their memory-narratives and pitting these against the national commemorative frame of reference (war remembrance), Reinwald restores to less-known individuals and the

[13] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 9. See also Partha Chatterjee, 'Introduction: History and the Present', in id. and Anjan Ghosh (eds.), *History and the Present* (Delhi, 2002), 12–19.

[14] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in eid. (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), 6–39, at 25–7. See also Jay Winter, 'Introduction: War, Memory, Remembrance', in id., *Remembering War*, 1–13.

myriad social groups that constitute a nation the agency of inscribing this culture with their own 'competing or dissident' personal or group memories. Monica Juneja examines the social, ritual, and modern academic (art-historical) practices of engaging with built structures (such as the Mehrauli mosque at the Qutb in Delhi), and the multiplicity and conflicting nature of readings of such a site that serve to blur the distinction that Nora makes between *lieux* and *mileux de mémoire*, between history and memory. By studying the interaction between built structures and the heterogeneous social memory of the various groups engaged in their use over a long period, Juneja shows how diverse and fluid *lieux de mémoire* in fact are. This is a point that Stephen Heathorn's article on the construction and subsequent loss of meaning of an imperial site of memory in Kanpur addresses as well. Heathorn analyses the diverse forms of engagement of the various groups that were involved in both the making of the site of memory as well as its dismantling in independent India and sets these 'group memories' against the backdrop of an imperial commemorative discourse.

It is precisely by destabilizing, as it were, the concept of *lieux de mémoire,* by critically deconstructing it and opening it up to a more nuanced understanding than the consensus-building and nation-oriented approach that the Nora project has adopted, that its possibilities as an analytical tool for colonial and postcolonial contexts can be realized. Equally, it is precisely the kind of chequered, ambivalent, and conflict-ridden contexts of colonialism and its aftermath that provide an ideal testing ground for *lieux de mémoire* as an analytical tool for understanding the complexity of social experience and collective remembering. In his study of Holocaust memorials in Germany, the USA, and Israel, James E. Young has shown the multiple, 'textured', and ever-evolving character of public remembrance of an event in various national cultures and in the course of time/generations.[15] Such an approach obviously lends itself to imaginative use in colonial and postcolonial studies. In the concluding article in this collection Jay Winter stresses the need to emphasize the hybrid character of *lieux de mémoire* in order to grasp the complexity of colonial/ postcolonial sites of memory, which he in turn conceptualizes as

[15] See e.g. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, 1993).

palimpsests, replete with layers of memory and meaning, while still retaining traces of their earlier form.

There is one more way in which colonial and postcolonial contexts lend themselves to an engagement with *lieux de mémoire*. Central to the concept of *lieux de mémoire* is the notion of its location, that is, its inherent spatiality. As Aleida Assmann shows in her article, history 'takes place'; so, too, does memory: by pitting what she describes as *lieux de souvenir* (individual memory) against *lieux de mémoire* (collective remembrance), Assmann uses examples from literary works to show how central place is to the way in which individuals remember and groups commemorate.

In the history of colonialism, and long before the spatial turn in historical scholarship,[16] space and place have traditionally been of central importance. Not only was colonialism itself about a kind of geo-politics that rested on the conquest and settlement of distant lands; its historiography, too, reflected a certain preoccupation with spatiality, with location and distance. In studies of the British Empire, for example, the conceptual framework of a metropolitan core and a colonial periphery was long dominant.[17] The work of Edward Said gave particular resonance to a spatial conception of colonialism, as he wrote about an 'imaginative geography' that was imbricated with structures of power and hegemony in western (imperial) representations of the Orient.[18] Newer approaches to imperial-colonial history, which seek to break down the barrier between the mutually exclusive strands of metropolitan history and colonial studies (that is, the anthropologically dominated area studies) that characterized the discipline until the 1980s, emphasize the entangled nature of the history of metropole and colony and conceptualize the British Empire as a

[16] The spatial turn in the social sciences and cultural studies since the late 1980s hardly requires introduction here. In historical scholarship it made its presence felt somewhat later; a groundbreaking study on the subject was the work of Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich, 2003). See also Riccardo Bavaj, 'Was bringt der "spatial turn" der Regionalgeschichte? Ein Beitrag zur Methodendiskussion', *Westfälische Forschungen*, 56 (2006), 457–84.

[17] See Alan Lester's summary of this tradition of the historiography of the British Empire, 'Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire', *History Compass*, 4/1 (2006), 124–41 at 124–5.

[18] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1995), 49–73.

network of spatial relationships.[19] From this notion of interconnect-edness within the Empire, historical geographers such as David Lambert and Alan Lester have developed the notion of 'place' in the British Empire as nodal points through which networks ran, inter-sected, and connected.[20] Following from Doreen Massey's conceptu-alization of place as open-ended, as a point of fluctuation and move-ment,[21] Alan Lester writes of places as 'not so much bounded entities, but rather specific juxtapositions of multiple trajectories' and of colo-nial and metropolitan places as 'specific meeting points of such tra-jectories, a coming together of them in specific ways at a specific time'.[22]

Such a notion of place in imperial-colonial history lends itself well to a clearer understanding of the conceptual usefulness of the sites of memory approach in colonial and postcolonial contexts. *Lieux de mémoire* in these contexts can only be multilayered, conflicted, and ever-changing, as they represent the points of convergence of the ambivalent trajectories of colonial relationships. The task of the his-torian is to ask in what precise ways they do so.

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[19] See e.g. Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Cambridge, 2002). For a discussion on the 'network-ed' conception of Empire, see David Lambert and Alan Lester, 'Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects', in eid. (eds.), *Colonial Lives across the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2006), 1–16.

[20] Ibid. 13–15.

[21] See Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles, 2005), 107.

[22] Lester, 'Imperial Circuits', 135.

PART I

Pierre Nora and (Post)colonialism

2

Architectural Memory between Representation and Practice: Rethinking Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire*

Monica Juneja

Having witnessed the inflationary use of the terms 'memory' and 'collective memory' in a proliferation of writings across disciplines during recent years, many of us may share a growing discomfort about the lack of agreement over what these terms stand for. It might be useful, therefore, to begin by identifying two important senses in which the notion of memory has been fruitfully used in historical writing to signify the ways in which people recompose the past through remembrance. Memory, or the act of remembering, has been drawn upon, first, to analyse the agency of those people reconstructing a past they have actually experienced and survived, a past often centred on traumatic events such as the two world wars, the Holocaust, or the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Prolific German-language research on the subject has rendered this sense of the concept as *kommunikatives Gedächtnis*.[1] This is distinct from another level of signification where memory, or the process of memorializing, denotes the ways in which successive generations of people are held to share common representations—*kollektives/kulturelles Gedächtnis*— of the past that have been canonized by a range of places, media, and practices: museums; intellectual production; emblems; heritage sites; commemorative festivals; and individuals, real and mythical. The list of these is endless, as the essays contained in the seven volumes of

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[1] Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich, 1999), 15–48; Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich, 1999), 408–13. Two studies of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent that have deployed the term in this sense are Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi, 1998); and Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, 2001).

Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire,* published in French between 1984 and 1992, amply illustrate.

Nation, Memory, History: Les lieux de mémoire

A collaborative project of encyclopaedic scope, *Les lieux de mémoire* was published in three parts—*La République, La Nation*, and *Les France*—which add up to seven volumes.[2] Framing this enterprise characterized by enormous diversity of content and authorship are the sections written by Nora himself: the Introduction to the series;[3] the transitional passages which connect the different volumes; and the final epilogue.[4] Although this effort cannot be said to impart to the collection an ideological uniformity, it does furnish the project with a general thesis that postulates the nation as a fixed canon, a focal point of agreement, and an important emotional anchor for the French people through history. Nora's aim, expressed in his introductory essay, was to write a history of France through the medium of its memories. His point of departure is the present, marked by a *fin de siècle* mood, which causes him to observe that the discursive pervasiveness of memory in the culture of contemporary France is a symptom of its rapid disappearance as a component of everyday life and experience. 'We speak so much of memory because there is so lit-

[2] Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, i. *La République;* ii. *La Nation* (in 3 vols.); iii *Les France* (in 3 vols.) (Paris, 1984–92). The first English trans. of this collection selected 46 of the original 132 articles, and was published by Columbia University Press in 3 vols. as *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past,* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, i. *Conflicts and Divisions*; ii. *Traditions*; iii. *Symbols* (New York, 1996–8). Further articles are now available in English in an edition published by Chicago University Press as *Rethinking France: Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. David P. Jordan, trans. Mary Seidman Trouille, i. *The State*; ii. *Space* (Chicago, 2001–6).
[3] Pierre Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire: La problématique des lieux', in id. (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, i. pp. xvii–xlii. An English trans. by Marc Roudebush appeared as 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989), Special Issue of *Memory and Counter-Memory*, ed. Natalie Z. Davis and Randolph Starn, 7–24.
[4] 'L'ère de la commémoration', in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire,* iii. 3. 977–1,012.

tle left of it.'[5] This striking and frequently cited statement in Nora's introduction underpins the distinction he makes between societies he labels 'modern', which insist on preserving memory through external signs, and those of the pre-modern world, where memory inhabited the daily universe of the people, mediated as it was through customs, rituals, traditions, and a host of social practices on the one hand, and through 'space, gesture, image and object' on the other.[6] History becomes necessary, Nora avers, when people no longer live in memory but become conscious of the 'pastness of the past' and draw upon written documents to recall it. Modernity needed to create archives, museums, memorials, and anniversaries because 'spontaneous collective memory' has ceased to function.[7] Or, as Nora puts it, *lieux de mémoire* come into being when *milieux de mémoire* disappear.[8]

Indeed, the famous phrase *les lieux de mémoire* entered the French language through Nora's opus. Regarded for a long time as untranslatable, it has now been rendered in English as 'sites of memory', or in German research as *Erinnerungsorte*. A *lieu de mémoire,* according to Nora, is 'any significant entity, be it material or non-material in nature, which human will or the work of time has rendered into a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community'.[9] A *lieu* is thus a vestige, an outer shell from which living tradition has departed, an externalized location of what was once an internalized, social, collective memory.[10] The essays in the collection, authored by a galaxy of prominent French historians, fan out in many directions to present a range of *lieux* that make up the bedrock of a communi-

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[5] 'On ne parle tant de mémoire que parce qu'il n'y en a plus', ibid. p. xvii. All trans. from the French, unless otherwise specified, are mine.

[6] 'l'espace, le geste, l'image et l'objet', ibid. p. xix.

[7] Ibid. p. xxiv.

[8] Ibid. p. xvii.

[9] 'tout unité significative, d'ordre matériel ou idéel, dont la volonté des hommes ou le travail du temps a fait un élément symbolique du patrimoine mémorial d'une quelconque communauté', Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, iii. 1. 20. This definition has also found a place in *Le Grand Robert*, see Nora, 'L'ère', ibid. iii. 3. 1,004.

[10] In the Introduction to the series dating from 1984 Nora compared such vestiges to 'shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded' ('ces coquilles sur le rivage quand se retire la mer de la mémoire vivante'), Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire', p. xxiv.

ty's symbolic repertoire: symbols and monuments; institutions and concepts; heritage and historiography; honorific dates; books; localities; landscapes; and religious minorities. Across this enormous material and ideational diversity, most of the contributors to these volumes set out to identify in the sites they study a common memorializing function, which serves to establish them as locations where contrasting interests and positions find a common ground. Nora and the bulk of the authors who contribute to the seven volumes seem to imply that culture has the power to bring together private and collective, republican and monarchical conceptions of the past and present, an assumption which leads them to idealize these sites as possessing the ability to give cohesion to the project of the nation. While *polyphonie* and *polysemie* are key terms that recur in Nora's framing texts, a *lieu de mémoire* in the vast majority of the case studies of this collection has the potential harmoniously to combine multiple voices with a sense of solidarity. Conflict, when it makes its appearance in the work, is about ways of identifying with the nation rather than about the nation per se. While two sites representing 'counter-memory'—the Vendée, a region associated with the counter-revolution, and the Mur des Fédérés, where defenders of the Paris Commune were massacred—have been examined, the binary thus created ends up reconstituting a quasi-consensual canon premised on a symbiosis of nation and community.[11]

Nora's magisterial project has often been situated within the stream of an *histoire des mentalités*, espoused by historians of the *Annales* tradition, many eminent practitioners of which have contributed to this collection. A quick look at the subjects that make up the contents of these volumes does indeed suggest an affinity with the concerns of the *histoire des mentalités*—rituals, symbols, festivals, songs, flags, geography, landscapes, and public monuments—and yet what distinguishes the *lieux de mémoires* project is that the vast majority of its essays focus on what could loosely be termed institutions of the state, which Nora calls 'laboratories' in which memory is and was created. Indeed, an underlying assumption common to most

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[11] Jean-Clément Martin, 'La Vendée, région-mémoire' and Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Le mur des Fédérés', both under the rubric *Contre-Mémoire*, in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, i. 595–617 and 619–49.

is the indissociability of the state and the nation.[12] The teleological drift that marks a number of contributions has given rise to some of the most articulate critiques of this project. Several of its studies take for granted the existence of a fully formed French nation and 'national consciousness' dating as far back as the Middle Ages, a *mémoire* draped in monarchical robes and enacted through timeless rituals.[13]

There have been other grounds for criticism. Not only is the concept of the French nation as a powerful emotional anchor and unifying force assumed to be eternal and given but, more seriously, the agency of France's long colonial history—the territories and populations of its vast overseas empire—in shaping collective memories and constituting national identity has been elided.[14] For example, part of the celebratory project of the nation is the homage paid to war heroes, which merely draws attention to the amnesia that marks the treatment of colonial armies.[15] Postcolonial immigration—a follow-up of the colonial past—has meant a more diverse and contentious population inhabiting the Hexagon, and the ensuing backlash of the right-wing Front National has served only to bring these fault-lines to centre stage. The decline of French national sovereignty in the wake of advancing European integration, and the economic and cultural workings of globalization are all factors which in Nora's eyes make up the 'crisis' of the present and cast their shadow over this enterprise. It is no surprise, then, that Nora takes as his starting point the historical eclipse of France as a *nation-mémoire* ('memory nation'),

[12] A few important exceptions which offer a more differentiated view are Maurice Agulhon, 'Paris: La traversée d'est en ouest', ibid. iii. 3. 868–909; Mona Ozouf, 'Le Panthéon', ibid. i. 139–66; Jacques Revel, 'La cour', ibid. iii. 2. 128–93; Philippe Joutard, 'Le musée du Désert', ibid. iii. 1. 531–59.

[13] See Steven Englund, 'The Ghost of Nation Past', *Journal of Modern History,* 64/2 (1992), 299–320, esp. 312–14 for trenchant critiques of the articles, all dealing with the Middle Ages, by Bernard Guenée, Colette Beaune, and Jacques Le Goff.

[14] For an engagement with Nora's *oeuvre* from the perspective of a postcolonial subject, see Hue-Tam Ho Tai, 'Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory', *American Historical Review*, 106/3 (2001), 906–22. Nora's project excludes a discussion not only of the role of French imperial possessions, but also of issues of gender and what the author of this review terms 'internal colonization'.

[15] Discussed by Brigitte Reinwald in this volume.

for he establishes a direct relationship between the proliferation of 'patrimonial' sites of memory and a multiplication of conflictual social identities. Yet the enterprise hinges on a paradox. On the one hand, the fragmentation of the present, dealt with in the third book *Les France* (here the plural qualifying definite article has been intentionally used to convey internal heterogeneity) infuses the entire *oeuvre* with an implicit sense of pessimism in the face of a world slipping away, giving it its elegiac tone. At the same time Nora maintains that despite its dwindling force, in an age when society rather than the nation-state has become the lynchpin of social organization, the memory of the nation continues to play a cohering role in the larger polity. Identifying these socially and culturally binding mechanisms of national memories is the central task taken on by the mammoth enterprise.

Monuments and Memory

There is much in Nora's collection to interest the historian of architecture, and it is on this dimension that my article will focus more closely. Material vestiges of the past in the form of monumental architecture were perceived by Nora as visible anchors for memory owing above all to the symbolic meaning that reposes in them. This understanding crystallized as the project advanced: in his epilogue to *Les France*, published in 1992, Nora insists that the heuristic value of the notion of a *lieu* lay in viewing it as 'a symbolic instrument rather than a physical site'.[16] While the wide-ranging themes encompassed in the collection include the study of sites whose concrete physicality cannot be overlooked, the relationship between architecture and memory that comes to dominate the work in its totality is that of

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[16] In the introductory essay 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire' of 1984 Nora identifies the constituent elements of a *lieu* as the material, symbolic, and functional, and goes on to insist that an object, a place, or an institution 'n'est lieu de mémoire que si l'imagination l'investait d'un aura symbolique', ibid. pp. xxxiv–xxxv. While a number of studies in the collection interweave the three aspects mentioned by Nora in their study of a given site, Nora's own position over the years works towards sharpening the distinction between the physical and symbolic dimensions of a *lieu* and to declare the latter criterion as exclusive of the others, Nora, 'L'ère', ibid. iii. 3. 1,006.

monumental architecture as a vestige, a form from which everyday experience has been evacuated. This is expressed in the distinction Nora makes between *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire*, to which I will return in the course of this article, and which comes to be memorialized as a component of national patrimony in the project he directed. The French word *patrimoine* does, indeed, carry a powerful charge: Nora ascribes to a *mémoire patrimoine* the important function of infusing in French public life a 'renewed sensibility of national singularity'.[17] The article by André Chastel dedicated to the notion of patrimony mirrors this reverential view, blandly equating the idea of heritage with the elites of a nation who embody enlightened, secular, good taste.[18] All in all, the state plays a key role in fixing sites as heritage, beginning with the institutions created for this purpose by the First Republic during the revolutionary years, when the educated elites tried to protect important ecclesiastical and aristocratic sites, which they judged to be of artistic value, from the 'vandalism' fuelled by anti-clerical and anti-aristocratic sentiments.[19] Arguments such as these are pregnant with the weight of ideology, though the term is carefully avoided, tarnished as it is, in the eyes of most of the contributors to this project, by its overt Marxist hues.[20] In its place we

[17] Ibid.

[18] André Chastel, 'La notion de patrimoine', in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, ii. 2. 405–50. The author's judgmental tone which scorns the 'mediocrity' of the issues involved in the major debate on laicity in 1905, when Church and state came to be officially separated, comes as a jolt. Chastel dismisses the discussion as one that stemmed from popular ignorance and 'incapacity of the faithful' to conceive of the sanctuaries and wealth of the Church as national heritage (p. 433). Even more astonishing is the arrogant connection Chastel makes between the superiority of Western culture which qualifies as patrimony while the inferior 'apparatus of traditions and customs' of 'third-world nations' would not, in his eyes, sustain their representatives' claims to this hallowed label for their monuments! In his view the UNESCO initiative to identify world heritage sites has had the unfortunate effect of confusing the idea of a 'bien culturel' (cultural property) with the more elevated notion of a 'bien patrimonial' (heritage) (p. 445).

[19] Ibid. 411.

[20] One of the important *lieux de mémoire*, where the nation was perceived as being embedded in the institution of the early modern state, was the palace and garden complex at Versailles. The ostentatious architecture and ceremonial displays enacted in its spaces are read as overwhelmingly affirming its

encounter with repetitive frequency a nebulous *imaginaire*, more suited to transmitting the inclusive, harmonious, and consensual notion of patrimony that envelops the notion of heritage.

In our discussion of heritage, memory, and practices of memorializing, it is important to distinguish between different understandings of memory, especially in the way Nora conceptualizes the notion as opposed to its earlier semantic genealogy in the writings of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and the art historian Aby Warburg. In his introductory essay, 'Histoire et mémoire', Nora refers to Halbwachs's understanding of memory as 'the continuous, unmediated, and unconscious experience of the remembering subject' (whether an individual or a group),[21] and goes on to postulate that such a notion of memory no longer exists in France or any other modern society. What we refer to today as memory, he continues, is 'not really memory but already history'. In other words, memory is a discourse of the second degree, recreated through critical methods applied by professional historians, a 'memory transformed by history'.[22] What gets elided in this easy and slippery equation is the relationship between the different discursive levels, the inevitable processes of selection and negotiation involved while the historian effects the transition from one level to the other. Which memories of the 'remembering subject' do historians choose to fix and canonize as history when they delve into the past and create a discourse which, according to Nora, is meant to respond to the emotional needs of fellow citizens?[23] While Nora and the authors of this collection acknowledge, in differing degrees, the disputed, fragmented nature of memories, the history that has been written in this collaborative project overwhelmingly canonizes, with a handful of exceptions, just one kind of memory by fixing it into the frame of the national. The potentially conflictual 'needs of fellow citizens' that constitute national identity, the lack of focus on competing interests—between

unitary collective vocation. See Edouard Pommier, 'Versailles, l'image du souverain' and Hélène Himelfarb, 'Versailles, fonctions et légende', both in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, ii. 2. 193–234 and 235–92.

[21] Cited in Englund, 'The Ghost of Nation Past', 305.

[22] 'La mémoire saisie par l'histoire', Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire', p. xxvi.

[23] Ibid. pp. xxix–xxx.

the local and the national, between ethnic, religious, social, and a host of other factors (Halbwachs referred to these as 'social frames', *les cadres sociaux*, of memory), all of which have erupted in societies, often with particular virulence over issues of monumental and other kinds of heritage—are conspicuous by their absence in this grand design.

In addition to the processes involved in the construction of history/memory, the question of reception and proliferation of significations is equally important. Here the work of Warburg is useful in drawing our attention to the pitfalls of assuming that representations of memory-as-history can speak for themselves. Reacting to the belief in the autonomy of aesthetic values common to art history, Warburg underlined the importance of the social mediation of images, of connecting artistic representation with other component elements of the society in which it is produced and circulates—politics, custom, symbols, and social practice.[24] The focus on the modalities of transmission of representations that engendered a plurality of meanings was developed subsequently in the writings of Roger Chartier and Louis Marin: the analyses of the latter, in particular, perceptively drove a wedge between the persuasive power of ideologies and the possibilities of their refusal.[25] These insights are vital to the study of memory in general, which is far from a transparent and unified expression of the social and political values of a society. In the case of architectural memory they sensitize us to the plural and mobile qualities of such memories, as they repeatedly enter into fresh relationships with the users of built structures, creating a field where their meanings can interact, overlap, and clash.

One more insight that goes back to Halbwachs and which has in recent years stimulated fertile thinking among anthropologists of space and place is the suggestive reference to the mnemonic power

[24] Carlo Ginzburg, 'Kunst und soziales Gedächtnis: Die Warburg-Tradition', in id., *Spurensicherungen: Über verborgene Geschichte, Kunst und soziales Gedächtnis* (Munich, 1988), 149–233, at 156–7.

[25] Roger Chartier, *Au bord de la falaise: l'histoire entre certitudes et inquiétitude* (Paris, 1998); id. 'Pouvoirs et limites de la représentation: Sur l'oeuvre de Louis Marin', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* (Mar.–Apr. 1994), 407–18; Louis Marin, *De la représentation* (Paris, 1994). For a fuller discussion see Monica Juneja (ed.), *Architecture in Medieval India: Forms, Contexts, Histories* (New Delhi, 2001), 61–3.

of space. Halbwachs argued that individuals and groups employ spatial references to help them remember, and that by remembering, the group marks the space that it inhabits.[26] Space — and by extension place — thus become a component of the social framing that makes memory collective. Places are like a text which is comprehensible within a group, a text whose meaning is perhaps constantly reinterpreted and adjusted, but betrays little or no trace of this and therefore feels 'timeless' to its readers.[27] These dimensions are of vital relevance to the study of how architectural memory is constituted, transmitted, pluralized, and contested, and will be elaborated in the case study that follows.

Constituting Heritage: The Medieval Complex at Mehrauli

The subject of this study is an architectural complex in Mehrauli, on the southern fringes of the city of Delhi, dating to the end of the eleventh century, when it was constructed by the earliest Turkish Sultans of Delhi. In 1993 UNESCO declared the complex a world heritage site. During the twelfth century this cluster of buildings had formed the locus of a new political capital. It consisted of a Friday mosque — a place for community prayer but also a space for a number of other political and social transactions — a *madrasa*, the tombs of royalty and saints, and a 72.5-metre tall tapering minaret, the Qutb Minar, that imparted a special visibility and symbolic substance to the site (see Fig. 2.1). At one level this complex of structures could lend itself to the kind of scrutiny envisaged by Nora and others.[28] A modern-day tourist attraction, it acts as a reminder of the glorious past of a young nation that has managed to outlive and overcome the more recent memories of colonial subjection. A 'memorializing' of the remains of Mehrauli and other pre-colonial buildings, comparable in intent to the efforts of Viollet-le-duc to restore the patrimony of France in the nineteenth century, was carried out by colonial projects in early

[26] Maurice Halbwachs, 'La mémoire collective et l'espace', in id., *La mémoire collective* (2nd edn.; Paris, 1968) 130–67, at 133.

[27] Ibid. 138–40.

[28] e.g. André Fermigier, 'Mérimée et l'Inspection des monuments historiques', or Bruno Foucart, 'Viollet-le-Duc et la restauration', both in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, ii. 2. 593–611 and 612–49.
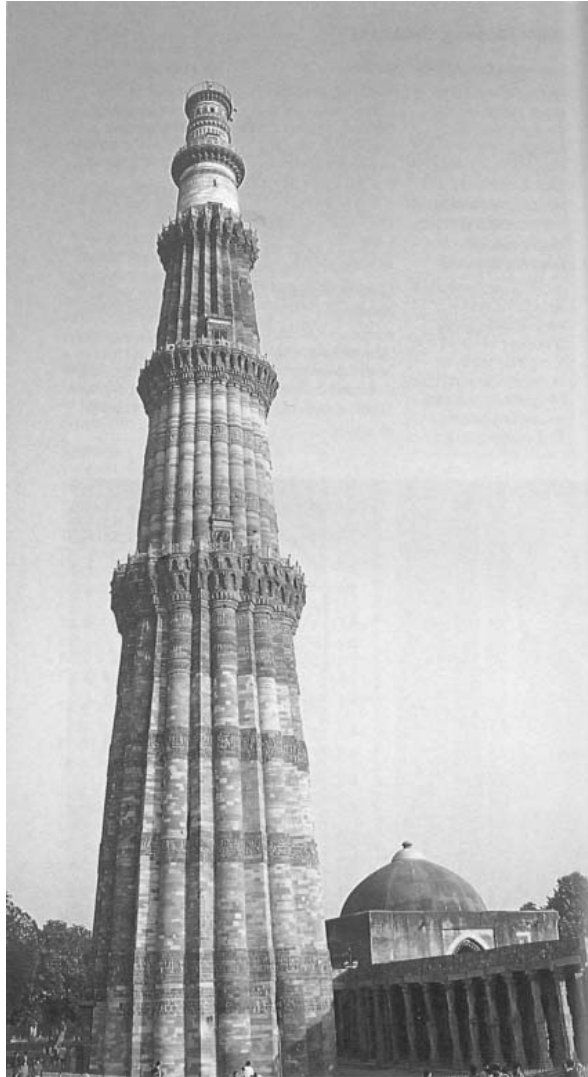
Figure 2.1. Qutb Minar and complex.

twentieth-century India. As in France, these projects and surveys were led by a new class of professionals comprising archaeologists, conservationists, and historians of architecture. However, writing the history of these projects to recover and conserve monumental heritage on the Indian subcontinent proves to be a more complex undertaking than the studies in Nora's collection suggest. For one, it is a history that spans both the colony and the metropole, and is therefore entangled with debates and publics common to both. Among the issues which impinge on this history are the content and formative processes of an emerging art history canon in Europe, discussions of race germane to the young discipline of anthropology that authorized European elites to classify the populations of the non-European world, and the compiling of universal histories and genealogies of world civilizations—all aspects I have researched and discussed in detail elsewhere.[29] The larger methodological questions involved in this study, however, do raise doubts about the explanatory value of a paradigm that seeks to investigate and elucidate cultural practice exclusively from within, ignoring the constitutive potential of entanglement.

At stake in all nineteenth- and twentieth-century projects to constitute 'heritage' was the task of creating a language of expertise, a professional authority that came to stand for modernity. On the Indian subcontinent these programmes of conservation and survey created a language and a field of scholarship in which monumental architecture was described and classified according to modern functional and stylistic typologies. Buildings were now singled out and the status of 'heritage' was conferred on them. They thus constituted a repository of a historical past that would otherwise be lost to a people 'without a sense of history'. Colonial texts reconfigured these sites as privileged structures which could transmit a historical memory: this memory could be read from the formalistic aspects of the buildings that flowed from the disciplinary canons of art history. Artistic components of monumental vestiges were described in terms of a mixture of what were labelled as 'Indo-Saracenic' and 'Hindu' styles of architecture. This mixture could then serve as an external expression and metonym for the history of the Indian subcontinent,

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[29] Juneja (ed.), *Architecture in Medieval India*, 7–35.

marked as it was held to be by invasions, subjugations, and what was termed a 'racial mix' of peoples and cultures.[30]

Another set of narratives, this time cast in a nationalist frame, took as their premise the colonial canonization of pre-colonial buildings as heritage, and proceeded to endow these with a similar memorializing value after they had purged them of the crassest forms of colonial stereotyping, such as expressions of racial or climatic determinism. Monumental architecture was now read as embodying the memory of the exemplary cultural and technological achievements of Indian civilization before it had been subjected to the humiliating experience of colonial rule. The search for memories became inextricably linked with securing the roots of an embryonic nation. Here, too, stylistic features of the buildings, described in terms such as a 'natural' or 'harmonious blending of Hindu and Muslim', came to function as a mimetic device to denote a pre-colonial Arcadia.[31]

The emergence of such 'professional' discourses was not, and can rarely be, a tension-free process, for it cannot unfold without engaging with a plethora of earlier significations and memories that sedimented from local quotidian use, custom, religious beliefs, and practices of communities whose access to these structures was not routed through the authority of modern discplines of archaeology, conservation, or art history. Yet one misses engagement with the processuality of canonization in the studies of similar subjects collected by Nora and his colleagues. What forms of hegemonization were involved as historical monuments in nineteenth-century France were made to embody a narrative of national unity and identity? How did such projects work to evacuate monuments of their specific local or regional, historical, or religious associations, of residual meanings that lay beyond the bounds of scientific language? What forms of contestation, assimilation, appropriation, destruction, or coexistence of older and newer histories and memories ensue? How are these constantly negotiated by the different actors involved in the process of casting a monument as patrimony?[32]

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] A fascinating study by Richard Wittman analyses an eighteenth-century French manuscript—an artefact that would meet Nora's criteria defining a *lieu de mémoire*—plotted by its author as a fictional dialogue about the cathe-

The insight that memories can constantly be reformulated and can also become a site of contestation and ideological battles should not come as a surprise to the historian. Overlaid with the forms of memorializing described above, in postcolonial India the Mehrauli buildings came to be cast as a site of more virulent memories. A Persian inscription on the entrance to the mosque records that it was constructed after 'destroying' a cluster of twenty-seven temples on the same site. The presence of richly sculpted blocks of stone that were re-used to construct the mosque's columns is cited as evidence that fanatical Muslim conquerors pillaged Hindu sacred sites.[33] The erection of the Mehrauli mosque is singled out to mark an originary moment for the ensuing centuries of conflict between communities that ended in the trauma of territorial partition. Indeed, this and other structures of its kind have been ascribed a key function in keeping alive the memory of the new nation's traumatic birth.[34] Such conflicts over signification arising out of a proliferation of readings, and born out of the existence of 'multi-temporal heterogeneities'[35] within a given historical moment makes Nora's sharp distinction between *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire*, between societies of the past and present questionable. Sites are both saturated with memory and work to proliferate memories, *lieux* and *milieux* coexist and are made to reinforce each other. Recollection is a construction of the present, sustained by a dialectic of remembering and obliterating from remembrance that harnesses the past to serve the present. In the specific instance of the Qutb mosque, the 'pastness of the past' is reinvented in order to keep

dral in Amiens. Wittman's reading of this rich source skilfully teases out the conflicting understandings, experiences, and responses emanating from different locations to trace the roots of some of the broader patterns followed by modern hegemonic discourses on monuments. See Richard Wittman, 'Local Memory and National Aesthetics: Jean Pagès's Early-Eighteenth-Century Description of the "Incomparable" Cathedral of Amiens', in Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (eds.), *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago, 2003), 259–79.

[33] Discussed in Juneja (ed.), *Architecture in Medieval India*, 75–7.

[34] Sunil Kumar, 'Qutb and Modern Memory', in Suvir Kaul (ed.), *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (New Delhi, 2001), 142.

[35] The term was coined by Nestor García Canclini, cited in Keith Moxey, 'Disciplines of the Visual: Art History, Visual Studies and Globalization', *Genre*, 36 (Fall/Winter, 2003), 443.

the past alive. History and memory are made to connect, to recycle each other, to produce and reproduce violent struggles.[36] The set of claims and counter-claims made around these monuments are all informed by the purpose of resurrecting memories that would cement a particular version of the past. Each one of these versions of memory — the colonial, nationalist, and postcolonial — strives for canonization as 'collective memory' without, however, finding a common basis. What Nora assumes to be a 'unified national consciousness' or a 'permanence of French identity' may simply be the ability of certain representations of the past to carve out a hegemonic position.

Up to this point, what I have described as processes of memorializing could be investigated and grasped within the frame set by Nora, even while questioning the overly harmonious blend of national identity and collective memory that his collection proffers. My article, however, argues for the need to go beyond identifying such national representations and the conflicts surrounding them, and to explore the plurality of memories that were produced in the interstices of social experience and the textures of everyday life within a society as they unfolded within the built environment. I am unhappy with the distinction Nora makes when he insists that the primary significance, or qualifying factor defining a *lieu*, is symbolic or commemorative rather than physical, spatial, or functional. The mnemonic power of space and place, so important to a historian of architecture, means that space, structure, iconic form, and function of buildings, all of which intersect in usage and social practice, become an important trigger for memory. Recent studies in sociology and anthropology have looked closely at the mutually constitutive relationship between space and the agency of those using it: space is sub-

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[36] In contemporary India the conflict over the 'desecration' and re-appropriation of sacred sites erupted over the issue of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya, destroyed in December 1992 by activists of the Hindu Right, who claim that the sixteenth-century mosque was built after tearing down a Hindu temple which stood on the site that was originally the birthplace of the god Rama. For an extensive discussion, Sarvepalli Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri-Masjid-Ramjanabhumi Issue* (New Delhi, 1990). Also Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Archaeology and the Monument: On Two Contentious Sites of Faith and History', in ead., *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi, 2004), 268–303.

ject to repeated construction through the agency of actors. Social exchanges, images, and the daily use of material settings and memories transform space and give it meaning.[37] To take a cue from Halbwachs, if individuals or groups resort to spatial or visual reference points to help them remember, then it is by remembering that individuals, coming together as a group in public spaces and buildings, bring to these spaces and places images, gestures, and actions that make up social experience. These then move beyond the domain of individual memory to become what Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan have in another context described as 'collective remembering'.[38]

From the perspectives outlined above I would like to explore the Mehrauli cluster of historical buildings belonging to Delhi's pre-colonial past as a space of social experience—not simply the heroic deeds of individuals, but the experience of groups and communities—in order to recover the memories that were created and transported through the lived relationships between buildings and their many users through different phases of history, and which did not always coincide with forms of 'commemoration' imposed from above. To undertake such an analysis means to address the problem of where to look for traces of evanescent memory, which are often not conserved in the archival records that form the basis of most historical writing. Archival research of this sort is, indeed, the scholarly scaffolding of most of the studies in the project led by Nora. What questions does one ask of architectural vestiges of the past? What are the dilemmas facing the historian seeking to transform these remains into 'evidence' for a history of multiple, at times overlapping and at times discordant, social memories? I shall here attempt to open up the functional, spatial, and symbolic language of the architecture I analyse in order to recover some of the ways in which memories—of conquest and consolidation, of the formation of communities, of the fixing and crossing of social boundaries—were transmitted through these buildings over centuries.

[37] Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main, 2001); Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture* (Oxford, 2003).
[38] Jay M. Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in eid. (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), on spatial memory 37–8.
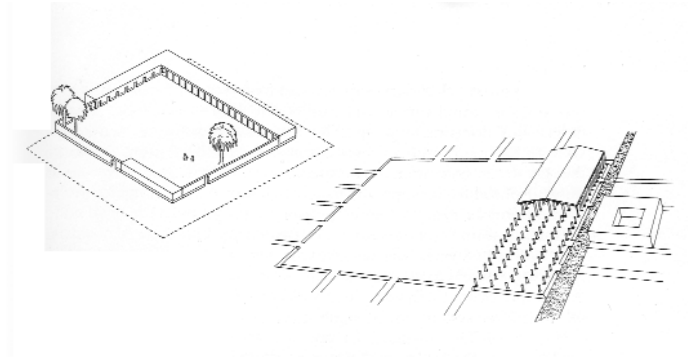
Figure 2.2. Plan of the first mosque at Medina, AD 624.

Space, Practice, and Social Memories

The first building that was constructed immediately after the military victory of the Turkish armies over the Rajput kingdom of Delhi was the *masjid-i jama*, the public mosque where Friday prayers were held. The *qibla liwan* or main prayer hall of the mosque, oriented towards Mecca, was built to follow the Arab prototype or hypostyle plan, that is, a hall whose roof is carried by columns and pillars set in parallel alignment with the walls. The origins of this form go back to the visual memory of Islam's first mosque, the house of the Prophet in Medina, which had an inner courtyard with two shaded areas, created by a thatched roof held up by rows of palm trunks (see Fig. 2.2).[39] Thus a visual form was created that soon became a sacred memory. The courtyard of the Prophet's house was more than a simple space for prayer; it was here that all significant decisions were made and the newly born Muslim community's activities took place. The memory of becoming a community that had fixed itself onto a stable space was transmitted onto the collective memory of subsequent generations by the emergence and diffusion of the hypostyle form, through its crystallization as tradition. This form that both kept alive the earliest individual memories and transformed them into collective

[39] For a plan, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London, 1999), 15.

remembrance was adopted by a large number of public mosques with ceremonial functions in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, and Spain.[40] That the earliest monumental mosque in Delhi relocated this memory to an Indian setting was a significant symbolic act associated with the inception of the Delhi Sultanate, for the form, which was now canonized through unbroken remembering and had become a component of social framing, effectively made the Turkish Sultanate of Delhi one more link in the chain of references that held together sites over a vast geographical area within the symbolic framework of a world empire. Delhi's first Friday mosque set a precedent which was repeated by Friday mosques erected across the Indian subcontinent in the following centuries.

The argument I am making for an association of physical site, space, and architectural memory as embedded in a social setting can be developed in two directions: first, by taking a closer look at the historical dimensions of collective memory and shifting our focus from representation to practice. This involves asking what kinds of memories the place and space evoked, and for whom, and whether a single built structure could lend itself to a synchronic proliferation of multiple rememberings shaped by the social heterogeneity of its users. In a second step it will be useful to explore memory as a process rather than an unchanging essence expressive of the 'permanence of identity'. In other words, it will necessitate viewing the ways in which architectural memory, while being transmitted, was also constantly being recreated in response to new needs, perceptions, and practices.

Who were the communities and groups using the Mehrauli mosque, and what did its structures and spatial arrangements mean to them? To begin with, the coming into being of Delhi's *masjid-i jama* evoked a pattern of conquest and symbolic appropriation of an alien territory which had precedents in the history of Islam's expansion in Arabia, North Africa, and southern Europe.[41] Elite groups expressed their victory over a conquered land through immediate visual acts and forms that recalled similar victories elsewhere: the immediate seizure of the centres of power and the conversion of the indigenous population's sacred sites into places of worship for the new commu-

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[40] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven, 1987), ch. 5.
[41] Ibid. ch. 3.

nity. In Delhi, the Chauhan ruler's capital city was taken and the main temples pulled down. As soon as possible, a *masjid-i jama*, the chief congregational mosque of the capital, was built, where the *Khutba*, a genealogical chart of rulers, was read proclaiming the new ruler, and coins were struck in his name. The memory of successful conquest was kept alive by the epigraph on the mosque's portal cited earlier, which proclaimed victory over the land of unbelievers and the erection of the mosque on the site of the temples. The epigraph was rendered in the medium of an extremely difficult and complex *naskhi* script, accessible only to a handful of highly literate members of the orthodox *ulama* and nobility. Indeed, this militant assertion of victory made a discursive statement that was to become part of collective remembering and a political resource for certain sections of the ruling warrior elites.

However, the public mosque's large range of functions, both sacred and worldly, meant that its spaces were used by a multiplicity of publics to whom culture was accessible mainly through oral and visual media. We therefore need to shift our attention to the semiotics of its architecture and location. At one level, the mosque is conceived of as part of a larger whole, represented by Islam with its sacred centre at Mecca. However, unlike in a Christian church, the sacred centre is not inside the edifice but outside it. This centricity determines the orientation of every mosque in the Islamic world and of every devout Muslim at the time of prayer, making it a physical reminder of belonging to a larger community transcending political frontiers. At another level, the congregational mosque was conceived of as a closed unit at the time of prayer, a refuge from the outside world within which class antagonisms, dissidence, rivalries, and differences dissolve through the constitution of a homogeneous community held together by shared obligations, piety, and brotherhood. The horizontal axis of a mosque and the lateral organization of space within its interior sought to generate the experience of solidarity within an undifferentiated congregation. Characteristic of the hypostyle model of the mosque, which kept alive the memory of the first Muslim community, was its ability to fragment space in a repetitive manner, thereby creating identical units which seemed to stretch into infinity, de-emphasizing any single unit of space which may draw attention to its uniqueness. Accompanying this was an epigraphic programme quite distinct from that of the portal. The inscriptions on the interior

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screen of the mosque bear a selection of verses from the Qur'an which stress the importance of adherence to the tenets of the faith, piety in everyday life, and of moral conduct and brotherhood among Muslims.[42] This structure and epigraphic programme was designed to cement the relationship of an egalitarian brotherhood defined by submission and conformity to Islam and so, by its very definition, by excluding those outside that structure at the given moment of community prayer. In twelfth-century Delhi this 'community' of Muslims, present within the enclosed space of the Friday mosque, was indeed marked by deep-seated social and ethnic differences. It was made up of a minority of Turkish noblemen and their slaves, and also included migrants from Afghanistan, Sind, and Khurasan. The largest number of 'Indian Muslims', however, were lower caste Hindu converts to Islam. To address all these groups collectively as a community of Muslims meant to overlay their memories of different pasts with a common vocabulary reiterating the bonds and duties common to all Muslims.

The iconic programme of the mosque presents a different set of possibilities. The sculpted temple stone blocks, which were held together by techniques of dovetailing rather than cementing, were taken apart without destroying their motifs and then reassembled to form the pillars of the hypostyle hall. The result is unexpected and unusual: a sacred space of Islam alive with the rich visual vocabulary of Hindu and Jain art forms. Rows and rows of pillars receding into the spatial depths of the congregational hall, the *riwaq* (see Fig. 2.3), resonate with the plasticity of the sculpted motifs that cover their surfaces—the *kalasa* (water pot) and the lotus (see Fig. 2.4), carved ceilings with figures drawn from Hindu mythology, and a panel on the north wall portraying scenes from the birth of the infant Krishna.[43] In short, the visual experience of this space, with its trabeate principles of construction and awkwardly shallow domed interiors was far removed from the memory and associations of a prayer space creat-

[42] Anthony Welch, 'Qur'an and Tomb: The Religious Epigraphs of Two Early Sultanate Tombs in Delhi', in Frederick M. Asher and G. S. Gai (eds.), *Indian Epigraphy: Its Bearing on the History of Art* (New Delhi, 1985), 261–3.

[43] For an attempt to date this panel and locate it within the genre of scenes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, see the note by R. B. K. N. Dikshit, 'A Panel Showing the Birth of Lord Krishna from the Qutb Mosque', *Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society*, 17 (1944), 84–6.

Figure 2.3. Qutb mosque, riwaq.

Figure 2.4. Qutb mosque, pillar detail.

ed in accordance with arcuate principles of construction generally associated with a traditionally 'Islamic' aesthetic outside the Indian subcontinent. To the large group of lower caste Hindus newly converted to Islam, however, this iconic vocabulary embodied a powerful memory of those sacred spaces from which Hindu ritual practice debarred communities labelled 'outcastes'. Access to ritual status was one of the mainsprings behind the conversion of low caste Hindus.[44] Conversion to Islam did not necessarily result in the discarding of older cultural practices.[45] The memory of their own exclusion and yearning, which can be recovered from devotional literature of the time, now triggered by access and belonging to a new sacred space resonant with familiar forms, meant that memory could function as an important resource in the constitution of a new sense of self and in the forging of new bonds.

Then there is the question of the associations of place, space, and memory that related to those users of the *masjid* who did not belong to the Muslim community. As well as being a place for community prayer on Fridays, the mosque was a site for meeting and transacting business between mercantile groups and their customers. Equally important were its political functions, as a place where the *Khutba* was read and legitimacy accorded to the ruling Sultan, and the site where protests were voiced, disputes adjudicated, and conspiracies hatched. Located in the heart of the city, the mosque and the bazaar just beyond it, formed two poles of urban life. The spaces of the *masjid* were where many encounters took place and many transactions were effected between social groups—and all of them were part of the process by which an empire and an urban fabric came into being.[46] Many of these must still remain open questions, calling for more detailed investigation and the search for new sources. What we need is the creation of a new archive to allow us to write the history of architectural and social memory.

[44] The question of what motivated Hindus of lower castes to convert to Islam is a subject of much debate. See Richard B. Eaton, 'Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India', in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Tucson, Ariz., 1985), 109–11.

[45] Mohammed Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), 19–20.

[46] For a fuller discussion, Juneja (ed.), *Architecture in Medieval India,* 76–84.

Figure 2.5. Qutb Minar, detail of surface pattern.

Let us take one last look at the complex in order briefly to chart the trajectory of the changing memories that it generated. A good example would be the ways in which these accumulated around the impressive Qutb Minar (see Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 2.5). The Minar, constructed in the twelfth century as the most visible commemorative sign of a new power and a new civilization, was modelled on precedents in Ghazni and Jam, whose memories it sought to evoke and transplant to the soil of Delhi.[47] This was part of the political agenda

[47] Both of these minarets had been erected some years earlier to commemorate victories. The minaret at Jam built by Sultan Muhammad of Ghur in 1190

of one of the Turkish factions controlling Delhi, involved in a struggle for suzerainty with two rival factions. Popular memories long associated the Minar with the political authority of the Delhi faction led by Qutb ud Din Aibak.[48] Over the twelfth century however, as memories of conquest seemed to fade, the Minar was perceived as the protective shadow of another Qutb, the Sufi Qutb ud Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, whose shrine was located in the heart of the capital city and attracted a continuous stream of devotees cutting across religious communities. The Minar was rechristened in everyday parlance as *Qutb sahib ki laath* (the walking stick of the holy Qutb) that cast its protective shadow over the city and its inhabitants. Well into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, long after the site of the capital had shifted to other locations, Mehrauli continued to be regarded as the Old Shahr, a hallowed site of imperial visits and pilgrimages drawing its charisma from the shrine of Qutb ud Din Bakhtiyar Kaki and the Minar. A third layer of memory was constituted in the fourteenth century, kept alive under the Mughal emperors during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and lasted until the deposing of the last Mughal emperor in 1857. This was coined as a semantic exercise centred on the word *Qutb* that in Persian means 'axis'. Political discourses which stylized monarchies as an axis of perfect justice sought to inscribe this abstract idea onto popular visual memory by a practice of architectural citation, either by constructing 'copies' on a minor scale of the Qutb Minar, or by replicating the highly individual surface patterns of the Minar's first three storeys on another building.[49] That multi-layered memories continued well into subsequent centuries and have not disappeared from the postcolonial present is obvious from innumerable signs and practices, such as the continuing and living presence of the shrine of the Sufi in the vicinity of the monuments, and the annual procession of floral garland-makers

has a similar tapered silhouette and bears panels of calligraphic verses from the Qu'ranic sura of victory. Illustrations in George Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London, 1978), 263–4.

[48] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge, 1999), 26–8.

[49] Ebba Koch, 'The Copies of the Qutb Minar', *Iran*, 19 (1991), 95–107. On the notion of *adl* (justice) in the political thought of South Asian Islam, Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India, c.1200–1800* (New Delhi, 2004), esp. 54–61.

(the *Phoolwalon ki sair*) that takes the shrine as its starting point and circles the settlement with the Minar as its point of reference. Yet these memories, while still visible, have been kept out of the more canonical 'commemorative' accounts of Mehrauli buildings with which this account began.

In this article I have tried to compress a number of arguments that call for a rethinking of Nora's paradigm of the *lieux de memoire,* arguments questioning not only its overly consensual basis, but also its marginalization of polysemous, lived social memories by an exclusive privileging of the commemorative dimensions of built structures. While it is important, therefore, to be wary of arguments which impose cultural homogeneity on any society and ignore contestations of memory, at the same time a narrative that presents an image of memory splintered into competing political cultures can be equally problematic. For the processes constitutive of heritage necessarily work to transcend, at a symbolic level, competing interests in order to create the illusion of an imagined community. Unpacking the dynamic tension between the two provides a challenging agenda to the historian.

At another level, it is not the intention of this case study to posit a binary opposition between 'official' narratives of architectural memory, be they colonial, nationalist, or modern-day fundamentalist, and a form of 'counter-memory from below'—popular, localized, fragmentary, and resistant to both colonialism and the modern nation-state—that could then be drawn in to undermine and ultimately replace the totalizing nationalizing project. The Nora volumes which, as pointed out earlier in this essay, end up reconstituting a unitary discourse as mainstream, pay lip service to such a binary. An opposition between memory and 'counter-memory' has also been proposed elsewhere, for example, by the anthropologist Johannes Fabian,[50] by the American historian John Bodnar,[51] and more recently by the Indian historian Gyanendra Pandey in his critique of Nora.[52] My exploratory analysis of the ways different social groups

[50] Johannes Fabian, 'Memory and Counter-Memory', text of a lecture delivered at the University of Hanover, Apr. 2006, now published in id., *Memory against Culture: Arguments and Reminders* (Durham, 2007), ch. 8.
[51] Discussed by Alan Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review*, 102/5 (1997), 1,401–2.
[52] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 11–13.

remember and constantly recreate the past through its built structures suggests a social field continually being traversed by memories that can potentially overlap, intersect, and contest—a field where the state and the community are not necessarily positioned in an oppositional relation to each other, but interpenetrate, where relations of power and adjustment operate within both, and at many levels. Perhaps the critique of Nora's overly consensual conjunction of collective memory and national identity can serve as an impulse to reconceptualize the nation in such a way that it could encompass live traditions of exchange and contain histories of fractures, rather than discarding them in favour of an equally consensual version of the individual community.

3

Recycling the Empire's Unknown Soldier: Contested Memories of French West African Colonial Combatants' War Experience

BRIGITTE REINWALD

Prelude: On the Vicissitudes of Burying Lazare Ponticelli

On 17 March 2008, in a ceremonial mass with military honours, the French nation commemorated what was evidently its last veteran of the First World War. After resisting for a long time, 110-year-old Lazare Ponticelli finally consented, two months before his death—a compromise by which he just managed to avoid more significant posthumous 'privileges', such as being laid to rest in the Paris Pantheon or next to the Unknown Soldier under the *Arc de Triomphe*. According to his own statement the prospect of figuring as a monument or memorial to the Great War was distasteful to the veteran because his comrades, who like him had fought and survived, had not been honoured in any way at all during their lifetimes.[1] This criticism, and his last, unfulfilled, wish to take his leave with his family and friends only, earned him the epithet 'misunderstood soldier', as an article in *Le Monde* put it. It is also reflected in the speeches made at the ceremony. Here the veteran is claimed *pars pro toto* as the testator of 'heroism without great words' (by the historian Max Gallo), as the last of those men and women of 1914–18 to teach future generations a lesson in the 'greatness of patriotism', in 'love of one's fatherland', and 'abhorrence of nationalism' (President Sarkozy); or the state ceremony Ponticelli opposed for so long was in fact justified by the notion that 'he was no longer entirely his own master', since

[1] Francis Gouge and Benoît Hopquin, 'L'Elysée étoffe le cérémonial d'obsèques du "dernier des poilus" ', *Le Monde*, 16–17 Mar. 2008.

he had 'traversed history', as Bishop Patrick Le Gal stated in his sermon.[2]

This choreography of national remembrance which unfolded in connection with the demise of the last combatant of the Great War in uniform, illustrates the close interrelation between the 'end of directly conveyed lived experience' and the 'increased demand for remembrance'. Again, the intensification of this call for remembrance in the public space—both post-military and postcolonial—is closely connected to the fact that those who lived through the great turning points of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are dying out.[3] As Pierre Nora has suggested, this could now lead to a causal relationship, in which the emergence of *lieux de mémoire* is directly attributable to the disappearance of *milieux de mémoire*.[4] Yet this would mean missing out on the opportunity to determine more precisely the colours and threads of the material from which remembrance is formed, as well as the irregular folds it creates. Or, to return once again to the example of the last veteran of the Great War, one would deny him and the group of 'dead' and 'survivors' to which he felt he belonged (and in whose name he rejected the metamorphosis into a 'memorial' proposed for him) participation in the processes of endowing meaning. Such processes are irrevocably tied to the generation, recognition, or rejection of *lieux de memoire*. In this sense the veteran's reluctance could be seen as articulating the memory of past experiences, in this case his own, by which Ponticelli, as he said himself, sought to warn future generations that they should never again

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[2] Ariane Chemin, 'L'hommage de la nation au dernier poilu, celui "qui ne s'appartient plus tout à fait" ', *Le Monde*, 19 Mar. 2008.

[3] These are the concluding remarks made by Christine Deslaurier and Aurélie Roger in their introductory article, 'Mémoires grises: pratiques politiques du passé colonial entre Europe et Afrique', in the theme issue, *Passés coloniaux recomposés: mémoires grises en Europe et en Afrique*, *Politique africaine*, 102 (2006), 5–27, at 27.

[4] For a condensed outline of Nora's French sites of memory project and its conceptual reflections which the present contribution seeks to assess critically, see Pierre Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History', in id. (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York, 1996–8), 1–20.

subject anyone to the experience of the trenches.[5] Under what conditions and to what degree a call for remembrance of this sort, based on rich personal experience, is likely to gain public acceptance; what role is played in this by the (limited) political and social scope of various groups of actors; and how competing demands for and strategies of remembrance are fed into broader political and social negotiation processes at a national and transnational level, are different questions altogether.

Before we leave the national commemoration of the last 'French' veteran of 1914–18, I should like to make one final observation pointing towards the historical vicissitudes of the national, which also play an important part in admitting historical actors into the pantheon of public remembrance. A contingent of men in the out-dated uniforms of the Italian mountain troops reminds us that Lazare Ponticelli was not a child of France, but an immigrant from the Po plain who, in the course of his military career, had belonged to various national units before joining the French Foreign Legion. It is tempting to say that the French nation honoured him as one of its own and, if he had not prevented it, might even have posthumously made him into *the* French symbolic figure of the First World War. Far more problematic, and certainly not only in France, is the incorporation into public commemoration of colonial African and Asian combatants who were present in numerous twentieth-century theatres of war in the service of France. On closer inspection, interesting parallels emerge with the commemoration of Ponticelli, specifically in the way in which the war experiences of those colonial soldiers are transformed into national—in this case Senegalese—choreographies of remembrance. The recent inflationary boom in remembrance surrounding these men is also, as Ruth Ginio argues, an expression of the ambivalent and difficult task of coming to terms, in postcolonial Senegal, with its colonial past and present relations with France.[6]

[5] See Benoît Hopquin and Francis Gouge, 'Les ders des ders', *Le Monde*, 9 Nov. 2007.
[6] Ruth Ginio, 'African Colonial Soldiers between Memory and Forgetfulness: The Case of Post-Colonial Senegal', *Outre-Mers* 94/350–1 (2006), 141–55, at 142.

BRIGITTE REINWALD

Debating Memory and History in the Postcolony

Taking the Tirailleurs Sénégalais as an example, this article will investigate how competing demands, strategies, and practices of remembrance interact with an 'appropriate' treatment of the colonial past, and how various political and social groups were and are involved in creating *lieux de memoire* that are contested between France and West Africa. The article takes as its starting point the thesis that this is an enduring and unfinished process, characterized by an ongoing struggle between various actors to gain the interpretative upper hand as regards a common, but problematic, history. As the episode surrounding Ponticelli illustrates, this process is peppered with power constellations; in other words, it is characterized by the varying scopes of the actors and groups of actors involved in it. Hence we have to assume that not all competing practices and discourses of remembrance are equally capable of asserting themselves publicly. However, the hegemony thus implied is not set in stone, but can, under certain conditions, become fluid. This has become apparent in recent years in the fierce controversies in France over the 'appropriate' way to deal with the colonial past, in which various social groups have enthusiastically put the demand for the integration of the 'republic's indigenous' people on the political agenda.[7]

This lively ideological debate has recently induced sociologists and political scientists working on 'memorial phenomena relating to the "colonial fact" in Africa and Europe' to reconsider their analytical frame of reference when it comes to scrutinizing the 'political usages of memory' in the sense of 'mobilizing the cognitive, argumentative, and symbolic resources of memory'. Instead of focusing on '*the* collective memory of the colonial fact, understood as a nationally unified memory', they see the need 'to consider different levels where collective memories within a national community and beyond, on an international plane, come to light'. Going beyond reductionist

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[7] On the public controversies and parliamentary debates fuelled by the draft of 24 Feb. 2005 on 'the rebirth of the nation and the national contribution in favour of French repatriates', see the insightful article by Romain Bertrand, 'La mise en cause(s) du "fait colonial": retour sur une controverse publique', *Politique africaine*, 102 (2006), 28–49.

notions of individuals as being solely inscribed in a national community also implies the need to investigate 'constantly interacting national and transnational, local and family, professional and associative memories and to explore the very mechanisms of these interactions'.[8] Reconceptualizing the intricate links and tensions between local and global, private and public, communitarian and national, metropolitan and colonial agency pertaining to the appropriation and negotiation of memorial phenomena, as suggested here, provides fresh incentives for research, in two respects in particular. First, it takes up the call for a revised colonial history that transcends binary approaches to the colonial past by focusing on 'process, on how the trajectories of a colonizing Europe and a colonized Africa and Asia shaped each other over time'.[9] Secondly, it may also help to recover the concept of *lieux de mémoire* from the blind alley it reached as a result of the narrow Franco-French national frame of reference to which Pierre Nora restricted it.

Based on a strictly Eurocentric understanding of modernization processes and almost completely leaving aside French overseas/(post)colonial sites of memory, Nora's approach has, over time, provoked considerable criticism from various historians examining the realms of remembrance and memory.[10] This has not, however, pre-

[8] Deslaurier and Roger, 'Mémoires grises', 7–8. ('Notre objectif était d'appréhender les implications politiques des phénomènes mémoriels relatifs au fait colonial en Afrique et en Europe. Toutefois nous voulions aller au-delà de l'examen des "usages politiques" de la mémoire, au sens le plus instrumental de l'expression—celui d'une "tentation récurrente de mobiliser les ressources cognitives, argumentatives, symboliques" de la mémoire à des fins de légitimation du pouvoir ou de renforcement de l'unité nationale. . . . Il s'agit donc ici de considérer non seulement l'état d'*une* mémoire collective du fait colonial, entendue comme la mémoire nationale unifiée d'un pays . . . mais encore les différents niveaux auxquels se font jour *des* mémoires collectives, à l'intérieur même de la communauté nationale et au-delà, à l'echelle internationale. . . . Mémoires nationale et transnationale, locale et familiale, professionnelle et associative, etc. sont continuellement en interaction, et les mécanismes mêmes de ces interférences doivent être interrogés.')

[9] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, 2005), 3.

[10] The original French seven-volume edition was published as Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, i. *La Republique*; ii. *La Nation* (in 3 vols.); iii. *Les France* (in 3 vols.) (Paris, 1984–92); the English edition published nearly two

vented a widespread, and arguably uncritical, use of the phrase 'site of memory';[11] nor did it until very recently initiate a serious debate on what has been put outside the brackets in French historical academia itself. Only researchers associated with the Association connaissance de l'histoire de l'Afrique contemporaine (ACHAC), in tune with the postcolonial studies approach, have attempted to assess the limitations of Nora's concept in the wider context of a re-evaluation of France's colonial legacies. They argue that it amputates 'the colonial versant of national history' and thus fails to reveal 'that colonization has deeply impregnated the societies of the colonizing metropoles, as far as popular and intellectual culture . . . discourse and political culture, law, or forms of government are concerned'.[12]

From this insistence on the 'pertinence of colonial representations'[13] to explaining the present through the past is, however, a step that might misdirect the search for the intricacies of memorial phe-

decades later (Nora, *Realms of Memory*) contains a selection of only 46 of the 132 articles in the French edition, including Nora's 'General Introduction: Between History and Memory'. The delay in publication of the English translation may partly explain why a critical assessment of Nora's approach outside France was a long time coming, as Hue-Tam Ho Tai, in her thought-provoking review of the English edition, 'Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory', *American Historical Review*, 3 (2001), 906–22, aptly remarks (at 906–7). However, see the pertinent critique of Nora by Jay M. Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in eid. (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), 6–39, at 25–7. For further elaboration of this issue see also Gregory Mann, 'Locating Colonial Histories: Between France and West Africa', *American Historical Review*, 2 (2005), 409–34, at 412.

[11] One might point out here that the theoretical issues of Nora's approach have received far less consideration, if any, in recent Anglophone works on memorial phenomena. See Tai, 'Remembered Realms', 915–16.

[12] Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, 'Introduction: La fracture coloniale: une crise française', in eid. (eds.), *La fracture coloniale: la société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris, 2005), 9–30, at 13 ('que la colonisation a imprégné en profondeur les sociétés des métropoles colonisatrices, à la fois dans la culture populaire et savante . . . dans les discours et la culture politique, le droit ou les formes de gouvernance'). Henceforth the Association connaissance de l'histoire de l'Afrique contemporaine is referred to as ACHAC.

[13] Ibid. 11.

nomena, their contemporary political and social implications, and history. In this context Deslaurier and Roger dismiss the 'transfer of memory' approach as an untenable simplification of the ambivalent articulations of 'memory' and 'history' when the (colonial) past is evoked. Hence their call for colonial legacies to be dissociated from colonial memories: whereas the former should be investigated by carefully scrutinizing the nurturing of historical 'transmissions from colony to postcolony, a critical assessment of colonial memories requires reflection of present conjunctures that generate the return of the past rather than explanation of the present through cognitive figurations of the past'.[14]

Pierre Nora recently warned against the 'tyranny of memory',[15] thereby addressing the challenges faced by the historian when dealing with memorial phenomena at a time when society is actively debating how 'to critically assess the postcolony'.[16] His reservations concerning 'moral judgement' and politically correct narratives of the past superseding critically informed historical analysis and thus curtailing the historian's 'intellectual liberty'[17] are pertinent, and echo various critical statements on the 'competition of victims' and demands for historiography to support the redressing of colonial crimes. Nora's insistence on a strict delimitation of 'history' and 'memory' does not, however, provide a clue to resolving this intriguing issue. To consider 'memory [as] susceptible to the magic, the sentiment, and only accommodating self-conducive information', and 'history [as a] purely intellectual and unfrocking procedure that requires analysis and critical discourse',[18] seems first and foremost a mere reiteration of his sharp distinction between categories of communitarian *milieux de mémoire* 'before' history and nationally significant *lieux de mémoire* of societies 'in' history. His is also an arguably

[14] Deslaurier and Roger, 'Mémoires grises', 10.

[15] Pierre Nora, 'La France est malade de sa mémoire', *Le Monde Deux*, 105 (18–24 Feb. 2006), 20–7, at 26.

[16] Achille Mbembe, 'La République et l'impensée de la "race" ', in Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire (eds.), *La fracture coloniale*, 139–53, at 139.

[17] Nora, 'France malade', 23.

[18] Ibid. ('On pourrait dire aussi que la mémoire relève du magique, de l'affectif, et qu'elle ne s'accommode que des informations qui la confortent. L'histoire est une opération purement intellectuelle, laïcisante, qui appelle analyse et discours critique.')

naive opinion of the historian's standpoint as being bound to time and space, particularly when he/she sets out to explore the field of remembrance and commemoration that per se embraces past and present.[19]

To bear in mind that memorial phenomena and historical knowledge evolve on separate planes is not, however, to dismiss the temporality of practices and discourses of remembrance and the specificity of the mutually intertwined relationship between officially choreographed commemoration and non-institutionalized dynamics of remembrance and commemoration by members of civil society.

To conceive of collective remembrance as a socially conveyed process, that is, one borne by small-scale agents, and thus to make each of their narratives into the object of historical investigation,[20] does not therefore imply giving full rein to the 'tyranny of memory', as feared by Nora. It means examining how these groups of actors position themselves within a larger — social or national — frame of reference. Seen in this way, the West African war veterans, for example, should be regarded both as participants in the Franco-African choreographed staging of collective remembrance of past wars, and also as members of a community of remembrance, made up of several social groups. Such partially overlapping groups could, for example, be members of the same year group,[21] or the same unit. They could also, as in the case of former prisoners of war, be formed on the basis of

[19] This problem has been discussed in Germany since the publication of Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (eds.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, 3 vols. (Munich, 2001), which adopted Nora's concept. See Constanze Carzenac-Lecomte et al. (eds.), *Steinbruch Deutsche Erinnerungsorte: Annäherungen an eine deutsche Gedächtnisgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), and the review by Beate Binder, 'Rezension: Steinbruch Deutsche Erinnerungsorte', <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensio/buecher/2001/bibe0201.htm>, accessed 9 June 2006.

[20] On the concept of social agency in war remembrance, see above all the seminal work by Jay M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995); and Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 6–39.

[21] When introducing themselves to the civilian interlocutor, veterans repeatedly mention the year of their conscription and thus point to a significant marker of their personal and group identity as former soldiers, the war generation, so to speak.

common experiences, or expanded by the inclusion of the civilian element—family members, and/or future generations. In their entirety these competing or dissident forms of remembrance, and the transitions and collisions between fluid, that is, rapidly changing, and more solidified institutionalized forms of remembrance, according to Winter and Sivan, are constitutive of the 'collective memory' which they consider a 'matrix of interwoven individual memories'. 'It has no existence without them, but the components of individual memory intersect and create a kind of pattern with an existence of its own.'[22] If we bear in mind that within these groups the work of remembrance is no less influenced by specific interests and discourses than the articulation of an official remembrance staged by social and political elites, then this 'dialogue between agents working within civil society and state institutions'[23] reveals how various social groups behave within a field of social forces characterized by inclusion and exclusion. In other words, it reveals the degree to which social groups reproduce the existing order, or else bring to light unresolved conflicts suppressed by power constellations, and demand that they be confronted.[24]

In the case of former colonial African soldiers, this 'process of ongoing contestation'[25] is shaped by a field of social forces in which metropole and (post)colony are intricately interlinked. The connection exists not only in the sense of various spatial and mental movements made by these men back and forth between Africa and France/Europe, resulting in their ambivalent personal and social patterns of identification and strategies of negotiating their reintegration into the late colonial and postcolonial milieu. It is also reflected in ambiguous images of the colonial soldier which characterize the mental appropriation of his supposed merits, virtues, and mis-

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[22] Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 28.

[23] Ibid. 39.

[24] On the tensions caused by the identification of West African colonial soldiers with Franco-African comradeship and military culture and their (inner) revolts against racial segregation, political and juridical inequality, and the resurgence of these motifs in veterans' narratives, see my case study on Burkinabè ex-servicemen, *Reisen durch den Krieg: Erfahrungen und Lebensstrategien westafrikanischer Weltkriegsveteranen der französischen Kolonialarmee* (Berlin, 2005).

[25] Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 39.

deeds—a kaleidoscope of multifarious representations viewing him in turn as a hero and liberator of France, a collaborator, a traitor or victim of colonization, a fighter for African independence—but hardly account for the political balance of power and historical contingencies that had made him a soldier fighting for others, let alone the heterogeneous trajectories this could have entailed.

The Tirailleurs Sénégalais
Introducing a Phenonomen of Franco-African Colonial History

Several hundred thousand Africans fought as conscripts in the French army in the two world wars and the subsequent French colonial wars in Madagascar, Indo-China, and Algeria. To this day these contingents continue to be known under the collective name of Tirailleurs Sénégalais (Senegalese Rifles), a colonial term that obscures both the origin of the combatants and their number. The majority of the men came from the colonies of Upper Volta (today Burkina Faso), Sudan (today Mali), Guinea, Senegal, but also Oubangi-Chari (today Central African Republic), Djibouti, Gabun, Congo-Brazzaville, and so on; in other words, all the territories of French West and Equatorial Africa.[26]

The contingent for the First World War comprised around 170,000 men, mostly conscripts, from sub-Saharan Africa. Some 135,000 of them fought on the Front, in Flanders, on the Somme, in Verdun, on the Aisne (Chemin des Dames), in Reims, the Dardanelles, and Macedonia.[27] Almost 30,000 died in the battles and trenches, fell victim to German poison gas or pulmonary diseases, or froze to death. In the Second World War a total of 200,000 soldiers from West and Central Africa fought with the French.[28] Of these, 100,000 were mobi-

[26] To complete the picture, the Tirailleurs Malgaches consisting of soldiers from Madagascar and the Comoros should also be mentioned.
[27] For a detailed evaluation of African soldiers' agency in the diverse theatres of the First World War, see Maurice Rives and Robert Dietrich, *Héros méconnus, 1914–1918, 1939–1945: Mémorial des combattants d'Afrique Noire et de Madagascar* (Paris, 1993), 12–115.
[28] Considering that there were two French armies (1939–40; 1942–5) and a probably significant number of repatriated African soldiers who joined de Gaulle's FFL in North Africa, only rough estimates of total numbers can be given.

lized in 1939–40 in the Forces Françaises Libres (FFL), and a further 100,000 soldiers from West and Central Africa joined the FFL from 1942 to 1945. In 1944, 20,000 of them formed part of the Allied troops who left North Africa (Libya and Tunisia) and landed on Corsica, Elba, or in Provence, and pushed forward to the Rhine via the Jura and Alsace.[29] Further evidence of the uninterrupted deployment of colonial troops is provided by the military operations against anti-colonial uprisings and liberation movements, by which the French colonial power sought to maintain its overseas possessions. Some 18,000 sub-Saharan soldiers were deployed in 1947–9 against the uprising in Madagascar;[30] 60,000 took part in the Indo-China War (1945–54);[31] and, finally, a further 15,000 in the Algerian War (1954–62).[32] In addition to these contingents of sub-Saharan soldiers, subsumed under the collective term *La Colonial*, another half a million men from the North African territories of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were deployed in the theatres of war just mentioned; they belonged to the Armée de l'Afrique.[33]

As these rough figures demonstrate, Africans conscripted for military service and deployed in war on behalf of the colonial power

[29] Rives and Dietrich, *Héros méconnus*, 196–279.

[30] Jacques Tronchon, *L'insurrection malgache de 1947: Essai d'interprétation historique* (Fianarantsoa, 1986), 62–4.

[31] Michel Bodin, 'La géographie du recrutement des soldats africains, 1944–1954', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 48/189 (1998), 123–34, at 123–4.

[32] Anthony Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization* (London, 1994), 120–1.

[33] The history of these contingents has been explored in a number of case studies. For an instructive overview see Anthony Clayton, *France, Soldiers and Africa* (London, 1988), 244–306. On Algerian soldiers in the First World War see Gilbert Meynier, 'Les Algériens dans l'Armée française, 1914–1918', in Gerhard Höpp and Brigitte Reinwald (eds.), *Fremdeinsätze: Afrikaner und Asiaten in europäischen Kriegen, 1914–1945* (Berlin, 2000), 35–55; and Belkacem Recham, *Les musulmans algériens dans l'armée française, 1919–1945* (Paris, 1996), whose work focuses on both world wars. On Moroccan troops see Driss Maghraoui, 'The Moroccan Colonial Soldiers: Between Collective Memory and Selective Memory', in Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (ed.), *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib: History, Culture, and Politics* (New York, 2000), 49–70; and Maghraoui's still unpublished, exquisite Ph.D. thesis, 'Moroccan Colonial Troops: History, Memory and the Culture of French Colonialism' (University of California, Santa Cruz, 2000).

constituted a mass phenomenon. Their economic, political, and social significance has been examined in several instructive general accounts of military history and in a series of social history case studies.[34] I shall now look at how these foreign units inscribed themselves in the Franco-African memorial landscape, using as an example a war memorial in Dakar which changed location on several occasions. This is just one of the ways in which this process materialized, a process that was given extra dynamism by competing practices and discourses of remembrance surrounding the phenomenon of the African colonial soldier.[35] I shall divide my analysis into four chronological sections: the building phase (1920s to 1930s); the structural cracks (1940s to 1980s); the interim phase (1980s to 2000s); and the recycling (2004 onwards).

Demba and Dupont: Revisiting a Franco-African War Memorial

The Building Phase: 1920s–1930s

On 30 December 1923 in Dakar, the capital of French West Africa (AOF), on the Place de l'Etoile,[36] close to the Ecole de Médecine founded in 1918, a monument was dedicated 'to the glory of the black troops and the dead creators of the AOF' (see Fig. 3.1). At the

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[34] The main work of social history here is still Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (Portsmouth, NH, 1991) who also engages with the formation of the 'Senegalese' as auxiliary troops of French colonial expansion and 'pacification', 1–25. On the broader implications of the French West African war effort, see Marc Michel, *L'Appel à l'Afrique: Contributions et Réactions à l'effort de guerre en A.O.F., 1914–1919* (Paris, 1982), slightly revised and republished as *Les Africains et la grande guerre: L'appel à l'Afrique, 1914–1918* (Paris, 2003). On post-military lives of Burkinabè ex-servicemen, see Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, which also contains an update on the state of research, 28–30. On Malian veterans, see Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC, 2006).

[35] On the discussion of other sites of memory in Dakar, see Ginio, 'African Colonial Soldiers'.

[36] This square was renamed Place Charles Tascher in Feb. 1956, and Place Soweto in 1983. Cf. Colonel Mamadou Lamdou Touré, *Les Tirailleurs Sénégalais: Leurs combats, leurs gloires, leur héritage* (Dakar, 2005), 47.
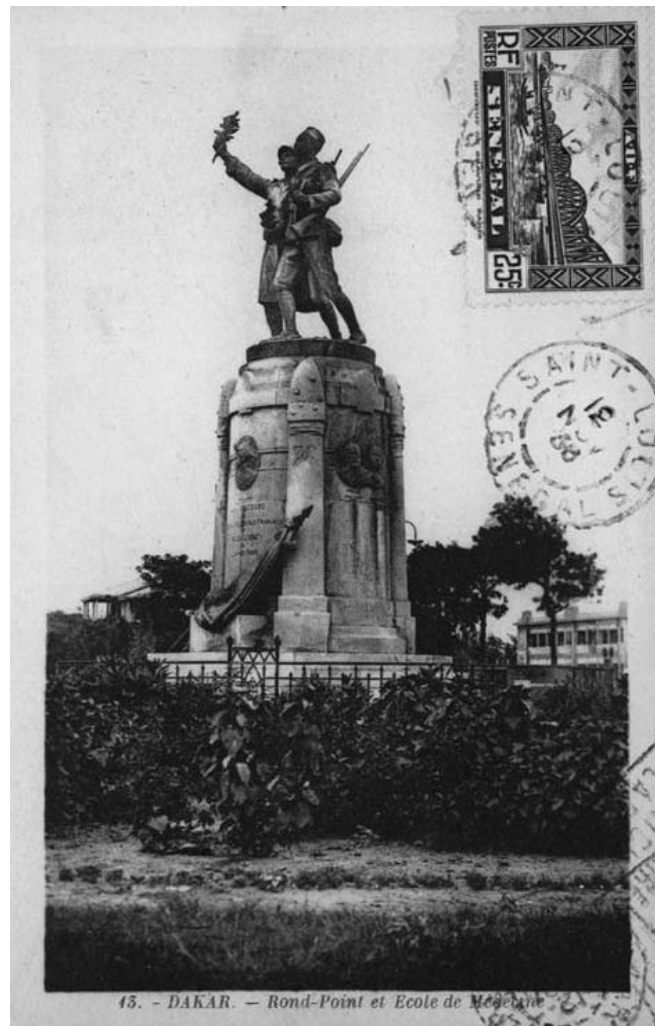
Figure 3.1. 'Demba' and 'Dupont' 1923. Postcard no. 1803 in Cartes postales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest/West African postcards 1895–1930. Association Images & Mémoires, UNESCO/Memory of the World.

behest of the French government the sculptor, a certain Ducuing, cre-
ated two figures. One represented the 'Senegalese Rifleman', the
other a French soldier. Each holds an olive branch in his right hand;
the Frenchman's left hand rests on the African's shoulder; the two are
marching, as the historian and former Senegalese Education Minister
Iba Der Thiam put it, 'together to victory'.[37] They are standing on a
plinth with five pictures round the edge. These show General
Faidherbe (1854–65), military conqueror and first Governor of
Senegal, and, not to be forgotten, founder of the Rifles units. Then
come four Governors General who determined the fate of French
West Africa between 1900 and 1917: Noël Ballay (1900–2); William
Ponty (1908–15); François Clozel (1916–17); and Joost Van Vollen-
hoven (1917).[38] The aim of the French colonial government in setting
up this monument was 'to celebrate both the greatness of France's
civilizing work, embodied in certain figures whose action for France
in the service of colonization has been regarded as exemplary, and
also the fidelity and loyalty of the African populations to the mother
power'.[39]

Thus to some extent it was also a companion piece to the statue of
Faidherbe, which stood as a symbol of French greatness in West
Africa opposite the Governor General's palace.[40] A coloured postcard
that can be dated to 1915–20 (see Fig. 3.2) shows this statue, flanked
by a unit of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, whose provenance and rank
are revealed by their headgear: African soldiers wearing the red fez

[37] Thiam in an article in the Senegalese pro-government paper *Le Soleil*, 7
Sept. 1983, which was reprinted by the critical daily *Wal Fadjri L'Aurore*, 25
Aug. 2004. Quoted in Ligue des droits de l'homme Toulon, 'Demba et
Dupont: le retour', <http://www.ldh-toulon.net/article.phb3?id_article=298,
2004>, accessed 14 May 2005.

[38] Présidence de la République, 'Dakar—la place du Tirailleur', <http://
www.elysee.fr.elysee/francais/ressources_documentaires/afrique/senegal/
dakar-la_place_du_tirailleur.27703. html>, accessed 14 May 2005, 1.

[39] Thiam, Ligue des droits Toulon. ('Désirant célébrer à la fois la grandeur de
l'œuvre "civilisatrice" de la France incarnée par certaines figures, dont l'ac-
tion au service de la colonisation avait été jugée exemplaire, et l'expression
de la fidélité et du loyalisme des populations africaines à la Mère-Patrie.')

[40] It was also a 'companion' in the sense that it was ultimately removed,
along with the statue of the two soldiers, in Aug. 1983. See the subsequent
section on the interim phase, 1980s–2000s.

Figure 3.2. Tirailleurs Sénégalais marching up in front of General Faidherbe's statue, Dakar 1915–20. Postcard no. 1667 in Cartes postales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest/West African postcards 1895–1930. Association Images & Mémoires, UNESCO/Memory of the World.

and French NCOs the white sun-helmet. Comparison of the two monuments shows the change that had taken place in France's colonial doctrine since the early 1920s. The strategy of subjugation and assimilation, symbolized by the solitary figure of the general, is successively replaced by association and participation by the colonized in the civilizing work of the mother country, which paved the way for the colonized to be called into service for the Great War. This is evident in the statue depicting the two brothers-in-arms. It may be mentioned in passing that this monument illustrates just one facet of this call to service. For while it represents the men's path to the Front, it obscures the fact that large numbers of African civilians—including women, and the young and old of both sexes—were drafted into colonial forced labour and mobilized for the war economy. The effect of this monument on the people of Dakar at the time has not yet been examined. All we know is that colloquially the two figures were given family names ('Demba–Dupont'), and thus to some extent rescued from anonymity, though when this happened is unknown.[41] In

[41] Like 'Dupont' in France, the male first name 'Demba' is widespread in northern West Africa. It is an open question whether this correlation of a

Figure 3.3. War Memorial for Combatants from French West Africa (1929), Dakar. Post card, undated. Éditions Moreau, Dakar (in possession of the author).

any case they seem to have been mentioned for the first time in writing in Senghor's 'Prayer of the Senegalese Riflemen' of April 1940.[42]

In terms of monumental history the sculpture fits into the period 'when France saw itself as great' and should be understood as such, the historian Serge Barcellini argues.[43] The third and final landmark

French surname and a West African first name alludes to the common colonial habit of generally addressing Africans by their first name.

[42] Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Prière aux Tirailleurs', in id., *Œuvre poétique* (Paris, 1990), 71 ('Que l'enfant blanc et l'enfant noir — c'est l'ordre alphabétique — , que les enfants de la France Confédérée aillent main dans la main, Tels que les prévoit le Poète, tel le couple Demba-Dupont sur les monuments aux Morts').

[43] Serge Barcellini, 'Les monuments en hommage aux combattants de la "Grande France": Armée d'Afrique et Armée coloniale', in Claude Carlier and Guy Pedroncini (eds.), *Les troupes coloniales dans la grande guerre* (Paris, 1997), 113–53, at 113 ('où la France se vivait grande'). According to Barcellini's three-phase scheme, this period lasted from 1918 to 1950 and was superseded by the era of radical changes and new concepts (1950–70) and a phase, setting in from 1975, characterized by 'multiple ways of memory recycling' ('un temps où la mémoire est réutilisée de manière plurielle'), ibid. 113–14.

of this sort was erected in 1929 in Dakar, in the city centre on the Place Protet, today's Place de l'Indépendance. Dedicated to 'the dead of the Great War, all European and indigenous combatants who set out from French West Africa', it shows two soldiers facing one another, on the left an African, and on the right a Frenchman, each extending his right hand to the other. The undated historical postcard reproduced here (see Fig. 3.3) gives an impression of the massive, overwhelming dimensions of this monument, which testifies quintessentially to the Franco-African brotherhood-in-arms as one of the kernels of the triumphant idea of Greater France that the architects of this monument wanted to immortalize in stone in such an overarching manner. In popular belief, this colossus was torn down after Senegalese independence because especially in such a prominent position, it cast too great a shadow of the past over the young republic and its visions of the future. It seems that the only thing considered worthy of preservation was its mid-section with the two figures, which survived the vicissitudes of time in a corner of a Dakar cemetery.[44]

Structural Cracks: 1940s–1980s

Socializing in the army, and the common experiences of fighting and suffering undoubtedly led to the formation of a cohesive military us-community, to which West African combatants felt just as loyal as their French comrades, although this did not undo their experience of exclusion and unequal treatment on the basis of skin colour and status. How this eventually led to demands for equal treatment on the part of West African soldiers and veterans has been discussed elsewhere.[45]

Although the Franco-African military community generally survived the endurance tests it faced during the Second World War,

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[44] On other memorials of the Great War which depicted the Franco-African brother-in-arms motif, see Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 116–23, and Mann, 'Locating Colonial Histories'.

[45] For a detailed survey of Second World War experiences and itineraries of West African combatants in the French Army and the Allied troops, see Myron Echenberg ' "Morts pour la France": The African Soldier in France during the Second World War', *Journal of African History*, 4 (1985), 363–80, and, on veterans' remembrances, Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 139–90.

these nevertheless caused certain structural fissures. The West African soldiers not only became increasingly aware of them, but also felt prompted by them to review their position in the hierarchically structured microcosm of the army. The first crack in the plinth upon which 'Demba' and 'Dupont' were marching emerged as early as June 1940 when, as a result of French capitulation and occupation, the myth of France as great and unvanquishable collapsed. The fact that up to 48,000 African combatants ended up as German prisoners of war in the course of all this, and that many of them were murdered, tortured, starved, and humiliated by their captors, was a great trauma. And there was more: from February 1943 onwards the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* redeployed German sentries to the Eastern Front and commissioned French military personnel to supervise the prisoner-of-war camps for Africans in the occupied half of France. Certainly this meant that the *Frontstalags*[46] became more lenient in various places, that is, more Africans escaped and many of them reached the free zone with the help of resistance networks, or joined French resistance groups. Yet the recollections of those who ended up as prisoners of war leave no doubt that they felt completely abandoned, especially because in the camps they were generally segregated from their French comrades and officers.[47]

The testimonies of former prisoners of war or soldiers who took part in the Allied operations in North Africa, Italy, and southern

[46] *Frontstalag* is the abbreviation of the German *Frontstammlager*, a term used for the approximately twenty-eight camps set up for African POWs by the German *Wehrmacht* in the north, north-west, and east of France, but also in Belgium and the Netherlands. For a ground plan of these camps, see Catherine Akpo, 'Africains dans les stalags', *Jeune Afrique,* 1934 (1998), 46–9, at 46.

[47] The recurrent theme of German atrocities motived by racial hatred and particularly directed to African soldiers and POWs permeates former African POWs' testimonies, which have been dealt with in several African historical case studies, such as Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*; Nancy E. Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II* (Athens, OH, 1992); and my own work (see Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 109–14, and 155–64). For an excellent military history investigation of these war crimes committed by the German *Wehrmacht* during its campaign against France, which is based on extensive research in German and French archives and thus backs up evidence derived from oral history accounts, see Raffael Scheck, *Hitler's African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940* (Cambridge, 2006).

France show, however, that these extreme experiences also enhanced their self-esteem and awareness of the contribution they had made to winning the war, as well as the quid pro quo owed them by liberated France. This growing self-esteem was articulated in very different ways, and while it by no means led to a process of mental and/or political emancipation among all soldiers/veterans, as feared by the metropolitan and colonial authorities during the last years of the war,[48] the majority were convinced that they had done France a great service and had made huge sacrifices for the cause. For some, however, their experiences gave rise to a feeling of inferiority as Africans; they saw themselves as an instrument of colonialism that was to secure and legitimize domination. This process later culminated in political engagement for the decolonization movement or in veterans' associations, where they fought for African soldiers to be given the same status as their metropolitan comrades. The extent and durability of this engagement has so far hardly been examined by social historians, largely because the sources are extremely fragmentary. However, the few testimonies available suggest that former prisoners of war in particular seem to have played a crucial role here, as expressed in a statement by a Senegalese veteran—a former prisoner of war and chairman of the Senegalese veterans' association—who himself played a part in the movement they initiated:

> The prisoners of war were something quite extraordinary! We were not all in the same camp. . . . We were spread throughout

[48] From 1942, the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States were concerned that governments in Africa and Asia were increasingly losing control of colonized populations, and feared that demobilized soldiers might support or initiate liberation movements. On this 'imperial panic', see Frank Furedi, 'The Demobilized African Soldier and the Blow to White Prestige', in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700–1964* (Manchester, 1999), 179–97. After the French surrender in June 1940, colonial administrators in French West Africa received orders to keep repatriated soldiers under surveillance. Informal reports from all French West African territories confirm fears of colonial soldiers being stirred up by German propaganda, and, from 1944 onwards, being contaminated by the Communist Internationale (Archives of the General Government in French West Africa, Dakar, series 2 D—Périodes de guerre, 1941–8; and series 5 D—Organisation militaire, 1944–8).

France. And there was a certain wind blowing everywhere. I was personally very surprised by the movement to push through the demands, and its breadth! We said to ourselves, we have come through difficulties, we have overcome obstacles, whites and blacks have been dealing with one another for years, so that each knew what to expect of the other. Consequently equality was a quite normal thing.[49]

Closely linked with this demand for equality, which the West African returners saw as their elemental right, is a second, far deeper crack in the colonial plinth, which was caused by something that happened in the Thiaroye transit camp near Dakar on the night of 1 December 1944.[50] The immediate cause of this event, certainly the most difficult

[49] Doudou Diallo, interview with Manfred Prinz and Papa Samba Diop, 16 Apr. 1987, in Janós Riesz and Joachim Schultz (eds.), *'Tirailleurs Sénégalais': zur bildlichen und literarischen Darstellung afrikanischer Soldaten im Dienste Frankreichs* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 260–4, at 262. ('Les prisonniers de guerre, c'etait quelque chose d'extraordinaire! Nous n'étions pas tous dans le même camp. . . . Nous étions repartis dans toute la France. Et un vent avait soufflé partout. Personnellement, j'ai été surpris par ce mouvement de revendication, son ampleur! On s'est dit, nous avons, nous avons traversé des difficultés, nous avons surmonté des obstacles, les Blancs et les Noirs se sont côtoyés pendant des années, par conséquent, chacun savait de quel bois l'autre se chauffait. L'égalité était, par conséquent, quelque chose de normal.') Doudou Diallo, a former member of the French *Résistance*, was part of the first contingent of repatriates involved in the rebellion of Thiaroye on 1 Dec. 1944 (*passim*). Although absent from the camp, he was sentenced as a mutineer and spent one and a half years in prison.

[50] For a detailed description and analysis of the background and course of events, see Myron Echenberg, 'Tragedy at Thiaroye: The Senegalese Soldiers' Uprising of 1944', in Robin Cohen, Jean Copans, and Peter Gutkind (eds.), *African Labor History* (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1978), 109–28. Since then, several historical studies have further contributed to the contextualization and demystification of the events. See Mbaye Gueye, 'Le 1er décembre 1944 à Thiaroye, ou le massacre des tirailleurs sénégalais anciens prisonniers de guerre', *Revue sénégalaise d'histoire*, 1 (1995), 3–23; Armelle Mabon, 'La tragédie de Thiaroye, symbole du déni d'égalité', *Hommes et Migrations*, 1235 (2002), 86–95, who investigated the impact of previous incidents in France connected with the liberation of African POWs on the course of events in Thiaroye; Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 239–47 includes reports by African witnesses; and Julien Fargettas, 'La révolte des tirailleurs sénégalais de Tiaroye:

and consequential in terms of the demobilization of African combatants, was that before their return home, the army command of French West Africa refused to give the 1,280 West Africans—almost all of them former prisoners of war—the unpaid wages due for the period of their captivity and also a demobilization premium which France had guaranteed. This had already been paid out to former French prisoners of war. At this, the men refused to be transported back to their respective colonies, and temporarily prevented General Dagnan, commander-in-chief of the forces in the Dakar area, from leaving the camp, in order to underscore their demands. This was regarded as mutiny; the camp was taken over by a special commando of Tirailleurs Sénégalais from Saint-Louis and the Dakar Gendarmerie, who, on the morning of 1 December, opened fire on the camp inmates.[51] Apparently thirty-five of the repatriated men perished; another thirty-five were seriously wounded. Of the thirty-four supposed ringleaders, who were given custodial sentences by a French court martial in March 1945, five died in prison and the rest were amnestied in June 1947, as the result of constant lobbying and public pressure; those largely responsible for their release were Lamine Guèye and Léopold Senghor, socialist Deputies in the French National Assembly.

After their return to their home colonies, spread throughout French West Africa, and following the lifting of censorship in 1947 once the debate over the amnesty had been documented in various newspapers,[52] the events became firmly entrenched in the conscious-

entre reconstructions mémorielles et histoire', *Vingtième siècle*, 92 (2006), 117–30, who draws on officers' reports, esp. the account by General Dagnan, whom the mutineers had temporarily taken hostage, to elucidate the uncomprehending attitude of the paternalistic French command which mistook transformed mentalities for acts of insurgency which were likely to threaten the colonial order.

[51] According to a former soldier of this commando, the men had been told upon their arrival in Thiaroye that they would be confronted by German internees refusing to deliver their arms, and it would be their task to disarm them (Touré, *Tirailleurs sénégalais*, 51). Another man remembers having been shocked when realizing that they had shot at Africans, not at the supposed Germans in the camp. According to him, every attempt to help the injured had been strictly prohibited by the commanding officer, who had even ordered them to open fire on helpers (ibid.).

[52] Echenberg, 'Tragedy at Thiaroye', 123.

ness of African war veterans, and also that of a shocked civilian population, as the 'massacre' of Thiaroye. Although the army censored letters, the news spread like wildfire amongst the Africans in the Allied units, who in 1944 were pushing forward over the Vosges to the German border.[53] As I have repeatedly established in various conversations, Thiaroye leaves virtually no West African veteran, whether contemporary or younger, untouched. Virtually all of them shared in the events via a choreographed version from an 'uncle', 'brother', or some other relative. It would be interesting to know to what extent the 1987 film *Le camp de Thiaroye* by the Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène, which was shown in Dakar cinemas from mid 1989, and shortly thereafter was available on video throughout Senegal, interfered with or responded to the story as handed down in this way.[54]

Directly after these events, there were various initiatives to make the military cemetery in Thiaroye, where those who had been shot were supposedly buried, into a memorial site.[55] For example, representatives of the anti-colonial West African political assembly movement, Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, members of the communist trade union, and representatives of veterans' associations planned to hold a rally there for the first time in February 1950, with the laying of wreaths, in order to keep alive the memory of Thiaroye as a symbol of unacceptable colonial repression. The rally was banned, and the cemetery surrounded by armed French troops, with the result that the organizers had to withdraw to the war memorial

[53] Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 137.

[54] A Senegalese, Algerian, and Tunisian co-production, *Le camp de Thiaroye*, was not performed in France until 1998, and apparently did not receive much acclaim. Based mainly on eye witness accounts, it also reproduces their often ambivalent, contradictory, and inconsistent features. However, Sembène was accused of historical misrepresentation by film critics and former colonial soldiers for having obscured the African composition of the task force at Thiaroye. On this issue see Kenneth Harrow, 'Camp de Thiaroye: Who's That Hiding in those Tanks, and How Come We Can't See Their Faces?', *Iris: A Journal of Theory on Image and Sound*, 18 (1995), 147–52.

[55] Whether the dead of Thiaroye were really buried there or in an unknown mass grave elsewhere is an unresolved issue, even among eye witnesses. Doudou Diallo, one of the alleged 'leaders', considered the anonymous grave more plausible (Interview, 16 Apr. 1987, unpublished, archived on VHS-copy at the University of Bayreuth, Germany).

in Dakar city centre (Fig. 3.3). In the enflamed political mood of 1958 the 'no' camp in the referendum on whether Senegal should remain in the French Union initiated another ceremony in Thiaroye. This was also banned.[56]

Nonetheless, the events of Thiaroye were taken up in their own ritualistic remembrance which created its own—to some extent sub-cutaneous—landmarks. Over the years anonymous people made the military cemetery into a clandestine place of remembrance which could only be identified as such by extremely discreet details. The place was carefully tended, the graves were repeatedly whitened, and one of those involved stated that people went there from time to time to pray.[57] At the same time the victims of Thiaroye were also remembered in literature and music, for example, by Léopold Senghor in his lamentation *Tiaroye*. Written in Paris in 1944, it formed part of his collection of poems *Hosties Noires*, published in Paris in 1948 by Seuil.[58] The 1949 musical creation *Douga* by the Guinean composer, singer, and ballet dancer Keïta Fodeba was also an explicit homage to the men of Thiaroye. Paradoxically, this piece was part of the record collection of *Radio France-Asie*, which, during the Indo-China War, broadcast request concerts for African soldiers twice a week. Repeatedly requested by the combatants, *Douga* was broadcast for years without any complaint, along with the soldiers' messages for those at home.[59] One might speculate as to whether this was because of the language, which the censors did not understand—the lyrics were in Maninka—or Fodeba himself, who was so popular with the French public that no suspicion would have been aroused.

[56] Echenberg, 'Tragedy at Thiaroye', 123–4.

[57] Diallo, interview, 16 Apr. 1987 (unpublished, VHS-copy, University of Bayreuth). On Thiaroye as a clandestine *lieu de mémoire*, see Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'Lieux de mémoire et occidentalisation', in Jean-Louis Triaud and Jean-Pierre Chrétien (eds.), *Histoire d'Afrique: Les Enjeux de Mémoire* (Paris, 1999), 377–88, at 382; and Ginio, 'African Colonial Soldiers', 151–3. This is reminiscent of concealed practices to commemorate Thomas Sankara, former President of Burkina Faso, assassinated by his fellow companions and buried anonymously on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. Sankara's supposed burial plot is regularly tended by his numerous followers, who still frequent the place.

[58] Senghor, *Œuvre Poétique*, 90–1.

[59] Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 138.

And, finally, there is at least one public memorial to the victims of Thiaroye, inaugurated on 1 December 2001 by the then President of Mali and historian Alpha Oumar Konaré in the centre of the capital Bamako. This ensemble consists of a watchtower, defamiliarized by elements of neo-Sudanese architecture, whose top is reached by two external staircases. It bears a fresco showing the Senegal Rifles, and, at the entrance to the Place des Martyrs de Thiaroye, named after the memorial, is a sculpture of an armed Senegalese Rifleman standing on a rostrum. The inscription 'in memory of those executed in Thiaroye' briefly describes the circumstances of the massacre and the men's demands, and attributes responsibility for the massacre to the colonial authorities.[60]

Even though the events of Thiaroye did not have any major political impact in terms of radicalizing the West African population, as the colonial authorities had feared, for the soldiers returning from war they marked a turning point in two respects. First, the events signalled that the arbitrary use of violence by the colonial power was no longer acceptable, and they also legitimized the soldiers' demands to receive the same treatment as French ex-combatants.

This is precisely the point at which the third—hairline—crack in the plinth occurred. It spread slowly but surely, and can be traced back to the struggle that went on for decades, and has still not been resolved, to raise African veterans' pensions and compensation to the level of their French counterparts. As this tedious and delicate negotiation process has been dealt with in detail elsewhere,[61] just a few key statistics will be given here. In 1947 African veterans' pensions were set at 50 per cent of those of their metropolitan comrades, although the Africans were similarly granted index-linked increases. Action on the part of African Deputies in the French National Assembly and lobbying in extra-parliamentary protests set going a reform process which was welcomed by the veterans, despite being regarded as inadequate. This culminated in the promulgation of the so-called Equality Law in August 1950 which, for the first time, envisaged that foreign soldiers' pensions gradually be brought into

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[60] Moussa Bolly, 'Journée du Tirailleur: Hommage aux martyrs oubliés de Thiaroye', *Le Reflet*, Aug. 2004, <http://www.afribone.com/actualité/reflet/2004/3008.html>, accessed 15 May 2005.

[61] Reinwald, *Reisen durch den Krieg*, 318–31.

line with those of the French. At the end of 1959 this all came to an abrupt halt with the law on *cristallisation*, whereby African pensions were frozen. Henceforth the recipients were not only denied increases, but payments could no longer be transferred to their widows or children. This law was ratified in the form of a bilateral agreement with the West African heads of state, which produced an entirely arbitrary pensions gap between the former colonies of North, West, and Central Africa.[62] At the end of 2001 the French Council of State finally accepted the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights, with which more than fifteen veterans' associations had lodged complaints against France. In principle, the French government accepted that African veterans' pensions should be brought into line with those of French veterans and, in spring 2002, having delayed by two years, started to pay the outstanding amounts retrospectively for five years. However, the sums were worked out according to a scheme that took into account the cost of living in the respective countries of origin, thereby creating renewed political irritation and bitterness amongst the veterans. The latest update: on 27 September 2006 the French government finally agreed to raise the African veterans' pensions to the level enjoyed by their French counterparts as of 1 January 2007. In statistical terms, this measure benefited around 84,000 people in the former colonies; in the case of Senegal, some 3,000 men.[63]

[62] Annual pension figures for 2002 demonstrate that this eventually resulted in an absurd hierarchy of payments on all levels. Whereas a former French combatant was entitled to receive €420.10, his Senegalese comrade had to be content with €174.60, a Burkinabè with €87.50, and a Moroccan or Tunisian veteran with as little as €48.50. See Stéphanie Séguès and Livio Thèves, 'La République "Banania": Quarante ans de discrimination', *Plein droit: La révue du Gisti*, 56 (Mar. 2003), 7–9.

[63] 'La France paye le prix du sang avec quarante-sept ans de retard', *La Nouvelle République du Centre-Ouest*, 28 Sept. 2006. With headlines such as '*Indigènes*, the Film that Convinced Chirac' (ibid.) or 'Justice Rendered to the *Indigènes*', *Sud Ouest*, 28 Sept. 2006, the dailies put this down to President Chirac's change of heart. Thereby they celebrated the intriguing, highly impressive, and, as far as historical accuracy is concerned, meticulously researched feature film by Algerian director Rachid Bouchareb (*Indigènes*, France, 2006) that depicts the itineraries of four Algerian colonial soldiers, members of the FFL who set out, in 1942, to liberate their 'mother–fatherland'. Bouchareb and his prominent cast also achieved a box office hit in France.

The Interim Phase: 1980s–2000s

Despite all these cracks and fault lines 'Demba' and 'Dupont' were to remain in place, united as brothers, for nearly forty years after the Second World War. From 20 August 1960 the bronze statue of Faidherbe was to look out on to the palace of the Senegalese President, while 'Demba and Dupont' stood opposite the building of the Senegalese National Assembly, built in 1956. Eventually, however, the government gave in to criticism from numerous citizens who found these symbols of a colonial era inappropriate in such prominent locations. On the night of 13–14 August 1983, both Faidherbe and 'Demba and Dupont' were taken down. The original plan to transfer the two soldiers to the military camp of Dial Diop failed because of opposition from the Senegalese General Staff. The statue was eventually transported to the cemetery in the Bel Air-Hann quarter of the city where, henceforth removed from their rostrum, they kept watch over the Catholic Senegalese and French civilians and soldiers buried there (see Fig. 3.4). In their place, on Soweto Square, also renamed in 1983, there now stands a piece by the Senegalese sculptor Babacar Sédikh Traoré: a couple that symbolizes Senegalese independence,[64] and, according to oral information, is known colloquially as 'Le Sénégal en vie' (see Fig. 3.5).

The Recycling: 2004 Onwards

What is, for now, the final chapter in the story of Demba and Dupont belongs in the context of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the liberation of Toulon. On the evening of 23 August 1944, the 6th regiment of the Senegalese Rifles, under the command of Colonel Salan, had been the first to enter the town. In 2004, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade declared 23 August a national holiday, the Journée du Tirailleur, in memory of the Africans who had served there. Proceedings began with a ceremony in the military cemetery of Thiaroy where, on 22 August 2004, the head of state laid a wreath in honour of the victims of the 'events' of December 1944. On the following day, on Dakar's Station Square, now renamed Place du Tirailleur, a statue

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[64] Jean M. Diop, 'Revoilà Demba et Dupont', *Wal Fadjri L'Aurore*, 24 Aug. 2004.

Figure 3.4. 'Demba' and 'Dupont' at the Catholic cemetery of Bel-Air, Dakar-Hann, 2002. Photograph by Uta Sadji (Aug. 2002). Courtesy of Uta Sadji.

Figure 3.5. Soweto Square after the removal of 'Demba' and 'Dupont'. Statue by Babacar Sédikh Traoré. Photograph by Laurence Marfaing (July 2002). Courtesy of Laurence Marfaing.

was unveiled (see Fig 3.6). Not only were 'Demba' and 'Dupont' back; henceforth the names they had been given at the time were to be official!

In the presence of several heads of state from Francophone Africa (Idriss Déby from Chad; Blaise Compaoré from Burkina Faso; Mathieu Kérékou from Benin; Amadou Toumani Touré from Mali; and Sghaïr Ould M'Bareck, Prime Minister of Mauritania), and the former French Development Minister, Pierre-André Wiltzer, representing President Jacques Chirac, President Abdoulaye Wade hailed the Franco-African community and the service given by several generations of Tirailleurs, who had 'fought side by side with French soldiers and, in the course of the century, built up the French empire, and preserved the honour and independence of France'.[65] In the name of the contribution they had made to upholding the essential values of the French Revolution, he demanded that the French government take the final step on the matter of pensions and give the African veterans genuinely equal treatment. Wade continued, saying that he knew he was united with Jacques Chirac in a common fight for justice, and assured him *in absentia* that numerous Africans and French people were determined to uphold the extraordinary relations of friendship and cooperation between France and Africa, and to continue to give them precedence in future.[66] The eminent guests

[65] Abdoulaye Wade, 'Allocution prononcée lors de l'inauguration de la Place du Tirailleur', in Fédération Nationale des Anciens d'Outre-Mer et Anciens Combattants des Troupes de Marine (ed.), *2004: Vie de la Fédération*, AOB 342, Sept.–Oct. 2004, 53–5, at 53 ('qui . . . se sont battus, côte à côte, avec les soldats français faisant au fil des années, pendant un siècle, l'empire français et défendant l'intégrité, l'honneur et l'indépendance de la France').

[66] Ibid. 54–5. Wade's rhetorical manoeuvre was, significantly, characterized by his efforts to keep the balance between a discourse of juridical claims and his conjuring up of universal history to take the witness stand. His motive was not only to make his interlocutors, French and Senegalese alike, believe that joint historical agency was the work of equals in rank; he also tried to allay any possible fears that Senegal would withdraw from the preferential partnership achieved by loyally serving *Françafrique*: 'Whether they have been paid or not upon returning home will never erase these obstinate and irrefutable facts of history. Equally irrefutable is our willingness to continue building together with the French, these veritable heirs of the 1789 revolution, a space of friendship and cooperation which is commensurate with our joint battles. This means that the contribution made by Africans to universal

Figure 3.6. The resurrection of 'Demba' and 'Dupont', Dakar, Station Square, 2004. Photograph by Stefanie Michels (Feb. 2005). Courtesy of Stefanie Michels.

were impressed by the 'historical fresco of the heroic deeds of the African Rifles', proclaimed in such glorious style and in front of such a colourful turn-out.[67] The speech by Pierre-André Wiltzer, Chirac's representative, was also deemed satisfactory, in particular, what he had to say about the events of 1944 in Thiaroye transit camp: 'A tragic and shocking event, which stirs up indignation, incomprehension and grief for the victims and their families. Those who bore responsibility on the part of the French authorities of the time [*sic*!], have damaged France's reputation and violated the values that French and African soldiers were jointly defending at the same time on European soil.'[68]

heritage must not be ignored. Liberty and democracy, justice and equality are, from now on, our joint heritage; within this heritage African populations have their share of contributions. . . . It is about time that the injustice committed against Africa and the Africans be corrected so that we can all together build a world of peace based on mutual respect, equal dignity of peoples and individuals, equality of rights, every time that we serve together. . . . Despite the vicissitudes of history, there are many of us, in Africa and in France, who are determined to preserve and privilege the exceptional relations of friendship and cooperation woven between France and Africa.' ('Qu'ils aient ou non été payés en retour ne pourra jamais gommer ces faits d'Histoire têtus et irréfutables. Non plus notre volonté de continuer à bâtir avec les Français, les véritables héritiers de la Révolution de 1789, un espace d'amitié et de coopération à la mesure de nos combats communs. Cela veut dire que la contribution que des Africains ont apportée au patrimoine de l'Universel ne doit pas être ignorée. La liberté et la démocratie, la justice et l'égalité sont, dès lors, notre patrimoine commun, un patrimoine dans lequel les peuples africains ont leur part de contribution. . . . Il est temps que les injustices dont l'Afrique et les Africains sont l'objet soient corrigées, pour que nous bâtissons, tous ensemble, un monde de paix, fondé sur la reconnaissance mutuelle, l'égale dignité des peuples et des individus, l'égalité des droits, chaque fois que les servitudes sont partagées. . . . Malgré les vicissitudes de l'Histoire, nous sommes nombreux, en Afrique et en France, à être déterminés à préserver et privilégier les relations exceptionnelles d'amitié et de coopération tissées entre la France et l'Afrique.')

[67] Christophe Champin 'De l'argent pour les tirailleurs', *Radio France International*, broadcast on 24 Aug. 2004, <http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/056/impr/article_30016.asp>, accessed 6 June 2006.

[68] Pierre-André Wiltzer, 'Commémoration du débarquement des tirailleurs sénégalais à Toulon' (allocution de M. Pierre-André Wiltzer, ambassadeur en mission, haut représentant pour la sécurité et la prévention des conflits,

This was, indeed, the first time that a representative of the French state had made an official statement about what had happened. It is therefore hardly surprising that his moral judgement seemed like balsam on an open wound, even if an official apology from the French government, which the press maintained was expected by President Wade, has so far not been forthcoming.[69] What also remains unclear is whether the various generations of veterans from all the different countries were also satisfied with Wiltzer's statement, for there is still no question of a pardon for those condemned at that time—they were merely given an amnesty.

Equally, it is debatable whether the Journée du Tirailleur and the gestures of Franco-African brotherhood connected with it were really received with such positive appreciation by the African veterans. They became increasingly irritated by the administrative pedantry with which the French authorities approached the issue of bringing Africans' pensions and the rights of their children into line with French rights. It therefore seems likely that the veterans regarded these symbolic gestures of Franco-African, or Franco-Senegalese brotherhood, which representatives of both the French and African states espoused, as mere facades behind which was a simple, but unpalatable truth, expressed by one veteran to the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* in February 2005: 'The increase is not enough . . . when we were at war no one made a distinction between Frenchmen and others. Why make one today?'[70]

Dakar, 23 Aug. 2004, <http://www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/BASIS/epic/www/doc/DDD/922877954.doc>, accessed 6 June 2006). ('Un événement tragique et choquant qui suscite l'indignation, l'incompréhension et la tristesse pour ceux qui en ont été les victimes et pour leurs proches. Ceux qui en portent la responsabilité, du côté des autorités françaises de l'époque, ont sali l'image de la France et des valeurs que les combattants français et africains continuaient de défendre ensemble, au même moment, sur le sol européen.')

[69] 'The Senegalese President appreciated this, but he still expects a formal apology.' Champin, 'De l'argent' ('Le président sénégalais a apprécié mais il attend toujours des excuses en bonne et due forme').

[70] 'Chirac exalte "la fraternité" franco-sénégalaise, les anciens tirailleurs s'impatient', *Le Monde*, 3 Feb. 2005. ('La hausse est insuffisante', s'est exclamé un ancien combattant rencontré à Saint-Louis. 'Quand on faisait la guerre, on ne faisait pas de différence entre les Français et les autres. Pourquoi en faire aujourd'hui?')

Similarly, the question of how the return of 'Demba and Dupont' was received by the public in Dakar and in Senegal as a whole should also be examined. A newspaper article published directly after the restoration of the monument in the Senegalese daily *Wal Fadjri* on 25 August 2004 is clearly an appeal to the civilian population not to let this reanimation of colonial symbols, initiated at state level, go without comment. Entitled 'Demba and Dupont—Yesterday's Shame, Today's Honour', the article claimed that 'Demba and Dupont . . . should never have met again on a Dakar street. We are now reprinting an article of 1983. This may perhaps help us to judge whether it was right to rehabilitate this sculpture, once so disputed and despised. Our contribution to getting the debate going once again.'[71]

Thus the restoration of this colonial sculpture in the postcolonial state and the strategically motivated wrestling between interest groups in civil society and representatives of the state to allocate meaning to the African victims of war shows a 'multiple recycling'[72] of key landmarks in the Franco-African war memorial landscape. It must already have become obvious, however, that in the meantime the *mémoire combattante* has been instrumentalized by political and civilian agents who are placed outside the primary memorial community of war veterans and are making their mark on this memorial landscape by establishing new claims.

Finally, I will present one example to show how, in this process, the primary memorial milieu is rejuvenated and trans-locally restructured, and also to illustrate the political recodification of memorial practices connected with it. In March 2005, during a visit to Lyon, the Senegalese President took part in a ceremony to commemorate 212 African soldiers who were massacred by a German tank unit on 20 June 1940.[73] At the monument of Chasselay-Montluzin set up in their

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[71] 'Demba et Dupont: honte d'hier, honneur d'aujourd'hui', *Wal Fadjri L'Aurore*, 25 Aug. 2004. ('Demba et Dupont, la statue qui surplombe la nouvelle place du Tirailleur à Dakar, n'aurait plus jamais dû se trouver dans une avenue de Dakar. . . . L'article que nous reproduisons ci-dessous date de 1983. Aujourd'hui, il pourrait aider à juger de la pertinence ou non de réhabiliter la sculpture jadis combattue et honnie. Une manière de relancer le débat.')

[72] Barcellini, 'Les monuments en hommage', 134.

[73] Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*, 167–9.

honour,[74] Abdoulaye Wade laid a miniature reproduction of Demba and Dupont. The head of state wanted his gesture to be seen as a contribution to the 'memory of the many common battles . . . which the Senegalese and French have fought in the name of freedom over several centuries'.[75] The paucity of sources makes it impossible to tell to what extent Wade was aware of a memorial initiative from below which had taken place more than eight years previously. On 11 November 1996, more than a hundred people had gathered at the monument, including several representatives of the *sans papiers* movement of Africans who were staying in France illegally, and who had become famous for occupying the Paris church of Saint-Bernard. In a ceremony, as 'children of the Senegalese Rifles', they had invoked Africans who had died in the war and veterans to bear witness to their battle against xenophobia, marginalization, and violent deportation, thereby giving expression and moral legitimacy to their demand to be allowed to live in the former colonial metropole. 'By our presence we make ourselves part of a continuity. The Senegalese Rifles paved the way for us. Just as they fought yesterday, so today we are also fighting for freedom', to quote the spokesman of the *sans papiers*, Babacar Diop.[76]

[74] On the memorial of Chasselay-Montluzin, see Barcellini, 'Les monuments en hommage', 130–1.

[75] Mamadou Cissé, 'Wade docteur honoris causa: Lyon rend hommage à l'Humaniste', *Le Soleil*, 22 Mar. 2005, <http://www.seneportal.com/ modules.phb?name=news&file=article&sid=1527>, accessed 14 May 2005. ('Le président Abdoulaye Wade a déclaré à cette occasion que cette cérémonie est organisée 'en souvenir d'un des nombreux combats communs que Sénégalais et Français ont menés au nom de la liberté pendant plusieurs siècles.')

[76] Babacar Diop, quoted in 'Tirailleurs, sans papiers, même combat!', *Lyon Capitale*, 1998, <http://www.lyoncapitale.fr/ArchivesLyonCapitale/1998/ 61tir.html>, accessed 7 June 2006. ('Nous, les sans-papiers, sommes les enfants des tirailleurs sénégalais . . . Par notre présence, nous nous inscrivons dans une continuité. Les tirailleurs sénégalais nous ont ouvert la voie. Comme eux hier, nous nous battons aujourd'hui pour la liberté.')

Conclusion

In the memorial strategies of the Senegalese President observed here, one can detect a multiplicity of strategically motivated intentions: first, to undo, so to speak, nearly eighty years of colonial rule in the territory he now governed, while setting himself up as the heir to a Franco-Senegalese past that was free of colonial implications and brilliantly remoulded; and, at the same time, symbolically to under-pin in an extremely interesting way his ongoing efforts to achieve equality for the African veterans. What is certain is that in so doing the Senegalese President insinuated himself as a new political actor into the nationally choreographed French memory, thereby giving it a new dynamic. His intervention did indeed culminate in a common Franco-African gesture, in which the experiences of a shared, but unequal (post)colonial situation increasingly had their differences eliminated and were recodified. This is apparent not least in the fact that the previously clandestine *lieu de memoire* Thiaroye that had been a taboo for over sixty years has been brought home and given a more or less officially sanctioned place in the landscape of Franco-African war memorials. Whether this merging from above of two *lieux de memoire* which, though closely connected by 'the same history', have very different symbolic connotations, will be beneficial to a 'genuine reassessment of French colonialism' in Senegal, as Ruth Ginio has predicted,[77] remains to be seen. In the interests of such a develop-ment one can only wish the on-going struggle for interpretative supremacy a long life, or in other words, hope that Demba and Dupont have not yet reached the last station of their journey.

[77] Ginio, 'African Colonial Soldiers', 155.

PART II

The Event as a *lieu de mémoire*

4

The Absent Site of Memory:
The Kanpur Memorial Well and the 1957 Centenary
Commemoration of the Indian 'Mutiny'

Stephen Heathorn

In 1957 the city of Kanpur (Cawnpore)[1] erected a statue to Tantya Tope on a blank sandstone circle in the centre of the municipally owned Nana Rao Park.[2] Tope was a hero of the 1857 rebellion, as was Nana Sahib (Dhondu Pant), after whom the park had been named.[3] The erection of this Indian nationalist monument caused some consternation amongst the remaining British community within India,

[1] Cawnpore was renamed Kanpur in 1948. In this article, I use the old British spelling, except for specific references to post-Independence India.

[2] Raleigh Trevelyan, *The Golden Oriole: Childhood, Family and Friends in India* (London, 1987), 472–3, and Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (London, 1996), 553–4.

[3] Tantya Tope (1814–59) was a friend of Nana Sahib (1824–?) and his chief military officer during the 'Mutiny' rebellion of 1857–8, winning over Indian troops based at Cawnpore to the rebel cause and then leading a successful guerrilla campaign against the British until he was captured and executed in 1859. Nana Sahib was the adopted son of the Maratha Peshwe Baji Rao II, who was deprived of his East India Company pension by the British because of his adopted status after the death of Baji Rao in 1851. He led rebel forces against the British during the events of 1857–8, and was subsequently demonized by the British as the leader who had ordered the massacres at Cawnpore.

and an official complaint was made to both the national and regional authorities by the British High Commission in New Delhi. As a result, the monument was moved a dozen yards from this initial position, so that it merely overlooked the stone circle instead of standing at its centre. The reason for the British complaint and the insistence that the Tope statue be moved, was that when the park—which until 1948 had been maintained by a British trust, The Memorial Well Garden Society[4]—was transferred to the city authorities, the only condition was that nothing whatsoever could be built over the sandstone circle. Nano Rao Park had been, until 1949, the Cawnpore Memorial Gardens, and the sandstone circle at its centre was all that was left of the memorial well monument, one of the most venerated British shrines of the Raj, built on the site of the final resting place of the approximately 125 women and children killed in the city on 15 July 1857. Yet without prior knowledge, a visitor after 1949 would have had no inkling that the blank sandstone circle within this pleasant but otherwise nondescript park was once more often visited by Europeans in India than was the Taj Mahal.[5] That Indian nationalists chose to erect their own monument to the 1857 'Mutiny'[6] on the centenary of those events is hardly surprising. But it was the British themselves who accomplished the removal of the original monument

He escaped capture and survived the conflict, but disappears from the historical record thereafter. For details on both men see Pratul Chandra Gupta, *Nana Sahib and the Rising at Cawnpore* (Oxford, 1963) and Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Spectre of Violence: The 1857 Kanpur Massacres* (Delhi, 1998).

[4] *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom* (New Delhi, 1951), 16, Oriental and India Office Library, British Library (hereafter OIOL) R/4/84. The Society was an ad hoc group of local British officials and merchants who had looked after the gardens since they had been transferred to their care from that of an official management committee of the government of the United Provinces in 1920.

[5] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered,* 551.

[6] The term 'Mutiny' is used to identify the wider events of 1857 because that is the term used until 1957 by the British in India (and in Whitehall) to describe the uprising. The terminology of the 1857–8 uprising is, of course, contested; hence the use of quotation marks around the term. See Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', in id. and G. S. Spivak (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1983), 77. As this article is primarily about the British memory of the event, and not the Indian, I do not think it necessary to review the extensive historiographical discussion about the actual

Fig. 4.1. Cawnpore Memorial Well, postcard *c.*1905 (in possession of author).

in the memorial gardens some eight years before 1957 in a deliberate attempt to obliterate one of their most precious sites of remembrance (see Fig. 4.1).

In *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora argued in the context of the French nation that a variety of objects, places, and concepts have become the fixed, externalized sites of what was once an internalized, social memory.[7] The collapse of 'living' collective memory and its replacement by the deliberate preservation of historical memory in specific memory sites, Nora and others suggest,[8] is characteristic of modernity, and following Nora many practitioners in the recent

character of the 1857 uprising, but for an introduction to the complexities of this debate see M. L. Bhargava, *Saga of 1857: Success and Failures* (New Delhi, 1992) and S. B. Chaudhuri, *English Historical Writings on the Indian Mutiny 1857–9* (Calcutta, 1979).

[7] Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de mémoire*, i. *La république;* ii. *La nation* (in 3 vols.); iii. *Les France* (in 3 vols.) (Paris, 1984–92).

[8] Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), 3–4, 22–4; Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 4, 15, 275–6; Helga Nowotny, *Time: The Modern and the Postmodern Experience*, trans. Neville Pierce (Cambridge, 1994), 22–3; Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde,*

memory boom[9] have tended to subject such sites of memory to rigorous analysis, examining them as self-referential signifiers.[10] It is questionable, however, whether a memorial monument like that which stood at Cawnpore from the early 1860s to the late 1940s can alone convey transparent expressions of intended (or even accreted) social and political meaning: objects do not speak for themselves. Rather, the significance of a physical site of remembrance is based on how observers have perceived and interpreted the meaning of the object and transmitted that perception to others. If, as Nora suggests, particular sites become the locus of collective memory,[11] then we should conceptualize that memory not as self-signifying, but as 'the result of the interaction among three types of historical factors: the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or

Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism (Durham, NC, 1987), 13; Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avant-Garde* (London, 1995), p. xii. More generally, see also David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985); Matt Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (Chicago, 1996); and Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004).

[9] On the origins and historiography of the 'memory boom' see Jay M. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2006).

[10] Pierre Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History', in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York, 1996–8), i. 19.

[11] For discussions of the idea of collective memory as used by Nora and his contributors, see Keith Michael Baker, 'Memory and Practice', *Representations*, 11 (Summer 1985), 134–59; Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn (eds.), 'Memory and Counter Memory', special issue of *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989); Amos Funkenstein, 'Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness', *History and Memory*, 1 (1989), 5–26; Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, 'Collective Memory—What is it?', *History and Memory*, 8 (1996), 30–50; Alon Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review*, 102/5 (1997), 1,386–403; J. K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology,* 24 (1998), 105–40; and K. L. Klein, 'On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69 (2000), 127–50.

transform such artefacts according to their own interests'.[12] This 'hermeneutical triangle'—the dialogue between the object itself, its makers, and its consumers[13]—can help us to appreciate the evolving meaning for the British of the Cawnpore site in the second half of the nineteenth century, the significance of the removal of the actual monument immediately after Indian independence, and the continuing anxieties among British officials and residents in independent India about the symbolism of the location even after the removal of all physical markers of the commemorated events from the site.

I. *The Bibighar Massacre and the Construction of Remembrance in the Cawnpore Memorials*

The 'Mutiny' began among the disaffected Indian infantry in early 1857, the spark for revolt being the introduction of new rifle cartridges that used animal fats for their lubrication. Detachments of the Bengal army of the East India Company rose against their officers at Meerut in May, killing many and setting fire to the cantonment before marching on to Delhi, swearing loyalty to Bahadur Shah II, a descendant of the last Mughal ruler, and declaring him King of Hindustan. Revolts against British rule followed throughout central and northern India, most significantly at Delhi, Lucknow, and Cawnpore, but did not spread to the armies of the presidencies of Madras or Bombay. The military revolt also unleashed widespread agrarian unrest, particularly in the recently annexed province of Oudh (Awadh),[14] but these popular struggles tended to remain localized

[12] Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', *History and Theory*, 41/2 (2002), 179–97, at 180.

[13] Ibid. 197. See also Marius Kwint, 'Introduction: The Physical Past', in id. et al. (eds.), *Material Memories* (Oxford, 1999), 3; Nick Merriman, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Making Early Histories in Museums* (London, 1999), 6; and Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artefacts of German Memory, 1870–1990* (Berkeley, 2000), 10.

[14] G. Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of 1857', in R. Guha and G. C. Spivak (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies I* (Oxford, 1992); R. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi, 1983); J. Pemble, *The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801–1859* (London, 1977); and Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1978).

and disparate, so that the events of 1857–8 became 'something more than a Sepoy mutiny, but something less than a national revolt'.[15] With the arrival of some 35,000 additional troops the rebels were brutally suppressed. News accounts riveted public attention in Britain on the Indian uprising and the struggle to repress it, turning otherwise obscure British generals into household names.[16]

In Cawnpore British civilians, officers, and troops under the leadership of General Hugh Massey Wheeler took refuge in an unfinished barracks complex, hastily fortified and subsequently referred to as the 'entrenchment'. Besieged for weeks by several thousand Sepoys led by Nana Sahib, eventually the British surrendered on 26 June, on the promise of safe passage down the Ganges to Allahabad on boats supplied by the rebels. However, while boarding the boats at the landing stage (the Sati Chaura Ghat), the British were ambushed by Nana Sahib's forces. All but four of the British men were killed, and some 125 women and children were captured and imprisoned in a house in the city known as the Bibighar ('the house of the ladies'[17]), only themselves to be killed and their bodies thrown into a well on 15 July, two days before Cawnpore was relieved by a British force under General Henry Havelock (see Fig. 4.2).[18]

The massacres at Cawnpore were, for the British, one of the signal events of the 1857–8 revolt, central to framing the entire 'Mutiny' narrative in British official and popular accounts for the remainder of the century.[19] As late as the 1890s the American missionary William Butler could refer to the events at Cawnpore as 'the blackest crime in human history' since 'every element of perfidy and cruelty was con-

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[15] Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857–1870* (Princeton, 1965), 60.

[16] For Bernard Porter's view of how rare such attention was see his *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (Oxford, 2004), 84, 112.

[17] This name predated the incarceration of the British group there.

[18] Early accounts of the events at Cawnpore include J. Shepherd, *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore, during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857* (Lucknow, 1894), and G. Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (London, 1886). More recent discussions include R. Mukherjee, ' "Satan let loose upon Earth": The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857', *Past and Present,* 128 (1990), 92–116; B. English, 'Debate: The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857', *Past and Present,* 142 (1994), 169–78; and Mukherjee's 'Reply', 178–89.

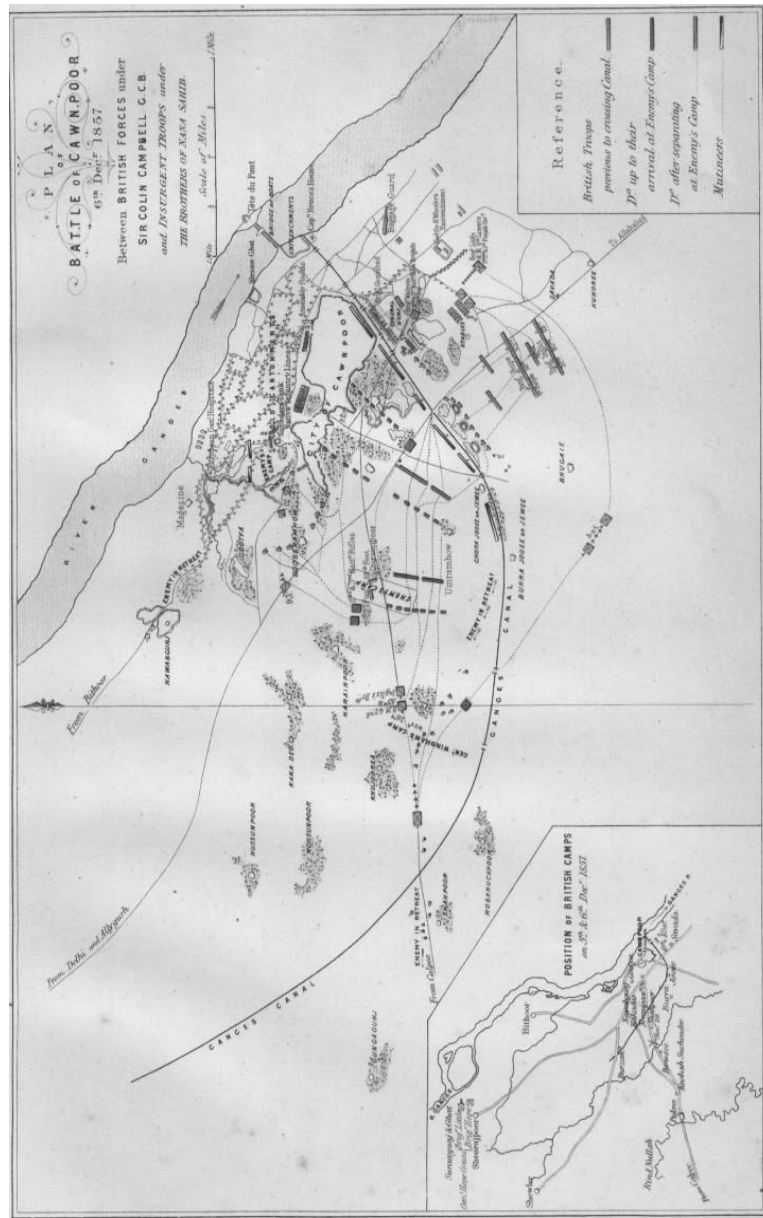[19] Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, 289–90.

Fig. 4.2. Battle plan of Cawnpoor (Cawnpore), 1857.

centrated in it. No act ever carried to so many hearts such a thrill of horror as did the deed that was done there on 15th July, 1857'.[20] The suffering of British women at Cawnpore quickly became a metonym for the severity of the challenge to the British Empire in India. Subsequently, the events at Cawnpore tended to be depicted through a gendered narrative in which Indian brutality to British women displaced the brutality of British colonial rule and the terrible reprisals exacted on those suspected of participation in the 1857 revolts.[21]

Consequently, even though twice as many children as women died at the Bibighar, for the British the event came to be known as the 'Massacre of the Ladies' and the 'Slaughter in the House of the Ladies'.[22] Moreover, the nakedness of the corpses convinced those that discovered them that the women had been subjected to sexual humiliations, although there was never any actual evidence of this, as contemporaries quickly noted, and later official investigations found the likelihood of sexual assault remote.[23] Still, innuendo and suggestive images of the fate of the prisoners in the Bibighar effectively raised popular outrage among both British troops and those reading news of the events back in Britain. The 'outrages' against British women perpetrated at Cawnpore thus confirmed British views of Indians as degraded savages, and served as a rallying cry to the building of a renewed, Christian-militaristic masculinity. Faced with such apparent barbarism, the savagery of British reprisals was the more easily rationalized. Indeed, British vengeance appeared all the more virtuous in the face of the demonization and emasculation of the Indian.[24]

[20] William Butler, *Land of the Veda* (New York, 1894), 294.

[21] Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, 1993); Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY, 1988); and Nancy L. Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830–1947* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1999).

[22] J. W. Sherer, *Daily Life during the Indian Mutiny: Personal Experiences of 1857* (Allahabad, 1910), 78.

[23] See G. W. Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (Edinburgh 1904), p. xi and J. Shepherd, *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore, during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857* (Lucknow, 1894), 158. On the official investigation see Mukherjee, 'Satan let loose upon the Earth', 115.

[24] For this process in general see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995).

The events of 1857–8 provoked substantial political and military reforms, the most significant being the replacement of the East India Company by a more formal colonial administration, and the beefing-up of the British component of the armies in India. But the 'Mutiny' also had a powerful and lasting cultural legacy within both Britain and India. The 'Mutiny' became a touchstone in cultural representations of the British Raj until independence, aiding in the hardening of racial categories and increasing the symbolic distance between the British and their Indian subjects.[25] Popular histories about the 'Mutiny' flowed liberally on the heels of the journalism, poetry, and memoirs of survivors and campaign participants.[26] Tellingly, even serious general histories of India that did not dwell on the massacres at Cawnpore nevertheless contained illustrations or photos of the memorial to the victims established at the Bibighar well site in the 1860s.[27] More than fifty 'Mutiny Novels' were published between 1858 and 1947,[28] and a scandal erupted over 'Mutiny' paintings exhibited in London in 1858.[29] In later nineteenth-century British schoolbooks, discussions of the Raj tended to revolve around the events of 1857, usually explaining the British presence in India with-in a symbolic narrative of Indian treachery and British tragedy (sym-

[25] Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*; Bernard Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Colonial India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).

[26] Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London, 1997), 278–98; Michael Edwardes, *Red Year: The Indian Rebellion of 1857* (London, 1973), 180–2.

[27] See e.g. Robert Frazer, *British India* (New York, 1972 edn.), 293.

[28] Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2005), 3–9. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, suggests that the number is more than eighty; Manu Goswani, '"Englishness" on the Imperial Circuit: Victorian Englishness, Mutiny Tours in Colonial South Asia', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 9/1 (1996), 54–84, states that there are more than 150, but this estimate is purely speculative and must include histories, drama, and other forms of literature, or works only tangentially related to the 'Mutiny'.

[29] Brian Allen, 'The Indian Mutiny and British Painting', *Apollo*, 132/343 (1990), 152–8, at 156; Alison Blunt, 'Embodying War: British Women and Domestic Defilement in the Indian "Mutiny", 1857–8', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26/3 (2000), 403–28, at 416–20; Mary Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947* (Manchester, 2002), 113–15.

bolized by the well at Cawnpore), heroic resistance against over-whelming odds (demonstrated by the siege of Lucknow), and manly triumph and renewal (the climax of which was the recapture of Delhi).[30] As Gautam Chakravarty has demonstrated, a 'dominant in-terpretation' of the meaning of the 'Mutiny' developed as the events unfolded and, with the exception of a few dissenting voices, lasted for a century after 1857.[31] This dominant interpretation was neither systematic nor conspiratorial, but rather a 'network of plots, redac-tions, myths, politics and cultures' that coalesced quickly around a number of core images, key among them those 'of British women as the helpless victims of Mutiny violence' which stemmed from the events at Cawnpore.[32]

The process of commemorating the massacre and the political manipulation of the martyrs began as soon as Havelock's relieving forces discovered the Cawnpore sites on 16 July 1857. The Bibighar was searched for any inscriptions from the victims about the events, and when none could be found, British troops provided their own impromptu imagined memorials in the form of graffiti:[33] 'Your wives and children are here in misery and at the disposal of savages'; 'My child!'; 'Think of us!'; 'Avenge us!'[34] 'Country men and women, re-

[30] See Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*; John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* (Manchester, 1984); Katherine Castle, 'The Imperial Indian', in J. A. Mangan (ed.), *Imperial Curriculum* (London, 1993); Katherine Castle, *Britan-nia's Children* (Manchester, 1996), 20–5; Stephen Heathorn, *For Home, Country, and Race: Constructing Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1880–1914* (Toronto, 1999), 133–5.

[31] Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination*, 181.

[32] Procida, *Married to the Empire*, 111. Procida's book is, however, concerned to demonstrate that in their daily lives the Memsahibs refused to be bound by these discourses of feminine victimization and protective menfolk.

[33] Francis Maude, an artillery officer, sketched several men in the act of writ-ing 'Countrymen revenge' on a wall near the well. See Francis Cornwallis Maude, *Memories of the Mutiny* (London, 1894), cited in Peter Stanley, ' "Highly Inflammatory Writings": Soldiers' Graffiti and the Indian Rebellion', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 74/300 (1996), 236. Similarly, *The Times* correspondent William Howard Russell stressed in his diary in Feb. 1858 that these inscriptions 'did not exist when Havelock entered the place, and there-fore was not the work of any of the poor victims', *My Indian Mutiny Diary,* re-print of *My Diary in India, in the Year 1858–59* (1st edn. 1860; London 1957), 35.

[34] Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving a detailed account of the*

member the 15th of July, 1857. Your wives and families are here in misery and at the disposal of savages, who has [*sic*] *ravished* both young and old, and then killed. Oh, oh! My child, my child. Country-men, revenge it.'[35] 'Remember Cawnpore!' was also scrawled on the walls in numerous places, and became the de facto battle cry for the British during the remainder of the campaign to suppress the rebel-lion.[36] This re-inscription of the site of the massacre by the troops that found the gruesome well, which was located in the courtyard of the Bibighar, encouraged subsequent British soldiers to carry out, with-out pause, the brutal retaliation and punishments ordered by Brigadier-General James Neill and the other British commanders.[37] These reprisals included Neill's infamous 'strange law' of 25 July that decreed that the blood and gore of the Bibighar would hereafter be cleaned by Indian prisoners before execution in a manner 'made as revolting to [Indian] feelings as possible'.[38] Lieutenant Arthur Lang wrote of his reaction to the site/sight in a letter home:

> No one who has seen that spot can ever feel anything but deep hatred to the Nana and his fellow fiends and all his fellow race.

Sepoy insurrection in India, and a concise history of the great military events which have tended to consolidate British Empire in Hindostan, 2 vols. (London, 1858–9), i. 377; Forbes Mitchell, *The Relief of Lucknow* (1st edn. 1893; Folio edition, London, 1962), 113.

[35] *The Times*, 16 Jan. 1858, 10.

[36] George Dangerfield, *Bengal Mutiny* (New York, 1933), 206.

[37] Survivor of the Cawnpore massacres, Mowbray Thomson, believed that 'the inscriptions, which soon became numerous, were put there by the troops, to infuriate each other in the work of revenging the atrocities'. Mowbray Thom-son, *The Story of Cawnpore* (London, 1859), 214. Stanley's study of military graffiti during the Mutiny suggests that the motives behind the writing of such inscriptions, while they were clearly intended to exacerbate the retribu-tive desires of those following, were not malicious or silly. Rather, they sug-gest a desire vicariously to share the ordeal; ambiguity between horror and fascination; or, recalling the contemporary belief that the captives were 'ravished', a darker motive, born of psycho-sexual prurience. See Stanley, ' "Highly Inflammatory Writings" ', 236.

[38] John William Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857–1858*, 3 vols. (London, 1880), ii. 399. For graphic descriptions of the ritual humiliations at Cawnpore, see Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny* (London, 1978), 211; and Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 454–7.

> No officer standing in those rooms spoke to another, tho' each
> knew his neighbour's feelings. I know I could not have spoken.
> I felt as if my heart was stone and my brain fire, and that the
> spot was enough to drive one mad. Neill made his high-caste
> Brahmin and Musalman Sepoy prisoners lick the stains on the
> floor and wall before he hung them. The gallows on which he
> hung them is the only pleasant thing in the Compound on
> which to rest the eye. All these fiends will never be repaid one
> tenth of what they deserve.[39]

Such attitudes were clearly common among the British within India. When Deputy Commissioner of the Punjab, Francis Cooper, summarily executed nearly 500 unarmed mutineers at Ujnalla (Ajnala) on 30–1 July 1857, he justified his actions by exclaiming: 'There is a well at Cawnpore, but there is also [now] one at Ujnalla.'[40]

The Bibighar was the first focus of commemoration, but attention soon switched to the well in which the massacred bodies had been deposited. For reasons of hygiene, Havelock and Neill decided not to disinter the bodies but rather filled the whole site with lime and consecrated it as a single grave. As a poignant marker, soldiers placed the discarded clothing of the women and children onto the resulting mound—although later observers mistook these garments for the cadavers themselves. Moreover, since the onset of monsoon rains later in the year resulted in the erosion of the earth around the corpses, it was decided to brick-over the wellhead completely.[41] A small monument in the shape of a cross was then erected in front of the well by some troops, inscribed with the verse 'I believe in the resurrection of the body' and the Bibighar itself was razed to the ground.[42] When Lord Canning, the newly proclaimed first Viceroy (1858–62), passed through Cawnpore for his Durbar, all the land around the well was cleared of the remaining partially destroyed structures.[43] When Canning returned to Cawnpore in 1861 he had

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[39] Letter cited in Wayne G. Broehl, *Crisis of the Raj* (Hanover, 1986), 145.

[40] Sir Frederick Henry Cooper, *Crisis in the Punjab* (Lahore, 1858), 123.

[41] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 549.

[42] Butler, *Land of the Veda*, 310.

[43] H. G. Keene, *Handbook to Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow and Benares* (Calcutta, 1896), 34.

decided to commission a permanent memorial to be placed on the wellhead.[44] The general layout of the memorial—a gothic stone screen surrounding a sculpture, with the whole memorial enclosed by a fenced garden—was sketched out by Charlotte, Lady Canning, who had known many of the victims of the massacre personally and was moved to honour their memory in perpetuity.[45] The gardens, which originally encompassed some 60 acres, were designed by the Collector at Cawnpore. A fine on the Indian inhabitants of Cawnpore was levied for 'their failure to resist' Nana Sahib's insurrection, and the resulting monies amounting to some £30,000 were used for the landscaping of the gardens.[46] In February 1863, the memorial gardens were opened by Canning's successor as Viceroy, Lord Elgin (1862–3), on the completion of the gothic screen at the centre of the park (designed by Colonial Henry Yule of the Bengal Engineers).[47] Thereafter, a British soldier stood on guard in the gardens at all times (right up to 1947), British visitors were required to maintain a sombre and dignified demeanour—carriages limited to foot pace, for example—and entry to the gardens was allowed to Indian residents of Cawnpore only with a special pass, but they were *never* permitted inside the gothic screen (see Fig. 4.3).[48]

While the building of the memorial gardens was quickly decided and accomplished, the shrine to the martyrs of the Raj—the memorial statue to be placed within the gothic screen on the wellhead itself—proved to be a greater challenge, particularly with regard to the issue of the appropriate iconography. Numerous demands were voiced in *The Times* for a worthy monument to the British dead.[49] One sculptor

[44] Canning to Granville, 3 Mar. 1861, reprinted in Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Second Earl Granville* (London, 1905), 395. See also *The Times*, 29 Mar. 1861, 4.

[45] Mary Ann Steggles, *Statues of the Raj* (London, 2000), 4.

[46] Charles Allen (ed.), *A Glimpse of the Burning Plain: Leaves from the Indian Journals of Charlotte Canning* (London, 1986), 122; Keene, *Handbook*, 30; Zöe Yalland, *Traders and Nabobs: The British in Cawnpore, 1765–1857* (Salisbury, 1987), 279.

[47] *The Times*, 24 Mar. 1863, 6.

[48] Keene, *Handbook*, 29; Zöe Yalland, 'Little Details of the Long View: Victorian Cawnpore', in Christopher London (ed.), *Architecture in Victorian and Edwardian India* (Bombay, 1994), 106.

[49] See the letters to *The Times*, 14, 16, 17, 19 Jan. 1860, and 10 July 1862.
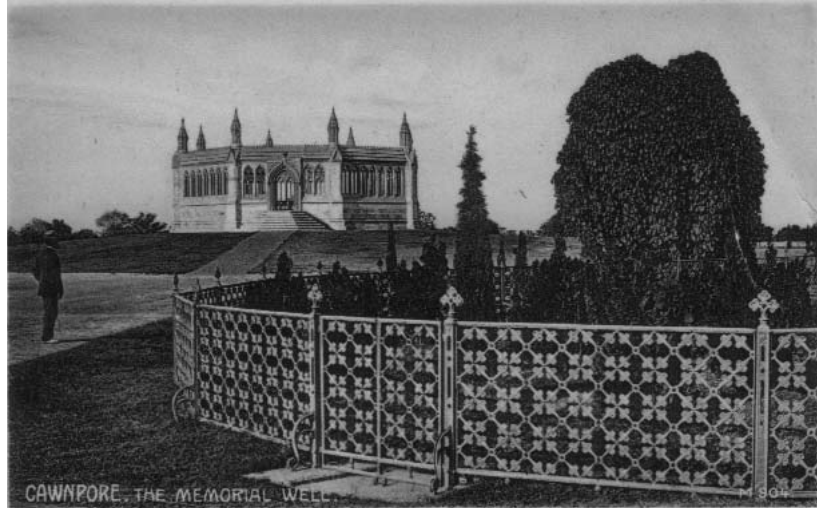
Fig. 4.3. Cawnpore Memorial Well, postcard *c*.1905 (in possession of author).

proposed the figures of 'dead children lying at the feet of an English woman leaning on a cross pierced with a sword'.[50] This was too graphic for the Cannings, who wanted to avoid depicting the 'horrors' of 1857 and argued that 'this vision of murder and terror is not the moment to be perpetuated but rather the condition of sober mournfulness'.[51] The Cannings were instead moved by the design of Baron Carlo Marochetti, who proposed a downcast marble angel standing before a cross, palm fronds in its crossed arms, a design very similar to his angel guarding the monument to the Crimean war dead at Scutari.[52] The inscription around the base of his statue, which he entitled the 'Angel of the Resurrection', stated:

> SACRED TO THE PERPETUAL MEMORY OF A GREAT
> COMPANY OF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, CHIEFLY WOMEN

[50] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 550; Yalland, 'Little Details of the Long View', 106.

[51] Canning to Granville, 21 July 1861, in Fitzmaurice, *Life of Second Earl Granville*, 398; Yalland, 'Little Details of the Long View', 107.

[52] Ibid. Granville to Canning, 17 June 1861, in Fitzmaurice, *Life of Second Earl Granville*, 398.

AND CHILDREN, CRUELLY MASSACRED NEAR THIS
SPOT BY THE REBEL NANA SAHIB, AND THROWN, THE
DYING WITH THE DEAD, INTO THE WELL BENEATH ON
THE XVTH DAY OF JULY, MDCCCLVII

Given the commission, Marochetti executed his statue and had it
shipped to Cawnpore, whereupon it was placed on a pedestal over
the wellhead and surrounded by the gothic screen. The Cannings
paid for the statue out of their own funds, but both were dead (Lady
Canning died in 1861; Lord Canning in 1862) before its completion in
1865.[53] Once the whole shrine was completed, visitors would trek to
the centre of the gardens, walk up a grassy knoll to Yule's screen and
pass into the sacred site through a heavy wrought-iron gate, over
which were the words of Psalm 141: 'Our bones are scattered at the
grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the
earth.'[54] The Cannings proposed a second major monument at
Cawnpore to be funded by public subscription. This took the form of
a church over the site of British dead from the siege of Wheeler's
entrenchment. This large, Romanesque-style Anglican church was
named All Souls, and its interior walls were covered with plaques
honouring the regiments and men and women of the 1857 garrison.[55]
The Bishop of Calcutta consecrated the church upon its completion in
1875 (see Figs. 4.4 and 4.5).[56]

Both the angel in the Memorial Gardens and All Souls Church
were infused with obvious Christian symbolism, and they soon
became the focus of pilgrimage, but most particularly the memorial
well. The Cawnpore sites were frequently visited from the 1860s until
the inter-war years. Generally these visits can be divided up into offi-
cial tours by royal and vice-regal figures, pilgrimages by the mem-
bers of the British-Indian[57] community within the sub-continent, and

[53] Keene, *Handbook*, 34.

[54] Butler, *Land of the Veda*, 310.

[55] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 560.

[56] Gibbs, *The Anglican Church in India,* 223, cited in Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered,* 551.

[57] Following the practice used by Elizabeth Buettner in *Empire Families* (Ox-
ford, 2004), the term British-Indian refers to British residents of India. While
not ideal, this term avoids the confusion (and Anglo-centrism) of the term
Anglo-Indian, which was used to describe both British residents in the nine-
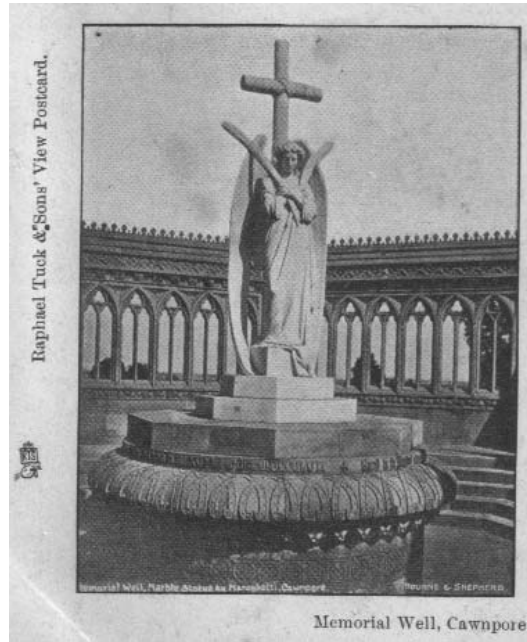
Fig. 4.4. Cawnpore Memorial Well, postcard 1903 (in possession of author).
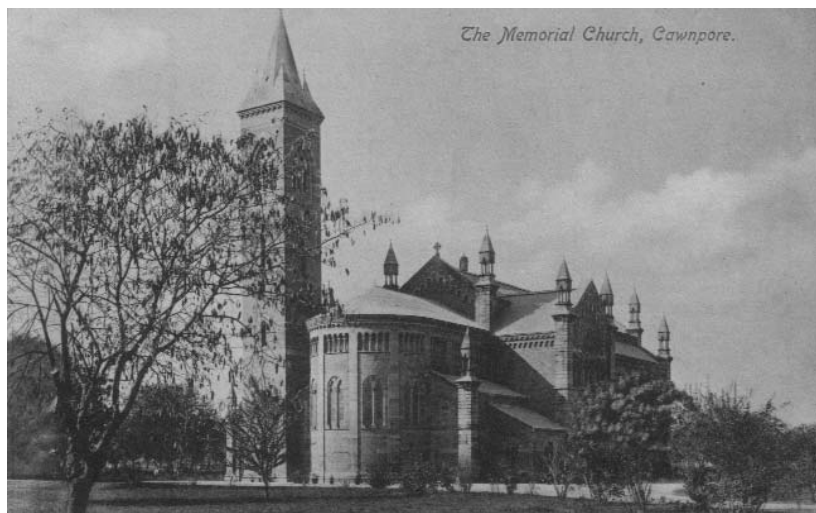
Fig. 4.5. Cawnpore Memorial Church, postcard *c.*1905 (in possession of author).

tourism by British and foreign visitors. In all three cases, the aim of visiting the memorials, and what significance was taken away by visitors, were informed by the pre-existing 'Mutiny' narrative: in short, visitors brought to the memorials the meaning they intended to find there.

Vice-regal tours of Indian territory had been established by Canning and became a staple of the elaborate rituals of British 'ornamentalism' that were designed to impart, symbolically, British imperial authority.[58] The 1875 tour by the Prince of Wales, for instance, followed what had by then become the standard official pilgrimage route to the 'Mutiny' sites of Lucknow, Cawnpore, and Delhi. When he arrived at Cawnpore, the Prince immediately visited All Souls Memorial Church and then the Memorial Gardens, reading the 'touching words' of the inscription aloud in a 'low voice' while his retinue remained solemnly silent.[59] The Prince instructed his entire retinue 'not to leave till they had seen that which they had come to look for'—the wellhead statue.[60] The Viceroy Lord Lytton (1876–80) followed in the steps of the Prince and toured Cawnpore's memorials on the twentieth anniversary of the 'Mutiny', finding them all appropriately solemn.[61] His wife, Edith, recorded in her diary: 'Such a pretty, fresh, peaceful spot, one can hardly realize the agonies experienced there.'[62] Lytton's successor as Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon (1880–4), visited the memorials in the summer of 1880,[63] and another royal tour took place in 1905, in which the Prince and Princess of Wales paid homage to the victims of the Mutiny.[64] Official visits such as these affirmed that the monuments had become significant symbolic sites of memory for the Raj as a whole.

teenth century and people of mixed European and Asian ancestry in the twentieth century.

[58] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford, 2001); Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Colonial India', 167.

[59] W. H. Russell, *The Prince of Wales Tour: An Official Diary* (London, 1876), 401.

[60] *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1876, 5.

[61] Mary Lutyens, *The Lyttons in India: An Account of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty, 1876–1880* (London, 1979), 116.

[62] Marian Fowler, *Below the Peacock Fan: First Ladies of the Raj* (Markam, Ont., 1987), 218.

[63] *The Times*, 7 June 1880, 7.

[64] H. V. Prevost Battersby, *Through Royal Eyes* (London, 1906), 390.

The recorded impressions of official visitors indicate that the Angel statue on the wellhead had become established as the most significant symbolic marker of the Cawnpore events. The Marchioness and Marquess of Dufferin (the latter served as Viceroy from 1884 to 1888) made their visit as part of their Jubilee tour of 1887. For the Marchioness, the monument in the Memorial Gardens was 'the saddest spot of all':

> The well has been filled in, and is surrounded by an ornamental wall, inside of which, in the centre stands a white marble figure of an angel. She leans against a cross and has long wings touching the ground; her arms are crossed, and she holds a palm-branch in each hand. We did not think her face quite beautiful enough, but the whole suggests sorrow, silence, and solemnity and so far is successful. No native is ever allowed to enter this enclosure and they have to get passes to come into the Garden. It is very well kept, and is full of roses and flowering shrubs.[65]

Significantly, as with other late nineteenth-century observers, the racial exclusivity of the site was recorded in a purely matter-of-fact manner or justified on the basis that it was a scared spot for the British.[66] When Curzon, who was Viceroy from 1899 to 1905, reached India in the autumn of 1899, he made a point of visiting Cawnpore with his wife, an experience which left them deeply moved. They were in no doubt about the necessary exclusivity of the site.[67]

Descriptions of visits to the memorials by members of the British community within India tended to be made using the language of personal or familial pilgrimage.[68] For such visitors, the monuments

[65] Marchioness of Dufferin, *Our Vice-regal Life in India* (London, 1891 edn.), 218–19.

[66] Frederick Wyman, *From Calcutta to the Snowy Range, Being the Narrative Through the Upper Provinces of India* (London, 1866), 110–11.

[67] Fowler, *Below the Peacock Fan*, 269.

[68] Procida, *Married to the Empire,* 120; Margaret MacMillan, *Women of the Raj* (2nd edn.; Toronto, 2005), 73; Charles Allen (ed.), *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London, 1975), 57; Pat Barr, *The Memsahibs* (London, 1976), 192–3. On the perpetual shadow of the memorial over British-Indian life in Cawnpore, see Zöe Yalland, *The Boxwallahs: The British in Cawnpore, 1857–1947* (Norwich, 1994).

aroused 'feelings of burning indignation', of 'fresh personal sor-row',[69] and brought home how 'brutally, shudderingly real'[70] the events had been. A member of the Indian civil service found visiting Cawnpore in 1881 made the events of 1857 'painfully memorable' to him.[71] He felt compelled to visit the sites again in 1889.[72] The photo albums of many British Indians contained pictures or postcards of the Memorial Well; Andrew Ward relates finding one from William Lindsay to his niece in 1903, with his simple handwritten message, 'Remember Cawnpore', on the reverse.[73]

Indeed, ritualized remembering of the 'Mutiny' by the British Indian community, especially in gendered terms, underpinned later justifications for the use of violence to keep order within the Raj. By the early twentieth century, as Procida notes, British women in India 'fore grounded the spectre of the Mutiny and of Mutiny violence in many of their writings' and in their vocal support of General Dyer after the British massacre of unarmed Indian protestors at Amritsar in 1919.[74] British-Indian women petitioned in support of Dyer and defended his actions in the press and in fiction, drawing explicit connections between the events at Cawnpore and what Dyer's 'drastic actions' might have prevented. The parallels were made stark by the collective punishment meted out by Dyer in response to the beating (and suspected, although unsubstantiated, rape) of a British missionary, Miss Sherwood, in the immediate aftermath of the Amritsar massacre. Here were clear echoes of the events of Cawnpore and the need for a 'vigorous' response: Neill in 1857 had humiliated suspected mutineers on their hands and knees in the Bibighar; in 1919, Dyer ordered all Indian men passing the street where Miss Sherwood had been assaulted to get on their hands and knees and crawl. In both cases British collective punishments were justified with reference to

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[69] Isabel Fraser Hunter, *The Land of Regrets* (London, 1909), 135.

[70] Norah Rowan Hamilton, *Through Wonderful India and Beyond* (London, 1915), 156.

[71] Ethel A. Waley Cohen (ed.), *A Young Victorian in India: Letters of H. M. Kisch* (London, 1957), 183.

[72] Ibid. 239.

[73] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 683; Yalland reprinted one of these post-cards in her essay 'Little Details of the Long View', 99.

[74] Procida, *Married to the Empire*, 118–26, quotation at 126.

the suffering of British women.[75] Significantly, however, as Procida convincingly demonstrates, the public support British-Indian women demonstrated for Dyer indicated their position of continued commitment to the empire through violence if need be.[76] This was the lesson of the 'Mutiny' and the events of Cawnpore for many British women. Writing in the 1930s, one British-Indian, Alice Lowther, summed up the importance of actively remembering 1857: 'Remembering what [the British community in 1857] endured, it is unbelievable to me how anyone can breathe, even in secret: Let us abandon India!'[77] The nationalist challenge of the inter-war years was thus, for many within the British-Indian community, met with a call to remember the greater challenges faced in the past. And here the memorial well at Cawnpore served as the one of the most important sites of keeping that memory of challenges faced, martyrdoms made, and sacrifice avenged.

Visiting the memorial sites also became popular among tourists to India from the 1880s. *The Times* noted in 1880 that 'no European traveller passes the neighbourhood of Cawnpore without making a pilgrimage to the solemn spot from which he looks back into that terrible past'.[78] Touring the 'Mutiny' sites was made possible by the East Indian Railway line that connected Lucknow with Cawnpore in the early 1860s, a construction project part-designed to help speed troops to potential trouble spots.[79] While a feature of many tourist itineraries, visitors to Cawnpore generally only stayed in the city long enough to visit the memorial sites, all of which could easily 'be seen in two to three hours'.[80] After visiting the 'Mutiny' cities himself,

[75] Ibid. 117. See also Helen Fein, *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The Massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh and British Judgment, 1919–1920* (Honolulu, 1977), 74; and Derek Sayer, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre, 1919–1920', *Past and Present*, 131 (1991), 130–64.

[76] Procida, *Married to the Empire*, 119.

[77] Alice Lowther, *Land of the Gold Mohur* (London, 1932), 210–11, cited in Procida, *Married to the Empire*, 120.

[78] *The Times*, 3 Jan. 1880, 10.

[79] R. C. Dutt, *An Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (New York, 1904), 548. The line to Cawnpore was running by March 1863 when Lord Elgin made the trip to consecrate the well memorial, *The Times,* 24 Mar. 1863, 6.

[80] Walter del Mar, *India of Today* (London, 1905), 126. See also *Bradshaw's Through Routes to the Capitals of the World and Overland Guide to India, Persia,*

Thomas Cook commissioned guidebooks and arranged tours to northern India that paid special attention to the memorial sites.[81] Significantly, these visitors' guidebooks and official gazetteers—prepared first by the Director-General of Statistics to the government of India, and then by the Secretary of State for India in Council[82]—relied heavily on the early histories of the 'Mutiny' for their content and, in turn, later popular histories cited the guidebooks and gazetteers as their authorities, thereby perpetuating the 'Mutiny' narrative as the framework for understanding the sites. As Goswami notes, following de Certeau, such guidebooks thus turned the uncertainties of history into discrete, 'readable' spaces.[83] And unlike at Lucknow, where the ruined residency had itself been preserved as a memorial to the heroism of the defenders,[84] the guidebooks explained that at Cawnpore 'there are no buildings to visit; the sole interest attaching to the place being the frightful massacre which took place during the Mutiny'.[85]

Published accounts of visits to the sites similarly infused travel description with the 'Mutiny' narrative:

> Then we drove about a mile away to the deep ravine called the Suttee Chowra Ghât. Here were the very steps, shaded by the same peepul-tree, where the men, women, and children went down on their way to embark from the ghât on the river. They had surrendered to Nana Sahib, as will be remembered, on the condition of being transported in boats up the Ganges to Allahabad. The women and children had embarked in the open boats, and been pushed into the middle of the stream. The stone platform flanked by two archways was crowded with others. There was a cry of 'Treachery!' and the soldiers of

and the Far East: A Handbook of Indian, Colonial and Foreign Travel (London, 1903), 257.

[81] Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 years of Popular Tourism* (London, 1991), 148.

[82] See e.g. W. W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (London, 1885), 289–93, and *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford, 1908), 315–17.

[83] Goswami, ' "Englishness" on the Imperial Circuit', 71, 73; and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley, 1984), 35.

[84] Agnes Rush Burr, *India the Land that Lures* (Boston, 1929), 79–80.

[85] *Handbook to the Bengal Presidency* (London, 1890), 353.

> Nana Sahib, acting under his orders, opened fire. Volley after volley was fired upon the helpless occupants of each boat; a hidden battery of guns behind a tree being brought to bear upon those on the landing-stage. It became a wholesale butchery. The women and children who were captured and not massacred were taken that night to the Assembly Rooms. Here atrocities were committed such as even the page of history cannot detail, until a century has passed, and the victims and their near relations shall be laid to rest; some cannot ever be mentioned in the ears of ladies, but the world learnt then, if it never learnt before, what our sex can endure. One lady killed the native with his own sword, when he attempted, with Nana's permission, to take her away to his house. Thus they remained for upwards of a fortnight, when, at Havelock's approach, Nana Sahib ordered a general massacre at the Assembly Rooms, the 'House of Massacre' as it came to be called . . . The bodies were cast into a well. It is on this awful spot that the most perfect monument, full of beauty and peace, has been so fitly erected . . . the lovely statue of Marochetti.[86]

This fusion of 'Mutiny' narrative with travelogue continued well into the twentieth century and was incorporated into the accounts of non-British tourists, such as American biographer, Agnes Rush Burr, who in 1929 opined: 'The chief interest of Cawnpore for the average tourist is its Mutiny history. The events that happened here were far more tragic than those at Lucknow, and one feels like saying, far more sublime in courage than self-sacrifice.'[87]

For over fifty years, tourists visited the sites on practically a daily basis. They came 'from many lands' but with 'sad thoughts and respectful steps approach[ed] the Ladies Monument'.[88] The exact number of such tourists is unknowable and few left detailed public

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[86] Lady Ethel Gwendoline Moffatt Vincent, *Forty Thousand Miles over Land and Water: The Journal of a Tour through the British Empire and America*, 2 vols. (London, 1886), ii. 149–51. A similar fulsome account of the events intertwined with a visit to the shrine can be found in Julia Stone, *Illustrated India: Its Princes and People. Upper, Central and Farther India, Up the Ganges and Down the Indus* (Hartford, Conn., 1877), 227–30.

[87] Burr, *India the Land that Lures*, 83.

[88] Butler, *Land of the Veda*, 310; Yalland, *Boxwallahs*.

recollections of their experience. Indeed, some were reticent about putting their emotions into words,[89] though a few published accounts do indicate the impact of the visit. Significantly, as the memorial attracted more and more tourists, those who wrote about visiting tended to record their own impression of the Angel statue as much as express sadness or rehearse the details of the events commemorated—though some did both. No doubt tourists came to the site because of some prior knowledge of the Mutiny narrative: why else would they be visiting what was an obscure industrial city,[90] often noted for its poor visitor accommodation and general lack of beauty or interest?[91] But once at the sites they did what tourists do when visiting locations the content of which is already known to them: they passed judgement and demonstrated their aesthetic taste. After noting the importance of the site for tourists, a *Times* correspondent in 1876 proclaimed: 'It is worth notice that no two people agree, exactly as to the expression of Marochetti's angel; is it pain, pity, resignation, vengeance, or triumph?'[92] The gardens themselves were reported as 'lovely' and 'beautifully kept',[93] and worthy of 'every mournful memory from this loveliest and saddest of all spots on earth'.[94] But the Angel statue was variously depicted in travellers'

[89] On the travels of one party through Cawnpore to see 'the ever-memorable sites connected with the Sipahi Mutiny', Augusta Klein recorded in 1895: 'of the impression of these days, of their meditations in these places, our friends may be forgiven if they keep no written record.' *Amongst the Gods. Scenes of India: With Legends by the Way* (Edinburgh, 1895), 228–9. For similar reticence to speak to the experience, see also the Diary of Anne Allnut Brassey, Baroness Brassey, Feb. 1887 in *The Last Voyage to India and Australia in the Sunbeam* (London, 1888), 30–1.

[90] Contemporary British accounts strengthen this view: 'The Memorial Garden . . . is the only really interesting object in Cawnpore', Stone, *Illustrated India*, 226; '[T]he marble angel of Marochetti . . . is the chief object of interest to visitors in a city otherwise devoid of historical interest', Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 292.

[91] 'Cawnpore may be described as a dreary plain', Vincent, *Forty Thousand Miles*, 147.

[92] *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1876, 5.

[93] Letter of Alice Mary Moore Wade, 23 Dec. 1870, in *In Memoriam*, ed. Augusta S. Moore (Edinburgh, 1872), 57.

[94] Stone, *Illustrated India*, 229.

accounts as 'full of tender sorrow',[95] 'as beautiful and exquisitely simple as it can be',[96] and as 'emblematical of martyrdom and victory'.[97] The experience of visiting the site clearly was deeply moving to some visitors: 'one cannot get rid of a sad feeling about the place,'[98] and many reported breaking into tears or standing reverently before the monument.[99] In 1905 one party had to leave the city immediately after visiting the memorial, so moved were they by the 'painful memories evoked by our pilgrimage'.[100] Frederick Wyman's response soon after the memorial had been erected had been more mixed, leaving him 'with mingled feelings of regret and thankfulness—regret that the deed had been so feebly avenged, but thankfulness that it still blessed God to bless our arms.'[101] Another observer pointed to the possibility that visiting the site helped deal with such painful 'memories' of the events: 'One thinks of Cawnpore with a shudder, and leaves it with a sigh.'[102] But the power of the Mutiny narrative in conditioning responses of those visiting the site over time can be seen in the reporting of American photographer James Ricalton, who wrote in 1889: 'If I were asked to name the saddest spot and most pathetic spot in the entire world, I would say that over which the pure and brooding angel stands.'[103]

Critical appreciations of the memorial focused on what the art did or did not accomplish rather than questioned the world-historical importance of the site. Thus the theosophist H. P. Blavatsky, while not a supporter of British imperialism, upon visiting the site in the mid 1880s nonetheless concentrated his comments on the failure of the architecture appropriately to commemorate 'the great tragic event':

[95] Vincent, *Forty Thousand Miles*, 151.

[96] Wade, *In Memoriam*, 57.

[97] Revd. W. Urwick, *Indian Pictures Drawn with Pen and Pencil* (London, 1891; reprinted New Delhi, 1972), 149.

[98] Wade, *In Memoriam*, 57.

[99] H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan, 1883–1886* (Wheaton, Ill., 1975), 376–7; Burr, *India the Land that Lures*, 85.

[100] del Mar, *India of Today*, 128.

[101] Wyman, *From Calcutta to the Snowy Range*, 112.

[102] Urwick, *Indian Pictures*, 149.

[103] *James Ricalton's Photographic Travelogue of Imperial India*, ed. Christopher Lucas (1st edn. 1889; Lewiston, NY, 1990), 122.

The statue represents a coarse figure of an angel with his [*sic*] hands held open, palms down, as though he felt cold and was warming them at an open fireplace. The statue is the work of Baron Carlo Marochetti and represents, according to his idea, 'the angel of compassion.' But why this pose should represent *Compassion* and not something else, is hard to say. The statue is placed within a granite enclosure with an iron railing around it; in front, marble steps lead to a wicket gate in the railing; this is even more ridiculous, as it would seem that in a structure having no roof a gate had no place, the more so as it seems to be hanging between heaven and earth.[104]

By the turn of the twentieth century, some responses to visiting the statue were being put into the context of the future of the British within India. Some visitors were clearly critical of the symbolic context of the monuments. Beatrice and Sidney Webb made the requisite pilgrimage to the 'Mutiny' sites in 1912 and noted, '*no Indians* are allowed to enter the beautiful ornamental gardens, which are kept up out of public taxation'.

This dates from the Mutiny days, and is really an invidious piece of vengeful feeling. The soldier on duty defended the exclusion on the ground that if Indians were admitted they would picnic all over the grounds, and make a mess—but this is a mere excuse. The clerk at the bank of Bengal to whom we mentioned the matter said that he thought the continuance of an invidious race exclusion was a mistake.[105]

Others criticized the Memorial Gardens, not for its racial exclusivity or its intended purpose, but for its excessive solemnity. In his *Handbook to Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow and Benares* (1896), Henry George Keene complained:

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[104] Blavatsky, *Collected Writings,* 374–5. Emphasis in original. Where Blavatsky got the idea that the angel represented 'compassion' is unclear.
[105] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Indian Diary*, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal (New Delhi, 1988), 72, emphasis in original.

> The Garden is well laid out . . . but it is much too large for the enclosure of a tomb. . . . The necessary observances of a cemetery render this large and ornamental piece of ground useless for the ordinary purposes of a public garden; even though the monument is not visible from any but the most central position.[106]

Even when its architectural form, solemn demeanour, or racial exclusivity was criticized, however, there was no doubt of the symbolic importance vested in the memorial site by the British well into the mid twentieth century. Tellingly, even serious late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century general histories of India that passed over the events of 1857 in Cawnpore without comment nevertheless contained illustrations or photographs of the memorial sculpture.[107] Moreover, at and even after Indian independence, the site's commemorative function and the particular cast of the 'Mutiny' narrative that framed that function played on the anxieties of British officials and observers.

II. *Indian Independence, the Memorial Well,*
and the 1957 'Mutiny' Centenary

At India's independence in August 1947, one of the outstanding issues between the United Kingdom and the sovereign government of India was what would be done to protect and preserve the approximately 1.5 million British graves, and thousands of memorials, monuments, statues, and portraits left behind by the British. The Commonwealth Relations Office in London worried about the domestic political consequences of simply abandoning this mass of commemorative culture. Monuments and buildings connected with the events of 1857 were especially 'likely to rouse a good deal of strong and natural sentiment in this country [Britain] and it is desirable to do what we can to protect them. On the other hand we cannot expect Indians to exert themselves and incur expenditure in maintaining them and indeed their existence may be resented by many Indians.'[108] This

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[106] Keene, *Handbook*, 26.
[107] See e.g. Robert Frazer's 1896 text, *British India* (New York, 1972), 293.
[108] H. A. F. Rumbold, Commonwealth Relations Office (hereafter CRO) to C.

resentment was graphically displayed by the attack on the Cawnpore memorial well on the day of Independence (15 Aug. 1947), when an Indian mob scaled the garden walls, blackened the face of the monument's angel, broke its hands, and desecrated some of the graves that dotted the gardens. Although the government of the state of Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces), where Kanpur is situated, immediately apologized for the desecration and repaired the damage, the memorial well's future, and that of all India's British memorials and monuments, became the subject of anxious consideration by the British High Commission in New Delhi, and of protracted correspondence between the High Commission and officials and interested lay observers in Britain.

The British High Commissioner, Sir Terence Shone (1947–8), charged Brigadier Humphrey Bullock[109] with surveying and registering a complete list of all British monuments, memorials, and graves within India for the newly created British Monuments and Graves Section of the High Commission. This agency, along with the Indian Office of the Imperial War Graves Commission (whose remit was strictly cemeteries containing military graves), was established in December 1947 and was charged with the maintenance and supervision of British cemeteries and monuments within India. Because the annual cost of upkeep of all the locations charted was seen as prohibitively expensive—prior to independence more than £45,000 had been spent annually on just the largest and most prominent sites— and the appeal for charitable donations failed to raise substantial funds, there was little political will to ask the UK taxpayer to foot the bill in perpetuity,[110] and contingency plans had to be drawn up. In Bullock's opinion, 'monuments of the British period like monuments of the Mogul period [were] essentially monuments and evidence of

A. Gault (Office of the High Commissioner for the UK), 19 Aug. 1947, OIOL R/4/82 citing file 180/47/EC/1.

[109] Bullock was a member of the High Commission staff. His entry in *Who's Who* indicates a long record of service in various military and administrative capacities (and a particular interest in historical research) in India, but I have been unable to find more detailed biographical information on him.

[110] The British Treasury agreed in Feb. 1949 to a final contribution of £50,000 for the future upkeep of all British cemeteries and monuments in South Asia. *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom* (New Delhi, 1951), 8. OIOL R/4/84.

the history of the Dominions of India and Pakistan'. They should therefore be preserved as relics of that history by the new postcolonial states.[111] However, as Bullock reported to the British High Commissioner in December 1947, the actual alternatives open to the British with regard to the mass of memorials were limited:

> The removal of monuments and memorials to the United Kingdom, except in isolated instances, is not a practicable solution. Expense alone will rule out any mass movement of this nature. Further, generally speaking, it would be no easier . . . to find a place in England for memorials than it would be in India. One must not, however, exclude the possibility of a special depository being established in the United Kingdom for memorials and monuments from India.[112]

The first course of action was therefore an effort to convince the Indian and Pakistani governments to take over the care of British monuments themselves. Bullock drew up a document explaining the British position and meetings were arranged between the High Commissioner and the Indian Prime Minister. As Bullock explained in his memorandum:

> Our approach to this difficult subject might be based on the following considerations. Since 15 August 1947 for an Indian to be 'anti-British' has ceased to have any practical, political or logical weight. The British rule has gone for good. It would seem to follow that agitation, abhorrence or indifference towards British monuments merely on the ground that they perpetuate the 'shameful' memory of 'foreign' rule would be ill-founded. To urge on such grounds that they should be removed or demolished would be no more sensible than to propose the Taj Mahal be blown up because it is a monument of a Mogul ruler.[113]

[111] Brigadier H. Bullock's minute of 15 Dec. 1947 on the preservation of monuments of British rule in India and Pakistan, 1. OIOL R/4/82.
[112] Bullock's minute of 17 Dec. 1947 on the disposal of monuments in India, 2. OIOL R/4/82.
[113] Ibid.

Bullock did recognize, however, that many of the men in power had been 'anti-British' all their political lives and 'it cannot be expected that their outlook will undergo a sudden change by virtue of the operation of the Indian Independence Act'. Still the High Commission was urged to express to the new government of India 'that there is nothing derogatory to Indian dignity or nationhood in their continuing to preserve and maintain all important memorials of British rule, in the same way as those of Mogul and other former "foreign" rulers in their land'. He admitted that some 'tactless' inscriptions may require alteration or effacement, but noted that 'as a matter of fact, the wording of inscriptions on mutiny monuments and graves in Lucknow, Cawnpore and Delhi display, in general, a degree of moderation which is remarkable in view of the high feeling which existed amongst English people at the time of their erection'.[114] This seems to be evidence of both the continuing influence of the 'Mutiny' narrative on Bullock himself, and of psychological denial about the new realities of post-Raj South Asia and this despite the realization in Whitehall and Delhi that British monuments in the subcontinent were at risk.

After a series of discussions, the government of India graciously agreed that it would treat the vast majority of British monuments with the same dignity and respect as it treated others from Indian history, but that it would not provide funds for their upkeep. Moreover, it reserved the right to ask the British government to repatriate, or otherwise allow the Indian government to move, any monuments liable to cause offence to Indian sensibilities, and in return London asked that 'such changes as were inevitable should be made as unobtrusively as possible'.[115] In Whitehall, this informal undertaking was received first with some relief, and then with the realization that the remaining monuments still constituted a sizeable financial, and potentially a symbolic, problem. It was agreed within the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) that the best policy with regard to the plight of British monuments was to keep things quiet—especially

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[114] Bullock's minute of 15 Dec. 1947 on the preservation of monuments of British rule in India and Pakistan, 2. OIOL R/4/82.
[115] Explanation of current policy by Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Patrick Gordon Walker, to Morgan B. Milton, 7 Dec. 1950, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA) DO 35/2137.

within Britain—lest the proposed action 'by either Dominion Government would damage British prestige'.[116] The problem of the cost of upkeep was then turned over to the High Commission in Delhi and to the management of Brigadier Bullock, whose solution was to transfer the care of as many cemeteries and memorials as possible to the precincts of Christian churches in India—he noted that by the end of July 1948, '300 local committees, some of them one man affairs, had been set up in India and Pakistan, and were dealing with over 1,400 cemeteries, some of which were no more than isolated graves or small groups of graves'[117]—and to arrange the moving of small but important busts and statues to the grounds of the British High Commission or regional offices. Graves that could not be identified or which were in areas without a local community to maintain them were allowed to 'return to nature'. Bullock provided detailed instructions on how inscriptions should be transcribed and placements of monuments recorded whenever monuments were moved. He consulted with the resident European community and Church officials on how they ought to establish memorial maintenance committees and raise funds from Britain and from the local European community for their upkeep. A large-scale moving of headstones, small memorials, and monuments was thereafter undertaken.[118] More prominent statues and monuments were left where they were. Their maintenance was either left to the whims of local Indian authorities, or to funds contributed by the local European community, or, especially in the case of military monuments, they were provided with endowments from current and former members of those regiments.[119] A few memorials, however, like the Cawnpore memorial well, presented more serious difficulties.

Brigadier Bullock argued that this site was too sensitive to British sentiment to be 'left to nature', but it was also found to be prohibi-

[116] Chisholm to Gibson (Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth), 18 Oct. 1948, Re: British monuments in India, TNA DO 142/255.

[117] *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office*, 6. OIOL R/4/84.

[118] See *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office*, 6–10 for details of these arrangements, OIOL R/4/84.

[119] Bullock on the memorial to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Lucknow, 16 June 1948, OIOL R/4/87.

tively expensive for the local community to protect the monument and gardens from future defacement. In October 1947 it was suggested that the Gardens be given to the Uttar Pradesh government on condition that the local Memorial Well Gardens Society be allowed to maintain the actual well site.[120] The Lucknow Diocesan Trust and the Bishop of Lucknow wanted the British High Commission to take over care of the monument. By the end of 1948, however, Bullock decided, after further consultation with the British-Indian community, ecclesiastical authorities, and Uttar Pradesh officials, that the best course of action was to have the gothic screen, angel, and assorted tombstones moved to the churchyard of All Souls Memorial Church in Kanpur.[121] Fear of possible future desecration of the site was uppermost in Bullock's thinking here. All concerned were afraid that the memorial might 'again become a focus of extremist feeling', while it was thought unlikely that All Souls Memorial Church itself would become a target for iconoclasts. Fortunately the Church was endowed with enough funds to provide for the moving and upkeep of the statues.[122] In 1949, then, the entire well site within the gardens was levelled—the Bishop of Lucknow's advisor used the term 'obliterated'—in order to leave no trace of its former significance.[123] Bullock's idea was to destroy the 'identity of the site' so completely that no future visitor would be able to say where the well had been. This was done under the cover of darkness and, as there was no question of exhumation, after the levelling a simple tablet was laid indicating that the site was a former Christian burying ground, with no mention of the well itself or of its former significance.[124] This latter step was taken so that nothing would be later built on the site. As Bullock noted, 'it is hallowed ground to all British and indeed all Christian people, and even the slightest possibility of a secular building—not to say a Hindu Temple or a Mosque—being erected over it

[120] Chisholm to Gibson, 18 Oct. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

[121] *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office,* 16. OIOL R/4/84; Right Revd. Robinson, Bishop of Lucknow, to Robert Menzies (President, Memorial Well Gardens Society), TNA DO 142/255; memorandum on the disposition of the Cawnpore Memorial Well, TNA DO 142/256.

[122] *Short History of the British Monuments and Graves Section Office*, 16. OIOL R/4/84.

[123] See Menzies to Bullock, 17 Nov. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

[124] Cawnpore Memorial Well, TNA DO 142/255.

is abhorrent'.[125] The gardens were then donated to the city of Kanpur, the transfer deed indicating that the sole condition of the transfer was that nothing should ever be built on the site in future.

Kanpur resident Zöe Yalland and art historian Mary Ann Steggles have suggested that the moving of the memorial and the effacement of the Bibighar Well site demonstrated the 'maturity' of the British at Indian independence.[126] This is, however, a rather optimistic, perhaps even a naive, conclusion. It disregards the fervid discussions between London and officials at the High Commission in New Delhi on how to preserve British imperial memory and honour from 'nationalist renaming' and iconoclasm.[127] A report about the future of the Memorial Well compiled by Col. C. J. Toyne for the British High Commission in September 1947 was explicit about British fears that nationalists, perhaps even the Congress Party itself, would seek to publicly demolish the memorial as it 'serves in the opinion of the Congress party to perpetuate racial hatred'.[128] An offer by the Uttar Pradesh government to take over the memorial grounds and a promise of future maintenance of the monument so long as the restrictions on access were removed was viewed with some scepticism by Toynes and others who worried about the future disposition of the monuments. Indeed, former Governor of the United Provinces (1945–7) Sir Francis Wylie wrote to Sir Paul Patrick at the British High Commission in February 1948 warning that the Gardens had been placed in the trust of the Well Gardens Society in 1920 'simply and solely to keep the provincial government out' so that the memorial would always remain in the hands of those who cared about it most, the British-Indian community.[129] Still, the restrictions on access to the Gardens were lifted on Independence Day, and the Gardens were formally transferred to the Uttar Pradesh government the following month. Care of the monument, however, remained in the hands of

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[125] Bullock to Locker, Office of Indian High Commissioner for United Kingdom, 1948, OIOL R/4/84.

[126] Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, 38; Yalland, 'Little Details of the Long View', 99.

[127] See the summary of these discussions in the eight-page memorandum to Gibson, 18 Oct. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

[128] Extract from Toynes Report, Sept. 1947, TNA DO 142/255.

[129] Wylie to Patrick (CRO), 5 Feb. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

the Memorial Well Gardens Society (with the Uttar Pradesh govern-
ment providing an armed guard), but as noted above, the 'problem
of the well' remained under discussion throughout 1948 until it was
finally decided to entirely efface the site. The levelling of the site actu-
ally occurred in January 1949, thereby re-uniting the Gardens and
site of the memorial as one park in the hands of the Uttar Pradesh
government, and was accomplished with the aim of raising as little
publicity about the action as possible.[130]

There was, however, considerable debate among the remaining
European population in India about the disposition of cemeteries and
monuments, with a long-running debate in the *Statesman* (New
Delhi) about the appropriateness of moving monuments or allowing
burial grounds to return to nature. From both India and Britain,
advocates of preserving British imperial monuments *in situ* also
pressed the Commonwealth Relations Office.[131] While the desire to
protect cemeteries and monuments marking graves from desecration
was reasonably rationalized at the time, there was an element of
petulance in some of these British actions, especially with regard to
the disposition of 'Mutiny' monuments. The decision to remove the
memorial well and place the statuary in All Souls Church was explic-
it in its aim of denying to Indian nationalists any opportunity to use
the site for their own political purposes, although it also revealed an
idealistic notion that the Church itself was safe so long as 'there was
a Christian Community, whether British or Indian', in Cawnpore.[132]
Bullock and the High Commission followed closely the Uttar
Pradesh assembly debates over the Kanpur well's authenticity and
over turning British memorials into Indian public places. Statements
such as 'the Premier [G. B. Pant] said it was true that some historians
had disproved the British assertion that this well was filled with their

[130] Report of meeting between Robert Menzies (President, Memorial Well
Gardens Society), Christopher Ackroyd (Secretary of the Lucknow Diocesan
Trust Association), and Bullock, 2 Dec. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

[131] See the dozens of cuttings collected between May and July 1950 and also
personal correspondence regarding British cemetery proposals, particularly in
Calcutta, in TNA DO 35/2137. For more recent concern about British graves
and cemeteries and the imperial nostalgia that accompanies demands for their
upkeep, see Elizabeth Buettner, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia
in Postcolonial Britain and India', *History and Memory*, 18/1 (2006), 5–42.

[132] Minute by Bullock, Feb. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

dead'[133] raised concerns that Indian revision of the British narrative of the 'Mutiny' might come to be attached to the site. And the decision to efface the site of the well thus needs to be put in the context of other British decisions concerning their monuments at the time of Indian independence. At Lucknow, for instance, a British flag had flown on the pole of the ruined residency day and night since 1857 — a proud symbol of British defiance. At the transfer of power in 1947, British sappers not only lowered the flag but also cut down the flagstaff and cemented over the base so that no other emblem could ever fly over the building.[134] These actions suggest that the hold of the 'Mutiny' narrative had not yet dissipated among old India hands even at the moment of official withdrawal. In fact, the effacement of the Cawnpore well site can reasonably be seen as an attempt to prevent the 'authentic' site of memory being sullied or desecrated by reinterpretation and appropriation by Indians once the British could no longer afford its upkeep.

Notwithstanding the continuous stream of letters from British citizens asking about the whereabouts of their ancestors' graves, the location and/or potential disposition of moved memorials or regimental monuments,[135] Bullock's efforts dampened official concerns about the status of British monuments in India until late in 1955. There were some hostile letters and questions in the British House of Commons about the policy of allowing smaller cemeteries to 'return to nature' and about the desecration of some unguarded sites, but these were brushed off on the grounds of financial necessity.[136] Moreover, where possible, Bullock resisted the efforts of British residents, and more often, those of regiments, to make a fuss about any monuments connected to the 'Mutiny' by suggesting that such attention imperilled them. For instance, he advised the regimental office of

[133] Cuttings from the *Hindustan Times*, 21 Oct. 1948, Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom files, OIOL R/4/84.

[134] Trevor Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj* (London, 1989), 172.

[135] See the extensive clipping and correspondence files on the issue in TNA DO 35/2137.

[136] Correspondence in files, Desecration and Vandalism in Cemeteries in Madras State, 1950–53, OIOL R/4/416 and Desecration of Graves in Uttar Pradesh, OIOL R/4/358. On the policy of 'return to nature', A. J. Brown, Secretary of High Commission, Delhi, to R. G. Chisholm (CRO), 10 May 1950, TNA DO 142/256.

the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1948: 'you will realise that the change of regime in this country has made it altogether inadvisable to conduct any public ceremony in connection with a memorial of the Indian Mutiny. In fact, I may say that the probable result of conducting such a ceremony, with attendant publicity, would be to invite the sabotage of the monument within a very short space of time.'[137] Yet official anxiety about the status of British monuments in India developed again as the centenary anniversary of the 1857 rebellion approached, particularly among the Commonwealth Relations Office and the British High Commissioners in Delhi and Karachi.[138]

Whitehall instructed all the British High Commissioners in South Asia to ask the various concerned governments how they proposed to commemorate the 1857 uprising. The High Commissioner to India, Malcolm Macdonald (1955–60) was recalled to London to discuss the situation after meeting with Dr Radhakrishnan, the Indian Vice-President at the time. Macdonald reported that he had gained assurances that the Mutiny Centenary would be celebrated not in May, but in combination with the ten-year anniversary of Independence in August, and that it would be an 'occasion for friendliness between the British and Indians rather than the reverse'.[139] Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru moved to conjoin the two anniversaries with the aim of avoiding partisan political violence over the issue of former British rule, especially from leftist parties within India, all of which had objected to Nehru's decision to keep India within the Commonwealth.[140] The Indian government did not intend to remove British monuments or build its own commemorative statues or buildings for the centenary; there would, however, be the presentation to the President of Dr S. K. Sen's new official history of the uprising.[141] Still, Indian MPs continued to press the Indian government to change the names of roads and rid the landscape, particularly that of the capital New Delhi, of all remaining colonial icons, the visible examples

[137] Bullock to Lt. Gen. Macmillan, 9 Dec. 1948, Military Memorials of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in India and Pakistan, OIOL R/4/87.
[138] See the extensive file, Celebrations of the Mutiny Centenary in 1957, TNA DO 35/9144.
[139] MacDonald to CRO, TNA DO 35/9144.
[140] *The Times*, 10 May 1957, 11.
[141] MacDonald to Earl of Home (Secretary of State for the Commonwealth), 22 June 1957, TNA DO 35/9144.

of 'our former humiliation'.[142] In May 1957 Nehru spoke on the issue to the Lok Sabha (the Indian parliament's House of the People):

> There are various kinds of statues; some may be considered historical, some may be considered artistic and some may be considered, well, rather offensive in themselves, and of various types. Our general attitude has been, first of all, to remove such as might be considered offensive, and that too, gradually without making too much fuss and without doing anything to raise ill will between countries. We have removed some of those statues and we propose to continue doing that. There are those which have been historically significant without causing offence; we shall also remove them and put them in historic museums. There are those that are not important historically or artistically. I do not know what we will do with them; if somebody else wants them, we will make a present of them. In particular, regarding such statues as may be considered in a sense offensive to our national sentiment, we have taken them up and we do propose to take them up; but we wish to do all this in a manner so as not to create international ill will and raise up old questions which are dead and gone.[143]

Despite these assurances, the remaining British community in India expressed concern to both the High Commission and to London about the likely character of the commemoration events, worrying that state and local governments did not necessarily follow the lead of the government of India.[144] Articles and letters in local newspapers calling for the destruction of all traces of the British past indicated the possibility of mob violence to British monuments or even to British subjects. The Bishop of Lucknow worried that churches containing memorials of the Mutiny might be attacked; individuals within the British community were anxious about the potential dilemma of being invited to Indian centenary celebrations: in short, would a refusal to attend be considered as much of an insult as it would be embarrassing for them actually to participate?[145]

[142] Lok Sabha *Debates*, 18 July 1956.
[143] Ibid. 3 May 1957.
[144] Menzies to CRO, 11 Feb. 1957, TNA DO 35/9145.
[145] See correspondence in TNA DO 35/9144.

The anxiety with which officials within the British government also regarded the upcoming centenary was made apparent in early February of 1957, when the CRO went so far as to instruct the War Office to avoid domestic British regimental celebrations that might inflame Indian nationalist opinion; as Secretary of State for the Dominions, Lord Home, explained to John Hare at the War Office, 'for political reasons we should prefer to call [all commemorations by the name] the "Sepoy Mutiny" rather than the "Indian Mutiny" '. While he appreciated that British regiments had a very natural desire to celebrate the bravery of their predecessors, 'celebrations should be played down' as much as possible.[146] In a hand-written postscript, reflecting on the post-Suez Crisis political situation and the desire to keep India officially friendly, he added ruefully, 'we are a bit touchy in the Commonwealth these days!' Numerous regiments did, in fact, hold centenary ceremonies; many British newspapers ran stories about the 'Mutiny' in May of 1957, the tone of most of which was muted. They did not refer to the events of 1857–8 as a nationalist uprising, or if they did, it was only to say that this was a minority Indian view.[147]

In India, despite the stream of anxious correspondence between the CRO and the UK High Commissioners about a feared orgy of monument smashing, Macdonald reported back to the CRO and to Prime Minister McMillan in October that the actual anniversary events had proved to be somewhat of an anti-climax. A bitterly anti-British speech had been broadcast by the Indian President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, which the High Commissioner characterized as the result of the ageing head of state becoming increasingly identified with the conservative, orthodox Hindu element of the Congress Party, and 'his brooding on the decline of the "ancient virtues of his country" and seeing the "innovating British" as the reason for India's troubles'.[148] MacDonald issued a strong protest to the government of India after this broadcast. Nehru gave a speech, which in MacDonald's

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[146] Home to Hare (Secretary of State for War), 1 Feb. 1957, TNA DO 35/9144.

[147] *The Times*, 10 May 1957, 13; *Manchester Guardian*, 10 May 1957, 8; *News Chronicle,* 10 May 1957, 4; *Evening Advertiser*, 10 May 1957, 5; Colin Welch, 'The Indian Mutiny', *Encounter*, 8/5 (May 1957), 15–22. *The Daily Worker*, 10 May 1957, 2, concentrated on British atrocities in the suppression of the 'Mutiny' but also noted that the rebellion was 'not a conscious national uprising'.

[148] 1 Oct. 1957, TNA DO 35/9144.

opinion went 'further than strict historical accuracy demanded in his
references to the spontaneity of the Mutiny and to the "brave sons of
freedom" '. But, true to its assurances, the government of India large-
ly downplayed the significance of the centenary.[149] MacDonald la-
mented that in concession to the demands of Indian socialists, a num-
ber of British statues, particularly those of Generals John Nicholson
and Alexander Taylor, who recaptured Delhi in September 1857,
were removed by the government, though on the grounds that they
might become lightning rods for disturbances. Local authorities
removed other monuments, however, despite New Delhi's assur-
ances to the British that they would not be touched. Provincial gov-
ernments, especially those in the northern areas that had suffered
under the British reprisals to the Mutiny, made a point of moving a
number of British public monuments.[150] The government of Uttar
Pradesh, for instance, took down a large number of statues 'reminis-
cent of foreign domination' and 'offensive to national sentiment' in
Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad, and Agra.[151] Still, for many in north
India, the provincial governments were not proving iconoclastic
enough: more than 400 protestors were arrested across Uttar Pradesh
for demanding that all remaining statues and monuments of British
rule be removed,[152] and a number of unprotected British graves were
desecrated in July and August.[153] Moreover, counter-monuments
were also erected. In Meerut a 100-foot tall white marble tower was
erected as a memorial to the Indian martyrs of 1857.[154] In Kanpur, as
we have seen, the city government erected their statue of rebel leader
Tantya Tope exactly on top of the old memorial wellhead. This clear-
ly suggested that, for nationalists at least, the site's significance had
not been obliterated by the removal of the statuary.[155] The British

[149] *The Times*, 11 May 1957, 5.
[150] In Uttar Pradesh, thirty-seven British statues were removed. Cutting from
The Star, 17 Dec. 1958, TNA WORK 20/259.
[151] Telegram no. 1698 (copy), Indian High Commissioner to CRO, 13 Aug.
1957, TNA WORK 20/259.
[152] *The Times*, 13 May 1957, 10.
[153] Desecration of Graves in Uttar Pradesh, OIOL R/4/358.
[154] *The Times*, 11 May 1957, 5.
[155] In his *The Discovery of India* (New York, 1946), Nehru points to the con-
tinued collective memories of the 'Mutiny' that persisted 'in town and vil-
lage' that in effect were fostered by the presence of British monuments to the

community in Kanpur and the High Commissioner in New Delhi were also sensitive to the connotations, and complained that the proposed position of the monument was offensive to British feeling. In this particular case, the terms of the transfer of the park to the city provided the British community with a means to stop the reappropriation of the site by claiming that the erection of the Tope statue was contrary to the terms of the deed of gift by which the memorial site within the gardens had been handed over to the civic authorities in 1949.[156] Accordingly, the Kanpur municipal authorities moved the plinth of the new statue to another part of the gardens—although it still overlooked the former wellhead site.

In West Bengal, statues to figures such as Sir James Outram in Calcutta were also taken down. An individual tried to blow up the statue of Sir Thomas Munro, but was caught and imprisoned for a year. In other cities, Indian police guarded British monuments from the demonstrators, and a statue of Queen Victoria was 'broken' by a socialist-led demonstration.[157] In southern India, where there had been little unrest during the events of the 'Mutiny', the centenary nonetheless produced a number of attempts to find counter-heroes to the British for commemoration: individuals who had resisted foreign rule. But this was largely the result of domestic struggles between the Communist and the Congress parties, who proposed quite different Indian figures for statues, neither of whom were connected to the rebellion of 1857–8.[158] Indian nationalist iconoclasm continued after 1957. By 1964, eight of thirteen statues in front of government buildings on the central vista of New Delhi had been removed (though not destroyed). Protestors broke parts of the face of the statue of George V in 1965, and that monument was removed in 1968. By 1970 the capital city of India had been cleared of all statues of 'foreign rulers'. Remarkably, however, a majority of British colonial statues and monuments remained untouched and, indeed, can be seen on their origi-

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'Mutiny', 325–6. The degree to which this memory was widespread before nationalists such as Nehru used it to attack British rule is a question beyond my competency to assess.

[156] The terms of transfer of the deed were noted by Bullock in his correspondence with Chisholm, 13 Dec. 1948, TNA DO 142/255.

[157] *The Times*, 13 May 1957, 10.

[158] 'What the Statues Tell', *Pacific Affairs*, 53/3 (1980), 495.

nal plinths, or in the precincts of their former locations, today.[159] And many of the remaining British 'Mutiny' monuments also remain, some with their original British inscriptions still in place, but now appropriated to Indian national memory, usually by adding a tablet in English and Hindi that reinterprets the monument for the domestic Indian audience.[160] Thus the plaque on the British Mutiny Memorial in Delhi retains the British inscription, but an additional one above it rejoins:

> THE 'ENEMY' OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THIS MONU-MENT WERE THOSE WHO ROSE AGAINST COLONIAL RULE AND FOUGHT BRAVELY FOR NAITONAL LIBERA-TION IN 1857.

> IN MEMORY OF THE HEROISM OF THOSE IMMORTAL MARTYRS FOR INDIAN FREEDOM, THIS PLAQUE WAS UNVEILED ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATION'S ATTAINMENT OF FREEDOM, 28 AUGUST, 1972.[161]

Such nationalist readings of the events of 1857–8 were more often applied to British monuments in the 1960s and 1970s and were much less apparent to British officials during the 1957 centenary. Indeed, the English-language Indian press was remarkably restrained in its editorial comments during the centenary, and MacDonald agreed that there was little at which the British could take exception. The *National Herald* of Lucknow suggested that the centenary provided a test of historical perspective; the revolt marked the end of the period of British expansion and the beginning of a new phase. *The Times of India* explained the background to the 'Mutiny', and concluded that divisions among the Sepoys and Indian people themselves were the cause of its failure; an editorial in the paper suggested that the revolt inspired the freedom movement that had led to the establishment of the Congress Party. *The New Delhi Statesman* emphasized the friend-

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[159] For a full listing see Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*.
[160] Nayanjot Lahiri, 'Commemorating and Remembering 1857: the Revolt in Delhi and its Afterlife', *World Archaeology*, 35/1 (2003), 35–69, at 56.
[161] Ibid. 57.

liness in Indian–British relations since independence; *The Express* 'lowered the tone' (in the opinion of MacDonald) by suggesting that the heroes of 1857 had been betrayed by Pakistan's current dependence on the USA. The *Illustrated Weekly of India* reported that a sense of history was weak amongst the Indian people; there had been no national feeling in 1857, it suggested, and little interest was shown in the centenary now. The Communist *New Age* and the *Blitz*, however, deplored the government's decision to play down the centenary by deferring celebrations until August.[162] One American writer in India during the celebrations did draw attention to the large amount of 'nationalist propaganda' about 1857 in films, museum exhibits, popular histories, and journalism, but wrote that, on the whole, 'the documentaries were surprisingly fair-minded towards the British'.[163] Similarly, MacDonald thought the official history produced for the centenary by Sen[164] was largely 'objective'. His final comments on the celebrations, though inflected with the expected class bias (for the High Commission only the official Indian attitude and the middle-class English language press mattered), were that they 'have revealed on the whole amongst educated Indians a welcome maturity of judgment on the days of British rule. The Mutiny generated much hatred. It is satisfactory that so little seems to remain.'[165]

III. *Conclusion: Sites of Memory and the Raj*

The iconoclasm of the 1957 centenary thus proved to be more limited than British officials feared, but there was still considerable debate within India about the fate of British monuments prior to and during the celebrations and, in the decades after 1957, a significant number

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[162] Newspaper clippings in file, TNA DO 35/9144.

[163] Katherine Nutt, 'The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857: The New Look' [1959], *Midwest Quarterly*, 21/1 (1979), 81–96, at 94.

[164] Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (New Delhi, 1957). C. H. Philips, in his review of Sen and of R. C. Majumdar's *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857* (Calcutta, 1957), concurred with Macdonald's assessment, noting that neither work viewed the mutiny as a nationalist revolt. *The Times,* 31 May 1957, 8.

[165] MacDonald memorandum, Oct. 1957, TNA DO 35/9144.

of monuments were removed or appropriated to the needs of Indian nationalism. While British official concern about 'Mutiny' and other Raj monuments between 1947 and 1957 centred on the question of British prestige and Commonwealth relations rather than nostalgia for past glory, for many within the British-Indian community, both those who stayed in India and those who returned to Britain, the desire to protect the memory of British accomplishments, heroes, and martyrs of the Raj remained strong.[166] The Cawnpore memorial well, as one of the best known of British monuments in India, was certainly believed by the British-Indian community to be a potential target for nationalist iconoclasts. It was intended to mark the memory of martyrs to the imperial project, as both a tomb and a monument of British trauma for British consumption.[167] For this reason it was particularly important to the British community that it not be defaced, desecrated, or appropriated for another political purpose. However, the memorial was also clearly a political statement about the British imperial presence, and a highly didactic feature of the imperial project. The well was a reminder to its visitors of the failure of British-Indian manhood to fulfil its most basic duty, the protection of women from the 'treachery' of its colonial subjects, in order to ensure that it never happened again. For most of its existence, the message was conveyed not by the symbolism of the actual monument per se—the angel was really rather an anodyne and commonplace funerary sculpture—but by the racial exclusivity of the site and the dominant 'Mutiny' narrative script that provided visitors with the meaning of the site. Given that this monument was such a declaration of British triumph through sacrifice, it is no wonder that the remaining British community in India, and officials in the High Commission and in Whitehall, feared that the site would become the target of Indian

[166] A clear example of this is Yalland's trilogy of books on Colonial Cawnpore. See also Buettner's chapter on the nostalgia for the Raj in postcolonial Britain, *Empire Families*, 252–70.

[167] Jeffery Alexander asserts that historical traumas are culturally constructed through a 'sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility and distributes the ideal and material consequences' which are then revised and routinized through social remembrance and commemoration. See Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma', in id. (ed.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, 2004), 1–30, esp. 22–4.

nationalist anger. After all, tearing down old and erecting new monuments is a way of taking vengeance on the past and attempting to create new understandings of history.[168] The effacement of the actual wellhead by the British was thus meant to control the site's meaning in perpetuity: to prevent any attempt to re-inscribe this material site of memory with any other meaning. The British were right to be concerned that this might be attempted, as the erection of the monument of Tantya Tope overlooking the former wellhead in 1957 demonstrated.

But even before Indian independence, the meaning of this site of remembrance had subtly changed by the very practice of paying homage to it. Initially, British visitors had come to Cawnpore to pay their respects to the martyrs of the Raj, not to gape at Marochetti's artisanship. The object of veneration was the spot of the massacre, not the architecture that now surrounded the graves of those killed. Yet, as is the way with tourism and perhaps even pilgrimage, over time the sign marking the site of memory—the angel statue—became the object of tourist interest.[169] The 'Mutiny' narrative provided the framework for the meaning of the site, and the monument served as the visual prompt to that remembrance. But by the turn of the twentieth century the angel statue itself had become one of the most recognizable images of the Raj, reproduced in countless travel books and histories. As Steggles notes, with perhaps only a little exaggeration, the angel 'was probably the best known of the British sculptures exported to the Empire and could well be the icon of British India, surpassing in its symbolic content the figures of the Queen'.[170] While the thoughts of the pilgrims and tourists may have been drawn to the memory of the women and children thrown into the well in 1857, it was indeed the angel that drew their gaze, and the angel on which most visitors chose to comment. It is for this reason that the angel was protected from potential desecration by moving it to the church after Independence, while the actual site of remembrance, the tomb

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[168] William Cohen, 'Symbols of Power: Statues in Nineteenth-Century Provincial France', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31/3 (1989), 491–512, at 493–4.

[169] Jonathan Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism' in id., *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Norman, Okla., 1988), 153–67; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London, 1990), 12–13.

[170] Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, 13.

of those sacrificed in the name of the Raj, was entirely 'obliterated'. But once the angel had been moved, this signifier of the memory of British rule in India—sacrifice, duty, fortitude, and, above all, ultimate triumph over those who had threatened what Bernard Cohn has described as properly constituted authority and order[171]— arguably became merely a marble curiosity in a crumbling historic churchyard. The monument lost its political relevance the moment the British turned power over to their former subjects. No longer a signifier of the collective memory of the British-Indian community, the angel was as effaced of meaning as were the physical features of the site on which it had sat for eighty years. Thus, except perhaps for the remnants of the surviving British-Indian community and their descendants who indulge in Raj nostalgia,[172] the Cawnpore well ceased to exist as a 'site of memory'. It was not the effacing of the physical site and the moving of the angel that accomplished this, but rather the collapse of the relevance of the 'Mutiny' narrative in post-Independence India and in postcolonial Britain. Only the distant relatives of those who died at Cawnpore in the events of 1857 could thereafter find real significance in this unmarked grave site. While researching his book on the events at Cawnpore in 1857, Andrew Ward travelled to Kanpur in 1994. Visiting Nana Rao Park, Ward 'asked one of the schoolboys playing cricket nearby in an empty fountain basin if he knew what had happened here almost a century and a half ago. He did not, he said, and listened politely as I told him of the massacre at the Bibighar. "Quite impossible", he said, gazing at the sandstone slab beneath us. "The British would never have buried their dead so carelessly".'[173]

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[171] Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Colonial India'.
[172] See Buettner, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia'.
[173] Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 554.

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The 'Indian Mutiny' as a Shared Site of Memory:
A Media Culture Perspective on Britain and India

Astrid Erll

Sites of Memory, Premediation, and Remediation

The 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857 is a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory which has emerged from the history of British colonialism. It is both a result and a sign of cultural contact and various conflicts between British colonizers and Indians in nineteenth-century India. As a shared site of memory, the 'Indian Mutiny' carries great significance in British as well as Indian memory cultures. In both countries, the uprising assumed the dimensions of a national myth (and in many cases still has them). From an Indian nationalist perspective, the revolt of 1857–8 is a foundational event in that it is understood as the first heroic revolt against foreign rule, which led to the freedom struggle and then to independence.[1] In a British imperialist perspective, the revolt marks the beginning of, and provides legitimation for, the British Raj. In the colonizers' view, the sepoys' uprising demonstrated the need for a strong British government on the Indian subcontinent.[2]

As these two different narratives indicate, the events of the years 1857–8 are not only a shared site of memory, but also very much a contested one. This contestation begins with the question of how to describe the Indian rebellion—one that tends to be answered rather differently in Britain and in India. While most British historians (even today) adhere to the somewhat derogatory term 'Indian Mutiny' (thus implying insubordination and treachery on the Indian side),

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[1] For a thorough historical analysis of this idea see Rajat Kanta Ray, *The Felt Community: Commonality and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Delhi, 2003).

[2] Cf. Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, The New Cambridge History of India, iii. pt. 4 (Cambridge, 1995).

people in India usually prefer other terms, such as 'Indian rebellion', 'Indian uprising', or even 'the first war of Indian independence'.

Lieux de mémoire provide, as Pierre Nora maintains, 'a maximum amount of meaning in a minimum number of signs'.[3] In order to explain how such a condensation of meaning works, Ann Rigney has introduced the term 'convergence' into the discourse of cultural memory studies.[4] Cultural memories tend to 'converge and coalesce' into a *lieu de mémoire*.[5] Stories, iconic images, and topoi about the past flow together and are conflated into a site of memory. One hundred and fifty years of remembering the 'Indian Mutiny' show that the sources from which meaning 'flows' into this site of memory are of three different kinds. They include first, different media representing the event (newspaper articles, official and unofficial histories, novels, photography, film and so on); secondly, different periods of recent history (for example, the ages of imperialism and postcolonialism); and thirdly, different cultural contexts (British, Indian, and many hybrid formations, such as nineteenth-century 'Anglo-Indian' or the Indian diaspora in today's multicultural Britain).[6]

Thus, rather than a static, fixed repository or a storehouse of memory, the *lieu de mémoire* should, in the words of Ann Rigney, be conceived of as 'a self-perpetuating vortex of symbolic investment'.[7] But the incessant, vortex-like process of convergence and condensation of meaning into a site of memory is only one aspect of the process by which *lieux de mémoire* come into being. In fact, those individual rememberers who are confronted with a site of memory

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[3] Quoted in Ann Rigney, 'Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory', *Journal of European Studies*, 35/1 (2005), 11–28, at 18. For a detailed account of Nora's project see Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, i. *La République*; ii. *La Nation* (in 3 vols.); iii. *Les France* (in 3 vols.) (Paris, 1984–92).

[4] For an overview of terms, concepts, and approaches to cultural memory see Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, in collaboration with Sara B. Young (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008).

[5] Rigney, 'Plenitude, Scarcity', 18.

[6] For a history of British and Indian memories of the 'Indian Mutiny' from 1857 to the present see Astrid Erll, *Prämediation – Remediation: Repräsentationen des indischen Aufstands in imperialen und post-kolonialen Medienkulturen von 1857 bis zur Gegenwart* (Trier, 2007).

[7] Ibid.

(standing in front of a memorial, participating in a commemoration, or just hearing the words 'Indian Mutiny') will usually want to unfold a meaning, to associate certain images and narratives with the specific site. For example, the Victorians, and indeed up to the mid twentieth century mainstream British culture, associated the 'Indian Mutiny' with images of ferocious sepoys raping English women, British cantonments on fire, heroic Highland soldiers charging into battle, and narrative plots such as 'last-minute rescue' and 'last stand', 'faith and delivery' and 'virtue rewarded'. However, the name of the event alone, or just one 'Mutiny' painting or memorial obviously cannot suffice to evoke all these associations. They can only serve as 'cues' which trigger different memories in each observer, different images and narratives of the past that are already part of his or her semantic memory.[8] And such memories can come to the fore only if the rememberer has read some Mutiny novels, seen a documentary on TV, watched a movie, listened to grandparents' stories of the event, or was taught its history at school, in short, if he or she is part of a 'media culture'[9] in which representations of the 'Indian Mutiny' are constantly being circulated.

This article will focus on the importance of media in creating and disseminating notions about the 'Indian Mutiny', and thus in constructing, maintaining, and transforming a site of memory that has been shared by British and Indian people for one and a half centuries. Starting from the idea that it is the convergence of medial representations which turns an event into a *lieu de mémoire*, I will delineate some of the intermedial networks that produced the 'Indian Mutiny'

[8] 'Semantic memory' is our knowledge system ('the world is round'; 'the First World War started in 1914'); it can be distinguished from 'episodic memory', which refers to our lived experience ('my first day at school'; 'how I witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall'). For such terms from cognitive psychology see Endel Tulving and Fergus I. M. Craik (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Memory* (New York, 2000).

[9] I use the term 'media culture' to accentuate the medial production of culture: the fact that every intersubjective notion of reality is based on communication and medial representation. Thus the focus is directed towards the specific possibilities and restrictions of representation connected with those media that are available in a given society. In this sense, cultural memory, too, is the product of medial processes. See Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen* (Stuttgart, 2005).

as a site of memory. I wish to draw particular attention to the diachronic dimension of these networks, or, to be more precise, to two basic processes of convergence which can be called 'premediation' and 'remediation'.[10]

By using the term 'premediation' I draw attention to the fact that existent media which circulate in a given society provide schemata for new experience and its representation. In this way, the representations of colonial wars premediated the experience of the First World War; and medial representations of the First World War, in turn, were at first used as a model for understanding the Second World War. But it is not only representations of earlier events that shape our understanding and remembrance of later events. Media which belong to more remote cultural spheres, such as art, mythology, religion, or law, can also exert great power as premediators. In the Western world, the Bible and Homer's epics have premediated historical experience for many centuries. Today, our expectations and meaning-making are often shaped by popular movies.[11]

I use the term 'remediation' to indicate that those events in particular which are transformed into *lieux de mémoire* are usually represented again and again, over decades and centuries, in different media. What is known about an event that has turned into a site of memory, therefore, seems to refer not so much to what one might cautiously call the 'actual event', but instead to a canon of existent medial constructions, to the narratives, images, and myths circulating in a memory culture. The rebellion of 1857–8 is a perfect example of this memory-making interplay between premediation and remediation.

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[10] The term 'remediation' (and later also 'premediation') was introduced in the context of new media theory. See Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (eds.), *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, 1999); Richard Grusin, 'Premediation', *Criticism*, 46 (2004), 17–39. It was Ann Rigney who proposed combining the concept of 'remediation' with cultural memory studies. See also Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (eds.), *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin, 2008).

[11] Many of those who saw the planes crashing into the World Trade Centre on 9/11 were reminded of the movie *Independence Day*, while George W. Bush revealed the premediating force of the Christian tradition when he distinguished between 'good and evil states', 'light and darkness', and called for a 'crusade' against the terrorists.

The 'Indian Mutiny'

In what follows I will take a—necessarily highly selective—look at the premediation and remediation of some of the topoi and narratives which are closely connected to the 'Indian Mutiny'. Probably the most tenacious notions about the rebellion centre on mini-narratives, such as 'rape and revenge' and 'treachery and massacre', as well as around some names and places fraught with meaning, such as Nana Sahib, Satichaura Ghat, and Bibighar. Newspaper articles, eyewitness accounts, historiographical works, novels, and films (among many other media) have contributed to infusing these elements of the 'Mutiny' myth with meaning, and they continue to do so. The following section is a reconstruction of some of the vertical, diachronic lines of representation which connect British imperial myth-making with colonial Indian counter-memory, and popular Hollywood stories with images of the revolt created in India's postcolonial Bollywood.

Atrocity Stories and Premediation: the British Press of 1857

That the British colonial memory culture of the nineteenth century turned the events of 1857–8 into a foundational myth which contributed to grand-scale imperial self-fashioning and helped legitimize British rule in India is well known.[12] With the help of exaggerated newspaper articles, biased historiography, and more than one hundred hugely popular 'Mutiny' romances, a colonial narrative was created which had little to do with the actual events. The imperial myth prominently features the themes of Indian treachery, of terrible Indian atrocities and, as far as the British side is concerned, of extreme heroism ('every man a hero, every woman a man', as one source phrases it).[13] From the colonizers' perspective, Indians had

[12] See Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1870–1914* (Ithaca, NY, 1988); Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2005).

[13] *Calcutta Review*, 1st ser., 61/5 (1858). This is, of course, the dominant myth, created by a powerful imperial memory culture, which (and this is important for the approach delineated here) made an impact on British as well as Indian cultures. There were certainly dissident voices in England which were highly critical of the British role in India. Cf. Margery Sabin, *Dissenters and Mavericks: Writings about India in English, 1765–2000* (Oxford, 2002);

betrayed British benevolence by turning against their just, liberal, and progressive rulers. Back at home, in England, the rumours of massacres and the rape of British women struck at the heart of Victorian sensibilities. 'Rape' became a symbol of what was understood as the Indians' transgressive assault against the British nation.[14]

None of the elements of memory just mentioned can stand up to historical enquiry, even if one limits oneself to British sources. The elements of the British myth are at best debatable, more often utterly wrong. For example, most of the rape stories belong to the 'fictions connected with the Indian Mutiny' as Edward Leckey pointed out as early as 1859.[15] Moreover, what was often forgotten was that some British atrocities preceded as well as surpassed those of the Indians, as Edward Thompson showed in detail in 1925.[16] The British site of memory called 'Indian Mutiny'—up to 1947, and in a residual way also after Indian independence—is a case in point for the selectivity, unreliability, and political functions of cultural memory. And it is the product of a powerful British media culture.

The earliest and most important medium which turned the Indian uprising into a site of memory was the British press in the years 1857–8. In many newspaper articles one can sense an awareness that the current events already belonged to 'world history'. Back in London's Fleet Street, where information about what happened in the faraway colony was scarce and unreliable, a rhetoric of prospective memory fashioned the events in India as a foundational, almost mythical event, and as an important lesson for 'many generations to come'. The British press was also an important generator of those blood-curdling atrocity stories which shape the image of the 'Mutiny' in Britain to this day. Some examples may give a taste of the atrocity stories which were disseminated by British newspapers. The follow-

Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton, 2008).

[14] For a detailed and intriguing analysis of the figure of woman and the topos of rape in connection with the 'Mutiny' see Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, 1993).

[15] Edward Leckey, *Fictions Connected with the Indian Outbreak of 1857 Exposed* (Bombay, 1859).

[16] Edward Thompson, *The Other Side of the Medal* (London, 1925).

ing text was originally published in the *Bombay Telegraph* and reissued in *The Times*:

> Children have been compelled to eat the quivering flesh of their murdered parents, after which they were literally *torn asunder* by the laughing fiends who surrounded them. Men in many instances have been mutilated, and, before being absolutely killed, have had to gaze upon the last dishonour of their wives and daughters previous to being put to death. But really we cannot describe the brutalities that have been committed; they pass the boundaries of human belief, and to dwell upon them shakes reason upon its throne. If ever a nation was made the instrument of an insulted Deity, that nation is England; and we trust that she will strike and spare not.[17]

Apart from the curious rhetorical device of introducing a topos of unspeakability (after *everything* seems to have been said), it is striking that this article ends with a fervent call for revenge. It is thus an early example of the rape-revenge plot connected with the 'Indian Mutiny' which can be found in most late nineteenth-century 'Mutiny' romances, and which popular British memory would become obsessed with, until even late in the twentieth century.[18]

Along these soon conventionalized lines (treachery, massacre, mutilation, rape) was the following atrocity story, again taken from *The Times*, which presents a veritable chamber of horrors:

> They took 48 females, most of them girls of [*sic*] from 10 to 14, many delicately nurtured ladies,—violated them and kept them for the base purposes of the heads of the insurrection for a whole week. At the end of that time they made them strip themselves, and gave them up to the lowest of the people to abuse in broad daylight in the streets of Delhi. They then commenced the work of torturing them to death, cutting off their breasts, fingers, and noses, and leaving them to die. One lady was three days dying.[19]

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[17] *The Times*, 17 Sept. 1857, 9.

[18] For examples see Sharpe, *Allegories*, and Erll, *Prämediation*.

[19] *The Times*, 25 Aug. 1857, 6. Jenny Sharpe has pointed out that the 'eye-wit-

But where did these wildly fantastical stories of rape and mutilation originate? The fact that a host of similar atrocity stories emerged simultaneously in many different places supports the idea that they are a result of premediation. Some of the atrocity stories seem to go back to the then current literary fashion of Gothic horror. Most of them seem related to a Christian imagination, with its medieval and early Renaissance visions of hell, such as can be found in the works of Dante and Shakespeare or — especially when it comes to children roasting over fire — in Hieronymus Bosch's paintings. All of these are texts, genres, and images which an uninformed public resorts to in order to imagine and make sense of an exotic and dangerous reality which is barely understood. However, such processes of premediation usually do not take place intentionally. Widely available media often provide their schemata inconspicuously. Premediation is a cultural practice of experiencing and remembering: the use of existent patterns and paradigms to transform contingent events into meaningful images and narratives.

Mediating and Remediating 'Satichaura Ghat':
From Eyewitness Account to Historiography

As stated earlier, atrocities, massacre, and rape are a staple element of 'Mutiny' memory to this day. A striking example of how a host of different medial representations — from eyewitness accounts, newspaper articles and historiography to novels, paintings, and films — converged and coalesced over a large time span into a powerful (yet in India and Britain rather differently interpreted) *lieu de mémoire* is the massacre of the Satichaura Ghat, which took place in Cawnpore (Kanpur) on 27 June 1857.

Cawnpore was one of the British stations besieged by Indian rebels during the revolt (the other famous one is Lucknow Residency). Under the leadership of the rebel prince Nana Sahib, the Indian sepoys offered General Wheeler and the British residents of Cawnpore safe passage from their besieged entrenchment (the so-

ness' who was responsible for this story was soon afterwards exposed by Karl Marx in the *New York Daily Tribune* as 'a cowardly parson residing at Bangalore, Mysore, more than a thousand miles, as the bird flies, distant from the scene of the action' (quoted in Sharpe, *Allegories*, 66).

called 'Wheeler's entrenchment'). They led them to the Ganges river, where boats were waiting for the defeated colonizers to take them to Allahabad, but fire was opened from an ambush as soon as the British boarded the boats. Several hundred British people were killed: the men instantly; the women several weeks later, after having been taken hostage in a nearby house called Bibighar. The women's dead bodies were thrown into a well, which, under the name of the 'Well of Cawnpore', has been turned into one of the best-known memorials of the British in India (see also Stephen Heathorn's article in this volume).

These seem to be the facts that can be established about 'Cawnpore'.[20] To this day, our knowledge of the Satichaura Ghat massacre rests on merely two primary sources. Of the four male British survivors only two, Mowbray Thomson and W. J. Shepherd, wrote down their memories; the Indian rebels did not leave behind any written documents. What is a difficult situation for historians,[21] though, may prove to be a good opportunity for media and cultural memory studies, because the meagre body of first-hand source material makes 'Satichaura Ghat' an excellent laboratory for observing how the mediation and remediation of an event occurs.

Mowbray Thomson's Mutiny memoir, *Story of Cawnpore*, appeared in 1859.[22] It has become, as Gautam Chakravarty correctly observes, a 'founding template',[23] a text that almost all later remediations of the massacre refer back to. Thomson was in one of the boats at the *ghat* (shore) when they were under fire and he survived by swimming down the Ganges river, by literally 'beating the water for life'.[24]

[20] See Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Spectre of Violence: The 1857 Kanpur Massacres* (London, 1998); Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (London, 1996).

[21] One way of dealing with this situation is to read the available, often biased sources 'against the grain'. For this method see Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham, 1983) and Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt.*

[22] Mowbray Thomson, *The Story of Cawnpore* (London, 1859).

[23] Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, 111.

[24] Thomson, *Story of Cawnpore*, 167. Later, Thomson exclaims: 'how excellent an investment that guinea had proved which I spent a year or two before at the baths in Holborn, learning to swim!' (ibid. 190). 'Learning to swim' has,

The other account of the Cawnpore massacre, that by W. J. Shepherd, appeared in Lucknow as early as 1857 under the title *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857*.[25] This was the first account to be published about the Satichaura Ghat massacre. However, Shepherd did not actually witness the massacre, but managed to escape the entrenchment as a spy dressed in Indian costume. (His masquerade was quickly discovered by the Indians and he was subsequently taken hostage by the Maratha chief Nana Sahib.) What he writes about 'Satichaura Ghat' and 'Bibighar' is therefore based on hearsay, and much of what he has to say seems to be wrong.[26] Nevertheless, Shepherd's account had a great impact on memory culture—because it appeared very early and because long passages from it were published in *The Times* (in November 1857). Shepherd's story was thus represented in *the* Victorian mass medium; as such, it was readily available to, and widely circulated among, British audiences.

Because of its early appearance Shepherd's account (but not Thomson's, which was not published until 1859) could enter the best-known historiographical work on the revolt, Charles Ball's popular, and often jingoistic, *History of the Indian Mutiny*.[27] Ball's *History* is an example of what may be called 'instant history-writing'. It tells the story of the revolt even before the fighting had officially ended. Through its lack of hindsight and its determination to record every available representation of the revolt for future memory, this work of history fulfils, as Gautam Chakravarty points out, 'a mediatory function', 'distilling a mass of heterogeneous primary material comprising letters, diaries, memoirs, newspaper reports, telegrams, civil and

as P. J. O. Taylor records, become one of the well-remembered anecdotes connected with the 'Indian Mutiny'. P. J. O. Taylor (gen. ed.), *A Companion to the Indian Mutiny* (Delhi, 1996), 191–2.

[25] W. J. Shepherd, *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857* (Lucknow, 1857).

[26] Cf. Taylor, *A Companion*, 304–5. For Shepherd's error concerning the place to which the British women and children were taken after the massacre at the Satichaura Ghat see below.

[27] Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving a Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India, and a Concise History of the Great Military Events which Have Tended to Consolidate British Empire in Hindostan*, 2 vols. (London, 1858–9).
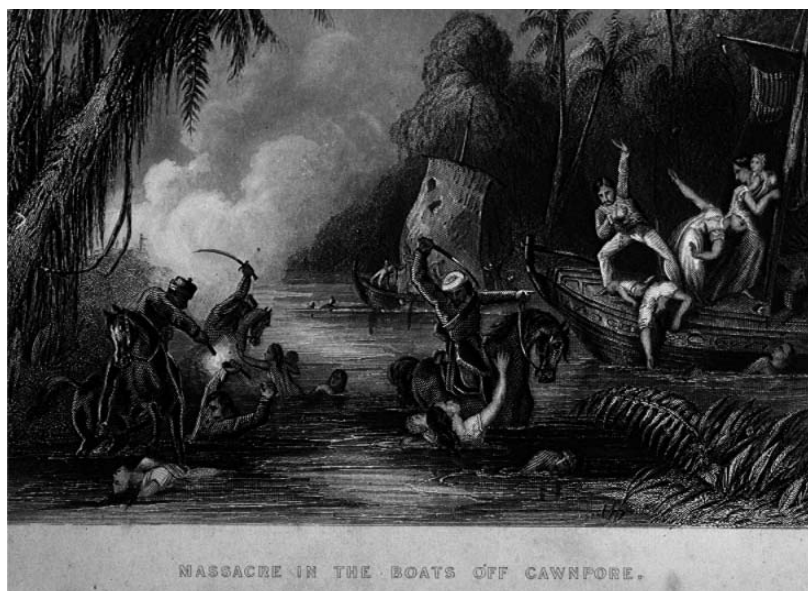
Figure 5.1. 'Massacre in the Boats off Cawnpore', in Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny* (1858), 336.

military despatches, parliamentary debates and, sometimes, rumour, and so preparing the ground for history writing in subsequent decades'.[28]

Charles Ball's *History of the Indian Mutiny* is one of the most widely distributed, most richly illustrated, and certainly most popular histories of the revolt. Because of its extensive circulation, it has become an important source for narratives and images of the 'Indian Mutiny'. Ball's famous Satichaura Ghat illustration, for example (see Fig. 5.1), is actually one of the most frequently reproduced images of the rebellion, even today (and often enough without any comment as to its source or its ideological implications); the 'Ulrica Wheeler myth', a story about the youngest daughter of General Wheeler, who is said to have killed several sepoys after being abducted by them and in order to 'save her honour', also finds popular expression in one of Ball's illustrations (see Fig. 5.2).

Ball drew largely on Shepherd's writing. Whole pages of his *History* consist of quotations taken from Shepherd's account in *The*

[28] Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, 20.

Figure 5.2. 'Miss Wheeler Defending Herself against the Sepoys at Cawnpore', in Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny* (1858), 380.

Times (with Ball sometimes correcting obvious errors). Ball's history is therefore an extensive and literal remediation of Shepherd's eye-witness account. With its wide distribution and huge popularity, the *History of the Indian Mutiny* transported Shepherd's story of 'Cawnpore' into late nineteenth and early twentieth-century memory cultures.

What is striking about Ball's *History* is its high degree of repetitiveness. For example, the episode of how British soldiers found the massacred bodies of English women and children in a well near the Bibighar—in what was to become the 'Well of Cawnpore'—is told several times, each time quoting a different eyewitness.[29] Such repetitions certainly have an authenticating function. Moreover, they effect an amplification of certain episodes of the revolt, thus preparing the ground for the emergence of a site of memory. In Ball, we find the process of convergence and coalescence condensed into one single medium.

[29] See Erll, *Prämediation*, 71–2.

The 'Indian Mutiny'

In the following two sections I will examine how those early representations of the Cawnpore massacres, which were themselves interlinked in many complex ways, became an object for remediation in the late nineteenth century. How were the images and narratives created by Shepherd, Ball, and Thomson turned into the fundament of a *shared* site of memory? That is, how did British *and* Indian writers refer to 'Satichaura Ghat' and 'Bibighar'? The next section will move on to a different symbolic system: to literature and the most prominent literary genre of the nineteenth century, the novel.[30]

High Imperialism, Remediation, and Variation: Henty's Popular Novel
In Times of Peril *(1881)*

The most important and also, as far as cultural memory is concerned, most resonant period of British 'Mutiny' writing is the latter part of the nineteenth century, an age of self-confident and aggressive imperialistic self-fashioning, not least in the medium of literature. In the 1880s, and even more so in the 1890s, the number of published 'Mutiny' novels reached a peak. The literary market was flooded with popular romances and juvenile fiction addressing the events of 1857; examples include G. A. Henty's *Rujub the Juggler* (1893), H. C. Irwin's *A Man of Honour* (1896), J. E. Muddock's *The Great White Hand* (1896), and Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* (1897). The turn from eyewitness account and history-writing to fiction and the greater freedom of representation associated with the latter result in a further amplification of the 'Indian Mutiny' as a site of imperial memory: the 'vicious' Nana Sahib's troops become more and more numerous; British soldiers appear more and more heroic; and English women by the hundreds are abducted, raped and/or killed by lecherous sepoys. This larger than life version of the 'Indian

[30] This move is made in order to show how remediation occurred not only across a spectrum of different media, but also across the spectrum of different symbolic systems. History, politics, literature, religion, and law were most important in the creation of the 'Indian Mutiny' as a site of memory. It would be interesting, for example, to ask what types of premediation and remediation are at the basis of Kaye and Malleson's multi-volume historiographical standard work on the Indian Mutiny. Sir John William Kaye and George Bruce Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857–8*, 6 vols. (London, 1897).

Mutiny' (prepared and supported by other contemporary media of cultural remembering, such as paintings, sermons, odes, monuments, and popular historiography) would thus enter popular memory and prove very persistent. Even a hundred years later, in contemporary British narrative history, traces of the high Victorian myth-making can still be discerned.[31]

In 1881 G. A. Henty, one of the empire's most productive bards and successful 'recruiting officer for a generation of schoolboys',[32] published *In Times of Peril*, a juvenile adventure novel with a highly propagandistic, didactic, and, not least, memorial dimension. The ficitious teenage protagonists, the brothers Dick and Ned, take part in every major campaign of the 'Indian Mutiny'. They experience the siege and the storming of Delhi; they spend time in the Lucknow residency among the besieged and later take part in General Campbell's so-called 'second relief'; they even witness the Satichaura Ghat massacre of Cawnpore:

> Dick and Ned Warrener were in one of the boats which were still ashore when the treacherous sepoys burst from their hiding-place. 'The scoundrels!' burst from Ned indignantly; while Dick, seeing at a glance the hopelessness of their position, grasped his brother's arm.
>
> 'We must swim for it, Ned. Take a long dive, and go under again the moment you have got breath.'
>
> Without an instant's delay the brothers leaped into the water, as dozens of others were doing; and although each time their heads came up for an instant the bullets splashed around them, they kept on untouched until they reached the centre of the stream.[33]

Interesting with regard to this scene is not only the fact that the narrator's account of the boys' adventure echoes *Story of Cawnpore* quite precisely, thus making the novel one of the numerous remediations of Thomson's textual founding template, but also that what Dick and Ned can see with their own eyes, while they (just as

[31] e.g. in Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Indian Mutiny* (London, 1978).

[32] Roy Turnbaugh, 'Images of Empire: G. A. Henty and John Buchan', *Journal of Popular Culture,* 9 (1975), 734–40, at 734.

[33] George Alfred Henty, *In Times of Peril: A Tale of India* (London, 1881), 149–50.

Figure 5.3. 'Opening Fire on the Boats', in Henty, *In Times of Peril* (1881), 148.

Thomson described it) are 'beating water for life' (Dick tells his brother that they must 'swim for it') and have reached the middle of the Ganges, is a strikingly precise ekphrasis of Ball's Satichaura Ghat illustration (Fig. 5.1):

> They looked back, and saw the sepoys had many of them entered the river up to their shoulders, to shoot the swimmers; others on horseback had ridden far out, and were cutting down those who, unable to swim far, made again toward shallow water; while cannon and muskets still poured in their fire against the helpless crowds in the boats.[34]

What is rather strange, however, is that whereas the literary narrative thus evokes the well-known illustration in Charles Ball's *History*, the novel's own illustration of this scene (see Fig. 5.3) seems to refer to a different point in the timeline of the massacre. The image, which can be found in the first edition of *In Times of Peril*, can be inter-

[34] Ibid.

preted as a remediation of Ball's famous Satichaura Ghat image.[35] But more interesting are the differences between Ball's and Henty's illustrations. The moment in time depicted in Henty is the beginning of the massacre: the British are looking, surprised and shocked, in the direction from which the gunfire seems to come. The illustration in Ball's *History*, on the other hand, shows a later point in time, when the Sepoys have followed the British into the water and many British are being killed.

This particular choice that is made in the novel's visual representation of the massacre fits well within its overall structure. Although the narrative does feature scenes in which British people are killed, the illustrations of *In Times of Peril* tell a different story: apart from the Satichaura Ghat illustration, with its one single figure in the boat who was apparently shot by the sepoys (see Fig. 5.3), none of the novel's nineteen images represent the British being violated in any way. On the contrary, the illustrations of *In Times of Peril* usually show colonizers successfully taking action. It is therefore the active and heroic part of the imperial 'Mutiny' myth which is amplified by a specific blend of textual and visual remediation and variation. And this is, of course, a very appropriate kind of remembering in a novel which was clearly meant to instil imperialist values and norms in its young readers.

Affirmative Remediation and Subversive Premediation
in Indian English Literature: Dutt's Shunkur *(1877–8)*

The corpus of Indian representations and remediations of the 'Mutiny' in the nineteenth century is less clearly defined and accessible than its British counterpart. Presenting an Indian perspective on the revolt was a dangerous thing to do for Indian novelists and historians under the Raj. It was only in 1909, that is, more than fifty years after the revolt, that the nationalist classic by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence*, was published—and imme-

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[35] This assumption is supported by the fact that here, too, the form of the boats is *not* historically correct. The boats offered by Nana Sahib to the British had roofs to protect the white-skinned colonizers from the fierce Indian sun on their long ride to Allahabad (cf. Ward, *Our Bones*, 301). But the roofs appear neither in Ball's image nor in most of its remediations.

diately banned by the British.[36] Savarkar's pamphlet points to the enormous potential of '1857–8' as a foundational event of an Indian nationalist memory culture, a potential Karl Marx had already drawn attention to in 1858 when he called the rebellion the 'first Indian war of independence' and emphasized the fact that, for the first time in history, Hindus and Muslims had fought side by side against foreign rule.[37]

Not only because of British censorship, but probably also because of the low literacy rate in the nineteenth century, some of the most powerful media of Indian memory of '1857–8' are to be found not in historical and literary writings, but mainly in oral media, such as ballads and songs. The collections of Scholberg and Joshi[38] show that there were many ballads about Indian heroes of the revolt, such as the Rani of Jhansi, Tantya Tope, and Kunwar Singh. With regard to literary representations of '1857–8', R. Veena maintains that the British had 'complete control not only over Indian territory but also over the literary "space" within which to write about it. It was only after Independence that the literary space was opened up to accommodate the Indian perspective(s) on the events of 1857.'[39] Nevertheless, leafing through Scholberg's extensive bibliography one realizes that there *are* Indian texts about the revolt which were published before 1947, in fact, throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. These have not, as far as I can see, been systematically analysed. Nor have they even entered a canon of cultural memory on which Indians would draw. (Indian novelists and historians, including those of the Subaltern Studies group, usually refer back to the imperial media representations, even if they set out to deconstruct them.) Considering the fact that the Indian texts recorded in Scholberg's bibliography are written in Indian regional languages such as Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi,

[36] Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857* (New Delhi, 1970).

[37] Karl Marx, *The First Indian War of Independence: Smaller Collections* (1st edn. 1858; Moscow, 1960).

[38] Henry Scholberg, *The Indian Literature of the Great Rebellion* (Delhi, 1993); Puran Chandra Joshi (ed.), *1857 in Folk Songs* (New Delhi, 1994).

[39] R. Veena, 'The Literature of the Events of 1857: A Postcolonial Reading', in Surya Nath Pandey (ed.), *Writing in a Postcolonial Space* (New Delhi, 1999), 1–9, at 1.

Oriya, Persian, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu, it becomes clear that an understanding of Indian memory cultures and their medial representations of '1857–8' must be an interdisciplinary project, one which brings together scholars of various languages and literatures as well as cultural historians who have engaged with regional-language literature on 1857. The works of Scholberg and Joshi moreover show that it is important to broaden the medial basis of such a 'memorial historiography', integrating Indian newspaper articles, letters, ballads, songs, images, and literary texts as representations of '1857–8' in their own right.

One of the best-known Indian works of fiction in English to have represented the events of 1857–8 is Shoshee Chunder Dutt's short novel *Shunkur*, first published in 1877–8.[40] Shoshee Chunder Dutt (1824–86) belonged to the famous Dutt family, a Bengali middle-class, Anglicized family of poets, journalists, and historians.[41] His writing can be placed at the beginning of the Bengal Renaissance. Unlike more overtly nationalist Bengali writers such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Dutt did not turn to Bangla at some stage in his career but chose to write exclusively in English throughout his life. In fact, 'Shoshee's seemingly ambiguous poetic investment in the culture of the colonizer has meant that his prose, while representing some of the earliest fiction in English by a South Asian writer, has received scant attention in nationalist, Marxist and postcolonial literary histories'.[42] It is the aim of the following interpretation to uncover, with the help of concepts such as remediation and premediation, some of the anti-colonial criticism that even such an 'elite Indian-English literary response'[43] may express.

[40] Shoshee Chunder Dutt, *Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny*, in id. (ed.), *Bengaliana: A Dish of Rice and Curry and Other Indigestible Ingredients* (Calcutta, 1885), 84–158. As Calcutta-based Bengalis, Shoshee Chunder Dutt and his family were not eyewitnesses of the 'Mutiny', which took place in Awadh. *Shunkur* is therefore an imaginative version of the revolt, just like most of the British 'Mutiny' novels.
[41] The historian Romesh Chunder Dutt is Shoshee Chunder Dutt's nephew.
[42] Alex Tickell, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Shoshee Chunder Dutt: Selections from Bengaliana* (Nottingham, 2005), 7–22, at 8. On Dutt's writing see also Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi, 2000).
[43] Ibid.

Two main story lines can be distinguished in *Shunkur*. One is about Nana Sahib; the other is about the fictitious character Shunkur. The Nana Sahib story features the Cawnpore massacres—as we have seen, a key element of the British memory of the 'Indian Mutiny'. Here, Dutt closely follows the topoi and narratives of the imperial media culture. Nana Sahib is depicted as an evil, decadent, and lecherous villain. The fictitious story about Shunkur, however, is quite another matter. It begins in the Indian village Soorájpore. A young Indian woman shows compassion for two British soldiers on the run after the massacres at the Satichaura Ghat and offers them shelter in her house. The soldiers, Mackenzie and Bernard, however, reciprocate the good deed by raping the woman, who is so ashamed that she commits suicide. Her brother and her husband, Probhoo and Shunkur, find her dead body when they return from the market and vow revenge. They get involved in the revolt, fight on Nana Sahib's side, and find the rapists in the end. They kill the British villains and then, having gained their revenge, return to their village.

Shunkur is a good example of remediation on various levels. The way Nana Sahib is characterized as a villain and the introduction of the rape-revenge plot are striking examples of how British representations of the 'Indian Mutiny' were remediated in Indian writing. Moreover, Dutt closely follows the British conventions of selection and heightening: there are lengthy descriptions of the massacres at the Satichaura Ghat and in the Bibighar; and even the myth of Ulrica Wheeler is repeated in *Shunkur* (for Ball's illustration see Fig. 5.2). The sheer extent of Dutt's remediation becomes evident when his description of the Cawnpore massacres is compared with W. J. Shepherd's account in *The Times*.

The women and children, most of whom were wounded, some with three or four bullet shots in them, were spared and brought to the Nana's camp, and placed in a pukka building called 'Subada Ke-Kothee'.
(Shepherd in *The Times*, 7 Nov. 1857, 7)

Of the women and children several were wounded, and some of these were released from their sufferings by death, while the rest were confined in a puccá-house called 'Subádá Kothee'.
(Dutt, *Shunkur*, 107)

One young lady, however, was seized upon (reported to be General Wheeler's daughter) and taken away by a trooper of the 2nd Light Cavalry to his home, where she at night, finding a favourable opportunity, secured the trooper's sword, and with it, after killing him and three others, threw herself into a well and was killed.
(Shepherd in *The Times*, 7 Nov. 1857, 7)

One young lady only had been seized upon previously by a trooper of the 2nd Light Cavalry, and carried off to his own quarters, where she was violently treated; but, finding a favourable opportunity, she rose up at night, and securing her ravisher's sword, avenged herself by killing him and three others, after which she flung herself into a well, and was killed.
(Dutt, *Shunkur*, 107)

Quite obviously, Dutt has copied Shepherd's account and integrated it into his literary text.[44] However, such forms of plagiarism are no anomaly in the history of remediating '1857–8'. As we have seen, Ball copied long passages from Shepherd's account into his *History of the Indian Mutiny* and Henty drew on and amalgamated the representations of Thomson and Ball in only one page of his *In Times of Peril*. In *Shunkur*, however, the unmarked integration of British eyewitness accounts (along with all the imperialist stereotypes about Nana Sahib and 'Cawnpore') is especially striking, because it seems that this nominally 'Indian' version of the revolt is to a large extent nothing more than a remediation of British representations. The plagiarism can be understood as an example of 'audience-tuning'[45] in the production of cultural memory: the adjustment of communication to (parts of) an intended audience. It serves as a medial *captatio benevolentiae*, indicating to a British readership, to which the novel was obviously also addressed,[46] that *Shunkur* is a 'proper and authentic' account of the Mutiny, even though it was written by a colonial subject. What Homi Bhabha would call an instance of colonial mimicry is an effect of cross-cultural memory, and it operates by remediation.[47] The novel thus may appear as yet another expression of a British dominated memory culture, one that stabilizes the imperial *lieu de mémoire* through constant transcription, even across the boundaries of colonizer and colonized.

The storyline which features Shunkur's revenge, however, unfolds quite a different dynamic. It is a subversive version of Indian counter-memory. First of all, the adventures of Shunkur and Probhoo are an early representation of the 'peasant armed', whom revisionist historiography of the revolt 'discovered' only after 1947 and then

[44] He also copied Shepherd's mistake: Shepherd (and by extension Ball and Henty, but not Thomson) falsely assumes that the women were taken into the 'Subádá Kothee' (instead of the nearby 'Bibighar').

[45] G. Echterhoff, E. T. Higgins, and S. Groll, 'Audience-Tuning Effects on Memory: The Role of Shared Reality', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 3 (2005), 257–76.

[46] Dutt is one of the first Indian writers to be published both in India and in Britain, thus reaching educated Indian elites and 'Anglo-India' (the British then living in India) as well as an interested public back in the 'colonial centre', Great Britain.

[47] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994).

turned into a central subject matter.[48] Dutt's fictional narrative imaginatively represents the lived experience of the host of peasants and small landowners who took part in the revolt, but whose testimony did not circulate within nineteenth-century British and Indian elite memory cultures because their memories were never written down in letters or autobiographies (as almost all of the English witnesses' were) and thus not coded in one of the leading media of those cultures. Secondly, *Shunkur* inverts the British rape-revenge plot. Now it is the Indian woman, and not the English woman, who is assaulted and must be avenged.

With regard to the simultaneous presence of British and Indian perspectives on the revolt in *Shunkur*, Meenakshi Mukherjee concludes that 'Dutt takes special care to distribute sympathy evenly between the British and the Indians. If officers like Bernard and Mackenzie are despicable enough to rape the woman who has given them shelter, Nanasaheb's treachery and promiscuity are foregrounded as if to provide a balance in villainy.'[49]

Such an interpretation can certainly be backed by looking at the comments made by the authorial narrator, who is at pains politely but firmly to revise some British misconceptions about the revolt. However, I would argue that the Shunkur story line goes beyond such a conciliatory endeavour, and that it does so yet again by medial dynamics, except that in this case it is a canonical text of *Indian* memory cultures that the novel draws on. *Shunkur* can be read as a story of the Indian Mutiny which is premediated by the Indian epic *Mahabharata*. This is a mythical narrative about the beautiful Draupadi, who was married to the five brothers of the Pandava family: one of Draupadi's five husbands gambled away his land, his

[48] Eric T. Stokes, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857* (Oxford, 1986); Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (Delhi, 1983); Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*. In this respect, *Shunkur* can also be placed in the tradition of Bengali literature on 'peasant suffering', which had been developed into a powerful trope of Bengali fiction from the mid nineteenth century onwards, especially inspired by Dinabandhu Mitra's influential drama *Nil Darpan* (The Mirror of Indigo) (1858–9). I am grateful to Indra Sengupta, who drew my attention to this fact.

[49] Meenakshi Mukherjee, 'The Beginnings of the Indian Novel', in Krishna Arvind Mehrotra (ed.), *A History of Indian Literature in English* (London, 2003), 92–102, at 95.

brothers, and his wife to the family of their cousins, the Kauravas. As a slave in the service of the Kauravas, Draupadi is almost raped by her husbands' cousins Duryodhana and Dushasana (but the Lord Krishna shows compassion and restores her garments as fast as they are torn). Draupadi's husband Bhima vows revenge and kills the cousins in the end. As Pamela Lothspeich has shown, the glorification of Draupadi as an allegory of Mother India can be traced back to late colonial Hindi literature, when many Draupadi parables were produced.[50] Early twentieth-century drama, for example, drew on the myth of Draupadi's violation and used it as an allegory for the conquest of 'Mother India' by the British. If we assume that *Shunkur* is an early version of such parables, then its rape-revenge plot is not only an inversion of a powerful British 'Mutiny' topos; it has, in addition, a mythological dimension which carries a proto-nationalist subtext—one which the British reader would not necessarily expect or understand, if we go by the medial mimicry on the text's surface.

Mukherjee points out that 'Shunkur's vendetta against those who raped his wife is made out to be a purely personal matter with no political overtones'.[51] This is what the ending of the novel in particular seems to point to. Shunkur's last words are: 'there is no further motive for the life we were obliged to adopt; let us go back to our cheerless home.'[52] When read according to the conventions of western realist narratives of the nineteenth century, this is, indeed, a return to the apolitical sphere, just as one would find, for example, in the works of German poetic realism of the time. Understood in this way, *Shunkur* comments neither on politics nor on the process of British-Indian history. But if we regard the novel as being premediated by the *Mahabharata*, then it is possible to decode from the literal story an allegorical dimension: after the 'rape' of Mother India has been avenged and the perpetrators Mackenzie and Bernard (obviously standing for British imperialism) are called to account, there is indeed nothing left but to 'return home', that is, to try to resume the old ways of living. The novel's allegorical premediation thus defies

[50] Pamela Lothspeich, 'Unspeakable Outrages and Unbearable Defilements: Rape Narratives in the Literature of Colonial India', *Postcolonial Text*, 1 (2007), <http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/602>, accessed 14 Aug. 2008.

[51] Mukherjee, 'The Beginnings', 95.

[52] Dutt, *Shunkur*, 158.

the British 'Mutiny' myth and represents an alternative memory. It provides a glimpse of a 'future past' of the revolt of 1857–8—the vision of an avenged Mother India—and inscribes it into an Indian site of memory.

'Mutiny' in Hollywood: Michael Curtiz's The Charge of the Light Brigade *(1936)*

In the twentieth century, the 'Indian Mutiny' continued to be constructed and reconstructed as a *lieu de mémoire*. New media (such as film, radio, television, and the internet) as well as an altered geopolitical landscape (decolonization, Indian independence in 1947) were responsible for new and altered forms of 'symbolic investment' into the site of memory.[53] Critical essays, such as Edward Thompson's *The Other Side of the Medal* (1925) and F. W. Buckler's *The Political Theory of the Indian Mutiny* (1922), revisionist historiography, such as Eric Stokes's *The Peasant Armed* (1981) and Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983), have challenged the imperial and Indian nationalist canons of events, heroes, and narrative structures, cherished myths and topoi. In the realm of literature, there has been a considerable increase in revisionist historical novels dealing with the Indian Mutiny (for example, Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur*, 1972), in representations of the revolt in Indian English writing (Khushwant Singh's *Delhi*, 1989), and in novels emerging from the Indian diaspora (Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, 1995) and from multicultural Britain (Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, 2000). What they all have in common is that they move away from the imperial adventure and romance model of narrating the 'Indian Mutiny' (of which Henty's novels are a good example) and open up new ways of remembering the revolt by using new narrative forms of representation (such as unreliability, multiperspectivity, tales within tales etc.).[54] In the remaining sections of this article, however,

[53] These new forms emerged alongside traditional and conventionalized methods of representation. There were (and still are) many representations of the 'Indian Mutiny' which rely on the received patterns of British imperial memory. We find them in popular novels, film, and historical works.
[54] For a history of literary representations of the 'Indian Mutiny', see Erll, *Prämediation* and ead., 'Re-writing as Re-visioning: Modes of Representing

I will look at what has arguably become one of the most powerful media for symbolic investment in sites of memory: popular cinema.[55]

Many of the most popular movies about imperial history emerged from the so-called Cinema of Empire during the 1930s and 1940s.[56] But, interestingly, it was not the British but the American film industry which set out to remember the 'Indian Mutiny'. Michael Curtiz's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936) is a classic of Empire Cinema made in Hollywood, and it is a striking cinematic version of the 'Mutiny'.[57] Although the name Cawnpore never appears in this movie, with its plot of Indian treachery and rebellion, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* certainly belongs in the long line of 'Mutiny' remediations. More than five minutes of the film show a massacre of British civilians by Indian soldiers, a massacre which takes place after a long siege of an English station has ended and safe passage has been offered to the British by a rebellious Indian prince. There is, once again, a British spy dressed in native attire who tries to leave the besieged station undetected, but is found out and killed by the rebels; even the rape motif so dear to the British newspapers is integrated into the movie, when a Sikh tries to abduct the heroine.

As the title of the movie, with its open reference to Alfred Lord Tennyson's famous poem about the Crimean War, already indicates, Curtiz's movie actually conflates two British sites of imperial memory, the 'Indian Mutiny' and the Crimean War. It is therefore a good example of further processes of convergence: to the Hollywood producers and American audiences, memories of British imperialism were foreign and not relevant to their identity. Thus, separate historical events could easily be amalgamated into one single topos of violence and the British Empire. And, apparently, their temporal

the "Indian Mutiny" in British Literature, 1857 to 2000', *Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory, EJES (European Journal of English Studies)*, 2 (2006), 163–85.

[55] For the theory and methodology of the 'memory film' see Astrid Erll and Stephanie Wodianka (eds.), *Film und kulturelle Erinnerung: Plurimediale Konstellationen* (Berlin, 2008).

[56] On the 'Cinema of Empire' see Jeffrey Richards, *Visions of Yesterday* (London, 1973).

[57] *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, dir. Michael Curtiz (Warner Bros. Pictures 1936, USA). (VHS: Warner Home Video, 1989.)

sequence could also be altered: in Curtiz's movie, the Mutiny of 1857–8 precedes the Crimean War of 1854–6.

The fact that 'Mutiny' narratives migrated to the Hollywood cinema of the 1930s points to yet another basic process of memory in media cultures: the 'Mutiny' had by then turned into a powerful pre-mediator. It had become a narrative schema which could be used to create successful stories. In this sense the 'Indian Mutiny' is not only a *lieu de mémoire* shared by the British and the Indian people, but can be seen as a transnationally available pattern of representation.[58] As a transcultural schema, the 'Indian Mutiny' has become decontextualized. In 1930s Hollywood, 'Mutiny' does not refer to a specific historical event, perceived in a clearly demarcated spatio-temporal context, and related to cultural identity. It has, instead, been turned into a narrative template used to tell stories of good and evil, valour and treachery—carrying with it, however, the ideology of a form that was created in the context of British imperialism.[59]

But while in the United States the 'Indian Mutiny' was used as an effective narrative schema for entertainment and box-office successes, the British government in India was rather sensitive about the revolt as a theme of popular cinema. As Prem Chowdhry points out in his study on the historical reception of Empire Cinema, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* was 'considered by British officials in India a "painful reminder of Indian history which was better left unrecalled"'.[60]

It is for such political reasons that no 'Mutiny' film emerged from the *British* Cinema of Empire during the 1930s and 1940s. Producers

[58] In fact, the 'Mutiny', and especially the figure of Nana Sahib, soon became a favoured subject of popular entertainment all over the world. In nineteenth-century Germany, for example, Theodor Fontane wrote about the Indian revolt, and in France, Jules Verne.

[59] In 1930s Hollywood the Cinema of Empire was structurally and ideologically not very different from the major American genre of that time, the Western. According to the film historian Jeffrey Richards, 'Americans do seem to have responded to Britain's folk myths in the same way that Britain responds to America's, the Westerns. There is in fact an area of cross-reference between the two genres. . . . Ideologically, American films of Empire were little different from British films of Empire.' Jeffrey Richards, *Visions of Yesterday*, 3–4.

[60] Prem Chowdhry, *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* (Manchester, 2000), 29.

were very interested in the 'Mutiny' as a theme, but British censorship intervened, for example, in 1936 when plans were made for a film called *The Relief of Lucknow*. The president of the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC), Lord Tyrrell, warned: 'The B.B.F.C. has been advised by all the authorities responsible for the government of India, both civil and military, that in their considered opinion, such a film would revive memories of the days of conflict in India which it had been the earnest endeavour of both countries to obliterate with a view to promoting harmonious cooperation between the two peoples.'[61] And two years later, an official of the Government of India wrote about the same issue:

> May I say how extraordinarily dangerous I think any such film would be in India today. In the first place young nationalist India is extraordinarily sensitive about the whole Mutiny episode. To them it was the first wave of national movement for independence. . . . It would most certainly provoke a crop of films from Indian companies setting forth the Indian version of the Mutiny, and it would be extraordinarily difficult for the Government of India to censor or suppress them if it had allowed a British film of the Mutiny to appear. Further, Hollywood has long been itching to use the Mutiny as a theme. . . . There will be no means of stopping Hollywood from pouring out versions of its own which would probably infuriate both Britain and India.[62]

In these remarks, we can sense the power exerted by popular media memory and the fear that British officials had in the face of the Indian independence movement during the 1930s, firstly, of cinematic counter-memory made in India, and secondly, of an uncontrollable Hollywood machine which might appropriate and commodify the memory of 1857–8 without considering its political implications for Britain and India.

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[61] Quoted in Richards, *Visions of Yesterday*, 42.
[62] Quoted in Chowdhry, *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema*, 30–1.

The 'Indian Mutiny'

Bollywood 'Films Back': Ketan Mehta's The Rising *(2005)*

My final example of 'Mutiny' remediation is one of the most recent and most widely distributed representations of the revolt: Ketan Mehta's Bollywood movie *The Rising* (2005).[63] There is a current renaissance of historical themes, and more specifically, of nineteenth-century settings in Bollywood,[64] which has also witnessed the production of a film about the Indian rebellion. With the release of *The Rising*, a film about Mangal Pandey, the first mutineer of 1857, a powerful mass medium is once more involved in the representation of the Indian rebellion. Just like the newspapers of the nineteenth century, movies—and especially Indian Bollywood movies—reach large parts of the populace. Bollywood is not only the most powerful film industry in Asia. It also exports its products to Europe and the USA, where members of the Asian diaspora in particular make for large audiences.

The Rising is a clear instance of what may be called 'filming back'. It revises some of the most tenacious of the British myths. Instead of a drugged and ragged rioting sepoy (as borne out by colonial historical records) we see a proud and utterly sober Mangal Pandey, and when he uses cannabis (*bhang*), he does so in the company of his British friend Gordon. While British accounts centre on the rape of English women, *The Rising* depicts the organized setting up of brothels by the East India Company, where abducted Indian women are at the service of British soldiers. And whereas professional British historiography tends to describe the rebellion of 1857 as unorganized and chaotic, *The Rising* gives an account of a carefully planned, concerted action.

This alternative version of the 'Mutiny' presented by the movie drew some criticism, especially in Britain. In interviews given to several British newspapers in the summer of 2005, the historian Saul David criticized the film, which was partly funded by the UK Film Council, for what he saw as its 'historical inaccuracy'.[65] But of course,

[63] *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey*, dir. Ketan Mehta (Yash Raj Films 2005, India). (DVD: Yash Raj Films, 2005.)

[64] Another hugely popular Bollywood movie set in nineteenth-century colonial India is *Lagaan* (2001).

[65] See e.g. Chris Hastings and Beth Jones, 'Lottery-funded Film under Fire for Anti-British Bias', *Sunday Telegraph,* 14 Aug. 2005, 8.

The Rising is a *fictional* medium of remembrance. It is, moreover, part of the Mumbai film industry, which is famous for its highly melodramatic plots and black-and-white characterizations, an aesthetic that starkly contrasts with classical Hollywood realism. Had it created a story in line with British military historiography, it would have failed dramatically *as a movie* (a movie, at that, directed primarily at Indian audiences). Cultural memory is produced not only by different media (oral speech, written documents, film) but also within different symbolic systems (art, history, religion). Each of these has specific characteristics and limitations. A fictional film, even if it is a 'history film', cannot be judged by criteria derived from 'history' as an academic discipline, because movies function according to a different symbolic system. This does not mean, however, that the production of cultural memory through literature, film, and the arts cannot be criticized. What is needed is a different methodology, one which allows us to address (adapting Frederic Jameson's expression) the 'ideology of memorial form', through, for example, an analysis of narrative voice, perspective structures, character constellations, the use of imagery, or (as in the following) intermedial structures and references.

The central message of *The Rising* is its linking of revolt and independence—in 1857 and 1947 respectively—as two national sites of memory. This linkage, which is prevalent in popular postcolonial Indian memory cultures,[66] is made verbally and visually in *The Rising*. At the beginning of the movie, the following words appear on the screen:

> The man who changed history
> his courage inspired a nation
> his sacrifice gave birth to a dream
> his name will forever stand for FREEDOM

A key scene of the film is a British massacre of Indian peasants (see Fig. 5.4). Historically, this episode is not recorded, or at least, not as having taken place during the time immediately preceding the

[66] For a critical assessment of this version of Indian history see Rajat Kanta Ray, *The Felt Community: Commonality and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Delhi, 2003).

Figure 5.4. *The Rising* (2005): massacre of Indian peasants.

Figure 5.5. Representation of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. *Gandhi* © 1982 Carolina Bank Ltd. and National Film Development Corporation Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

outbreak of the mutinies in spring 1857. It does, however, evoke the time *after* the 'Mutiny', the cruel British campaigns of counter-insurgency in 1858. Moreover, the episode recalls and inverts the British Satichaura Ghat myth, a technique similar to Dutt's inverted rape narrative. And, finally, this scene is related to the palimpsest of new memories and medial representations which have emerged since Indian independence. It draws on the iconographic memory connected with the Indian freedom struggle, because it is quite clearly a visual echo of the Amritsar massacre in the Jallianwala Bagh (1919), which was similarly represented in countless films about British India—the version most popular worldwide can be found in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* of 1982 (see Fig. 5.5).[67] The episode, in short, condenses the complex of colonial violence into one image.

It is in line with so many historical cross-references that we find in the final credits of *The Rising* the image of Mangal Pandey cross-faded with well-known images of Gandhi's freedom movement: Indians on a protest march, probably footage from the Quit India

[67] *Gandhi*, dir. Richard Attenborough (Columbia Pictures 1982, UK/India). (DVD: Columbia TriStar, 2003.)

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campaign of 1942 (see Fig. 5.6). This is an apt visualization of the intermedial processes which are at the basis of all *lieux de mémoire*: images, topoi, and narratives about the past are brought together and 'cross-faded', condensed into a single site of memory. This creation of a maximum amount of meaning in a minimum number of signs is made possible through the repeated representation of historical events, usually across the whole spectrum of culturally available media.

Lieux de mémoire derive their meaning only within the context of (increasingly globalized) media cultures. Medial representations surround, constitute, and modify sites of memory. They function according to different media specificities, symbolic systems, and within ever changing socio-political constellations. Medial representations of the past, moreover, refer to one another, pre-form and re-shape cultural memories. And they do so across the boundaries of time, space, and culture. In this sense, all *lieux de mémoire* (and not only those 'belonging' to two different nations) are 'shared' sites of

Figure 5.6. *The Rising* (2005): Cross-fading of the image of Mangal Pandey with footage of Indian protest marches of the 1940s.

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memory: they are shared by different social classes, political camps, generations, religious groups, and regional cultures (above as well as below the level of the national), and not least by different media cultures—with their specific practices of representation and reception.

PART III

Of Place and *lieu*

6

How History Takes Place

ALEIDA ASSMANN

We exist at a moment when the world is experiencing . . . something less like a great life that would develop through time than like a network that connects points and weaves its skein.

(Michel Foucault)

'What a history you have.' 'You are welcome to it if you like.'

(Jamaica Kincaid)

The shared leitmotiv of this volume is Pierre Nora's concept of the *lieux de mémoire,* which has offered new common ground for scholars from rather different disciplines such as history, sociology, or literature. What we all have in common is an interest in symbols and the way in which they shape historical experience, memory, arguments, and collective identities. Nora's concept of *lieux* harks back to the ancient Roman art of memory, which created durable props for the notoriously unstable memorizing capacities by combining specific *loci* (places) with *imagines* (images). While most approaches that investigate the role of myth and memory in the process of nation-building and the forging of collective identity are built on the concept of narrative, Nora's innovation was to reactivate this ancient concept of 'topoi' and thereby approach the texture of memory in a non-linear and topological way. The *lieux*, of course, are not necessarily 'places' in the strict sense, but crystallizations of experience or memory-entries in a much more general sense, be they events, heroes, buildings, artefacts, customs, ideas, or images. In moving from 'stories' to 'topoi', Nora focused on a much looser texture of memory that is anything from an open inventory to a rhizomatic matrix of more or less connected nodes and ties. Instead of emphasizing continuity and unity, Nora has provided us with a conceptual framework with which to approach the fragmentary, inconclusive, and highly elusive texture of national memory.

Roughly half of the articles collected in this volume are dedicated to the concrete localization of events and memories. This contribution will also return to the more literal sense of 'place' and ask the more specific question: how does history take place? How does it take possession of place; how does it inscribe itself in space? I shall first briefly discuss methodological issues related to the 'spatial turn' in historiography and another shift that has remained concealed beneath it: the shift from space to place. I will then introduce the distinction between *lieux de souvenir* and *lieux de mémoire* and discuss the question of how memory interacts with places from the point of view of individuals and collectives. Finally, I will briefly touch on colonial and postcolonial *lieux de mémoire*, emphasizing the role of symbols and media in the shaping of memory. At the same time as history takes place, it also takes hold in memory to the extent that it is shaped by symbols. These symbols, however, are by no means fixed entities but liable to change with political constellations and perspectives. As we move from Nora's national (and patriotic) to a more transnational perspective of *histoires croisées*, the emphasis clearly shifts from consensus to conflict. In this perspective it turns out that what is sacred for one group may be offensive to another. The symbolic places that maintain the past and transfer it to the present often become sites of a post-history in which the meaning and memory of the past event is continuously contested.

Space and Place

At the same time as Pierre Nora was working with more than a hundred colleagues on his 130 *lieux de mémoire*, published from 1986 to 1992 in his seven-volume project, the spatial turn was proclaimed as a new intellectual and discursive orientation in historiography and cultural studies. As far as I can see, those who were involved in the two historiographical trends did not take much notice of each other, but it is the privilege of the historian to reflect on their relationship in retrospect. A strong and decisive voice in the proclamation of a spatial turn was that of Edward Soja, political geographer and urban planner, who argued that the new paradigm of space should replace that of time, historians' great theme since the nineteenth century. The claim was that space as the dimension of the simultaneous had been

silenced by an over-emphasis on linear temporal change.[1] Soja point-
ed out that something had been forgotten, overlooked, elided in the
nineteenth-century obsession with history and time, namely, 'the life-
world as being creatively *located* not only in the making of history but
also in the *construction of human geographies*, the social *production of
space* and the restless formation and reformation of *geographical land-
scapes*'.[2]

Soja did not invent this new paradigm out of the blue. He was
able to draw on French historians who had already prepared the
ground. One of them was Henri Lefebvre who, fifteen years before
Soja, had written on *La production de l'espace* and defined space as 'a
reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are
applied'. By stressing a constructivist view, Lefebvre emphasized
that space is 'more than a theatre, the disinterested stage or setting,
of action. . . . Its role is less and less neutral, more and more active,
both as instrument and as goal, as means and end.'[3]

In a similar way, Edward Said made the point that 'geography can
be manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site's
merely physical reality'.[4] A 'merely physical reality' of space is some-
what difficult to conceive of; historical, political, and economic
human action always interacts with space, which is quite obvious to
historians of colonial and postcolonial history. According to David
Harvey, the conquest of space 'first required that it be conceived of
as something usable, malleable, and therefore capable of domination

[1] The historian Karl Schlögel has made a similar point: 'The historical narra-
tive has enforced a silencing of space which could not be integrated into the
structure of temporal sequence but persists in the presentation of the simul-
taneous.' Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte
und Geopolitik* (Munich, 2003), 64. I owe the phrase 'history takes place' to this
book. Schlögel emphasizes: 'All our historical knowledge attaches to places.
. . . Historical dates coincide with sites of action, we cannot do without
images of the locations where events have happened.' Ibid. 70.

[2] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geography: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social
Theory* (London, 1989), 10. See also id., *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and
Other Real and Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996).

[3] Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace 1974*; Eng. trans. published as *The
Production of Space* (Oxford, 1991), 410–11.

[4] Edward W. Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place', *Critical Inquiry*, 2 (Winter
2000), 175–92, at 180.

through human action'.[5] In the political context, space means territory and calls for very specific forms of action; it is to be conquered or defended, discovered, traversed, colonized, measured, mapped, occupied. Space, indeed, is the central motive and motor of colonialism and modern geopolitics. In this context, it is space that is to be transformed and exploited, becoming the central locus, manifestation, and symbol of power. Imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced a new form of territorialism based on an aggressive form of modern space-consciousness.

There was an even earlier shift of orientation towards space by Michel Foucault, who gave a lecture to architects in 1967 on 'different spaces' (*Des espaces autres*) which was not published until 1984, shortly before his death.[6] At the end of the twentieth century, he argued, 'we are in the age of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered. We exist at a moment when the world is experiencing, I believe, something less like a great life that would develop through time than like a network that connects points and weaves its skein.'[7]

I want to draw attention to the fact that below the shift from time to space as propagated in the rhetoric of the 'spatial turn', there is another shift that has received less attention. I am referring to the shift from space to place. While *space* is often conceived of in discourses as something to be shaped (whether by politicians who have the power to make history, or by architects who transform geographies according to their vision by inscribing their intentionality into space), *place* appears as something that already has a name and a history. It has acquired a specific physiognomy by previous acts, experiences, lives, and deaths. While the notion of space is rather abstract,

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[5] David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore, 1989), 176.

[6] Michel Foucault, 'Des espaces autres', pub. in English as 'Different Spaces', in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (London, 2000), 175–85, at 175. Five years later, Soja recycled these ideas and gave them the shape of a 'spatial turn'. An interesting assessment of the rhetoric of paradigm changes is to be found in Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit*, 60–4.

[7] Foucault, 'Different Spaces', 175. Foucault does not distinguish between space and place; his description covers both aspects. In introducing the concept of 'emplacement', he is not interested in leaving history or time, but in conceptualizing both space and time along different lines.

often directed towards the future and related (to use Lefebvre's words) to instruments and goals, to means and ends, place is related to the past, to events that have happened, and have left their mark. Soja writes about Los Angeles, which, according to him, is paradigmatically characterized by 'the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes'. These ever-changing landscapes are obviously the very opposite of 'place' in terms of a crystallization of history or memory.[8]

Place refers us to the specificity of concrete places which have become the focus of a new form of topographical enquiry. Places can be defined as a condensation of historical events, as a thickening and materialization of history, as a tangible carrier of signs and traces which are eventually destroyed or preserved, discarded or deciphered, marked or unmarked, forgotten or remembered.[9] It is the stage after some violent action has taken place, and then ceased, yet still remains present, either as material traces, or in memory. The concept of place becomes especially relevant when the focus is shifted from the ways of making history to the ways of experiencing and remembering historical events. Place has now become an object of historical research that has become as important as written and verbal sources. It applies the notion of legibility to landscapes, cities, and places wherever, as Foucault says, 'this inevitable interlocking of time with space' has taken place.[10] Places that are replete with history are the opposite of the so-called *non-lieux* such as parking lots, international airports, and hotel-chains that have a purely functional design and generally lack a historically specific physiognomy.[11]

The 'spatial turn' has sparked new interest both in space and place. The concept of place is directly related to 'history' and 'memory', and to history as memory in particular. While historiography focuses on change and development, the interest in place emphasizes aspects of continuity in change, of permanence, of subsistence, and

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[8] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, 1977).

[9] Gaston Bachelard, *Poetik des Raumes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975); Jay Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford, Calif., 1995); Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit*.

[10] Foucault, 'Different Spaces', 176.

[11] Marc Augé, *Orte und Nicht-Orte: Vorüberlegungen zu einer Ethnologie der Einsamkeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994).

retention. It is the shift in perspective from history in the making to the aftermath of history, from the aspirations of power to the trauma of violence. It allows for new forms of writing colonial history in a non-linear and fragmented way by reading the struggle with the empire and the complexities of the postcolonial period within the framework of concrete historical sites. As history takes place, it leaves its marks, scars, and traces, which later become the focus of memory through acts of symbolization and the construction of narratives. The shift towards place does not banish narrative altogether; it only discards homogenizing master narratives such as imperial narratives to make room for multiple and contesting narratives. As place tends to be contested and layered, it is often the focus of divided memories and competing narratives.

Lieux de souvenir

How do places become repositories and media of memory? In trying to answer this question, let me start with individual experience. There is an illuminating autobiographical essay by the German writer Günter Grass that can serve as a starting point. The text begins with the words 'I remember' and continues as follows: '. . . or am reminded by something that crosses my path, that has left its scent or that has lurked in long outdated letters or insidious words, waiting to be remembered.'[12] In turning abruptly from the active to the passive voice, Grass alerts us to two basic modes of memory, which we may refer to as 'I-memory' and 'me-memory'. While the first is conscious, verbal, and declarative, the second is embodied, elusive, and diffuse, which is not to say that it is not equally potent; it clearly appeals more to the senses and emotions than to will and reason. In the following paragraph, Grass describes in detail the workings of his me-memory while describing what happened to him when he revisited places of his youth after a long interval:

[12] 'Ich erinnere mich . . . oder ich werde erinnert durch etwas, das mir quersteht, seinen Geruch hinterlassen hat oder in verjährten Briefen mit tückischen Stichworten darauf wartete, erinnert zu werden.' Günter Grass, 'Ich erinnere mich', in Martin Wälde (ed.), *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung* (Göttingen, 2001), 27 (Eng. trans. Aleida Assmann).

But it is also when travelling to places that we left behind, that were destroyed and now bear strange-sounding names that memory suddenly catches up with us. It happened to me in the spring of 1958, when, for the first time since the end of the war, I visited the city of Gdansk, which was slowly growing out of the cleared-away rubble. I was hoping to stumble upon some remaining traces of the old Danzig. Indeed, the buildings of my school were still in place and so was the well-preserved fug in the corridors. The road to school seemed shorter than I had remembered. But suddenly, when I came to the old fishing village of Brösen, recognizing the unchanged lazy wash of the Baltic Sea, I found myself again in front of the bathing place and the sealed-up kiosk next to the entrance. And before I knew it, I saw the cheapest delight of my childhood foaming up before me: effervescent powder with the taste of raspberry, lemon, or woodruff that used to be sold in tiny bags for a few pennies at that very kiosk. Hardly had the remembered drink started to fizz, than it brought up stories, truthfully deceitful stories that had only waited for their password to surface. The harmless powder that so easily dissolves in water triggered a chain reaction in my head: effervescent early love, this repeated sensation that wanes and vanishes in later years.[13]

It is a token of the writer's genius that he achieves various things at once in this paragraph: he recounts an episode from his youth, he

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[13] 'Auch während Reisen an Orte, die hinter uns liegen, die zerstört wurden, verloren sind und nun fremd klingen und anders heißen, holt und plötzlich Erinnerung ein. So geschah es mir im Frühjahr 1958, als ich zum ersten Mal nach Kriegsende die langsam aus abgeräumten Trümmern nachwachsende Stadt Gdansk besuchte und beiläufig hoffte, auf verbliebene Spuren von Danzig zu stoßen. Gewiß, Schulgebäude waren stehen geblieben und ließen in ihren Korridoren wohlkonservierten Schulmief aufleben. Schulwege hingegen schienen kürzer zu sein, als mir erinnerlich war. Dann aber, als ich das einstige Fischerdorf Brösen aufsuchte und den schlappen Anschlag der Ostsee als unverändert erkannte, stand ich plötzlich vor der verschlossenen Badeanstalt und dem gleichfalls vernagelten Kiosk seitlich vorm Eingang. Und sogleich sah ich die billigste Freude meiner Kindheit aufschäumen: Brausepulver mit Himbeer-, Zitrone- und Waldmeistergeschmack, das in jenem Kiosk für Pfennige in Tütchen zu kaufen war. Doch kaum prickelte das

reminisces, and he describes the process of recall. His memory is triggered by visiting places which he had not seen for decades, his school in Gdansk and the beach at Brösen. We may call such places *lieux de souvenir* to distinguish their private und subjective quality from Pierre Nora's collective and cultural *lieux de mémoire*. Places and objects are the most important triggers for our me-memory. Grass writes: 'Speechless objects touch us.' These may be buildings, mute relics, or photographs, but also the effervescent powder that stimulates a sudden almost physical sensation.

What kind of magic is it that rests in such inconspicuous places; how can it suddenly move us with a sudden and unexpected touch? Before such places can exert this power over us, clearly we must first have invested something in them. Whatever we have consciously or unconsciously invested in them will later produce the specific effect of a 'resonance'. We may perhaps compare this magic power of memory residing in places as well as objects to the operation of *symbola* in classical antiquity. The word refers originally to objects that were broken in half and given to the two parties engaged in a legal contract. When they met again after a long interval, the two parties identified themselves by their respective halves. Fitting the halves together again was a way of authenticating their identities and of vouching for the contract. Something similar occurs when we invest autobiographical experience in outside objects and places while carrying the other half with us as a kind of 'divining rod' or 'memory rod'. The non-conscious memory is reactivated when, after a relatively long interval of forgetting, the external half is suddenly reconnected with the somatic half. Such memories cannot be recalled at will. They remain latent and have to wait until they are reconnected with the right external trigger. The *lieux de souvenir* relate to an embodied memory that is radically different from other externalized forms of storing memories in symbolic carriers such as texts or images. In the case of *lieux de souvenir*, a concrete place provides a 'contact zone' in which

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erinnerte Erfrischungsgetränk, begann es sogleich Geschichten zu hecken, wahrhafte Lügengeschichten, die nur auf das richtige Kennwort gewartet hatten. Das harmlose und simpel wasserlösliche Brausepulver löste in meinem Kopf eine Kettenreaktion aus: aufschäumende frühe Liebe, dieses wiederholte und dann nie wieder erlebte Prickeln.' Grass, 'Ich erinnere mich', 28. Eng. trans. Aleida Assmann.

the barrier between the past and present unexpectedly collapses, and sudden and unpremeditated transitions can unwittingly occur.

Lieux de mémoire

When we move from me-memory to we-memory, that is, from individual *lieux de souvenir* to collective and cultural *lieux de mémoire*, we move from embodied forms of remembering to disembodied and re-embodied cultural practices of commemoration. What happens spontaneously and unconsciously in personal memory has to be symbolically constructed in trans-generational collective memory. There is an important link, however, between both forms of memory because the *lieux de mémoire* in collective memory are very often also constructed and experienced as contact zones in which time collapses in a symbolic reclaiming and re-enactment and an unmediated, embodied access to the past seems possible.

   Since ancient times 'place' has been credited with an inherent mnemonic power. Cicero wrote: 'Magna vis admonitionis inest in locis' (Great is the power of memory that resides in places). Cicero was not only the great master of the Roman art of memory, he also cherished special *lieux de mémoire* to celebrate the Greek past, such as the ruins of Plato's Academy. At the time of the Roman Empire, such sites were already the destination of a tourism of the past in which a later civilization venerated an earlier one that had become a repository for cultural norms and models of styles and values. The humanists of the Renaissance revived this affective attachment to the memory of places when they travelled to Italy to visit paradigmatic sites of the Roman or Christian past. Long after the events, they returned to ruined places that retained traces of the past and used them to re-establish a direct contact to a lost foundational past. By themselves, of course, these places yielded no memory. They had to be framed by a powerful narrative and their traces had to be marked symbolically to confirm the truth of this narrative and be credited with an experiential quality. Such places do not refer to one specific event only but become models for the ongoing and layered process of history as palimpsest (*Geschichte als geschichtet*). Narrative and place reinforce each other in this process of mutual authentication, a relationship that is further consolidated by continued performances and experiences.

If the magic of the *lieu de souvenir* works in terms of emotional investment and resonance, what is their equivalent in the case of collective *lieux de mémoire*? In this case personal experience and emotion are replaced by collective experience and emotion, which are transformed and condensed in a symbolic form, be it that of a heroic person, a mobilizing narrative, or a stimulating icon. The memorability of a *lieu de mémoire* is built on various past incidents, which more often than not refer to the dying of a heroic death than to the living of an exemplary life. Wars, battles, rebellions, daring adventures, and tragic suffering stand out in the list of possible investments in places. In one of his plays, T. S. Eliot reminds us that blood is the most precious investment in place that calls for a long-term memory commitment. I quote a passage from his play *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), which is taken from a prayer by the Women of Canterbury:[14]

> For the blood of Thy martyrs and saints
> Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places.
> For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has given his blood for the blood of Christ,
> There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not depart from it
> Though armies trample over it, though sightseers come with guidebooks looking over it.

The sanctification of places through the shedding of the blood of martyrs is not only a Christian tradition but also one that was adopted by political nations which, within a secular framework, made the same claim for their soldiers. In this context, the cultural norm of 'dying for Christ' was replaced by 'dying for the nation'. It is Eliot's claim that the holiness of such places cannot be desecrated or profaned; it has fused with the site and remains an inherent quality of the place: 'From such ground springs that which forever renews the earth.'[15]

From such ground, we may add, also springs that which can forever renew the memory. The *lieux de mémoire* of the Romans in Greece and of the humanists in Italy were sites of exemplary models; they reconnected to a normative past enshrined in places that were

[14] T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1st edn. 1935; London, 1969), 85–6.
[15] Ibid. 86.

revered and invoked to guarantee the values of the present. But not only sites of triumph, also sites of suffering serve a similar foundational function. Suffering, interpreted in a heroic martyrological narrative, is the paradigmatic 'investment' in a place that will later define its sacrificial aura and provide a highly affective and long-term link to past events.

Colonial and Postcolonial lieux de mémoire

Since the 1980s, two new developments have changed the transnational culture of remembrance: the belated emergence of the discourse on the Holocaust and the rise of postcolonial studies. In the light of this change, suffering has once again become a central feature of memorial sites. This suffering, however, can no longer be framed in a heroic narrative. The new mnemotechnics of places that has evolved in a post-traumatic world is very different from both the older European notion of sacred places as represented by T. S. Eliot, and Nora's emphasis on positive national *lieux de mémoire*. It has introduced new concepts such as 'trauma', 'victim', 'witness', and 'survivor', which frame our constructions of memory within a new political and ethical discourse.

In postcolonial discourse, we are dealing not with perpetrators and victims but with colonizers and colonized, the latter also qualifying as victims. When speaking about colonial and postcolonial *lieux de mémoire*, we are moving into an exemplary domain of entangled histories. In this context, the problem is not only how history takes place but also how it has marginalized and effaced other histories. The question, then, of how it takes hold in different memories becomes much more complex. It is often the very same site that yields contrasting and irreconcilable narratives, depending on the point of view of the historical agents and non-agents. These *lieux de mémoire* are paradigmatically contested sites; on former Palestinian ground, for instance, 'the trees and landscape themselves yield two very different and contesting narratives converging on the same site'.[16] This contestation can take different shapes. There is the polarity between the hegemonic and imperial narrative versus a subversive or liberat-

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[16] Carol Bardenstein, cited by Said, 'Invention, Memory and Place', 191.

ing counter-narrative; there are usable and unusable, self-reinforcing and awkward narratives; and there is even the asymmetry of ardent remembrance practised on one side and total amnesia on the other. We will have to distinguish not only between the colonial power and the colonized, but also between political, that is, imperial or national memory on the one hand, and social and individual memories on the other. While political memories define, support, and enforce a collective identity, social memories generally do not; social memories are embodied—they exist as a network between individuals, they are much more varied, and lack an effectively homogenized symbolic shape and profile. Social memory affords room for internal variations whereas political memory gains its clear profile in a context of struggle and contestation.

To distinguish between different shapes of memory, then, we have to pay attention to symbolic strategies. The creation of effective and affective symbols is of paramount importance for binding individuals together and compelling them to commit themselves to common goals. Without such symbols and commitments, there is little chance of constructing long-term memories and collective identities. In the creation of symbols, memory often draws more heavily on imagination than on historiography. From the point of view of memory, the question is not so much what exactly happened in the past, but how the event can become representative of an enduring experience. In a similar way, the *lieux de mémoire* project the past into the present. They are constructions of past events which are made accessible in the present. The *lieux de mémoire*, then, are not so much about how history actually took place, but how history is rooted in the hearts, minds, and imaginations of subsequent generations.

Historians, of course, enjoy the professional privilege of looking backwards. Today we live in a world in which looking backwards has become a general habit. Defining our era as post-traumatic or postcolonial already shows that we are defining who we are and what we do with respect to events located in the past rather than by visions of the future. Or rather, the gaze that looks into the future must take a detour across the past.

A (Post)colonial lieu de mémoire: *The Library in Antigua*

I will end this article with a (post)colonial *lieu de mémoire*, which is at the same time a colonial *lieu de souvenir*. It is a description of the library on the Caribbean island of Antigua that I found in the writings of Jamaica Kincaid. Kincaid was born in 1948 in St John's, Antigua, in the West Indies. The island gained its independence from Britain in 1981, long after Kincaid had left it for voluntary exile in the United States. In her description of the island, she looks back at the English and their colonial system with great bitterness:

> no natural disaster imaginable could equal the harm they did. Actual death might have been better. . . . They should never have left their home, their precious England, a place they loved so much, a place they had to leave but could never forget. And so everywhere they went they turned it into England; and everybody they met they turned English. But no place could ever really be England, and nobody who did not look exactly like them would ever be English, so you can imagine the destruction of people and land that came from that.[17]

Kincaid attended a colonial school. In an earlier novel she describes how she had to learn the colonial history of Britain and to memorize long passages from Milton's *Paradise Lost* as well as poems by the English Romantics. One of these poems, 'The Daffodils' by William Wordsworth, which can in itself be considered as a colonial *lieu de mémoire*, she had to recite at a school celebration, without having the faintest idea what a daffodil might look like. When she finally got a chance to see real daffodils, for her they had turned into a symbol of colonial oppression and humiliation. Where others saw daffodils, she saw 'a scene of conquered and conquests'. While her friend 'saw beautiful flowers, I saw sorrow and bitterness'.[18]

In her autobiographical description of Antigua, Kincaid describes how, at an early age, she obtained a library card and used to spend hours poring over the books. She recalls with considerable affection the big old wooden building with its permanently open windows

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[17] Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York, 1988), 23–4.
[18] Ibid. 30.

and 'rows and rows of shelves filled with books', with 'beautiful wooden tables and chairs for sitting and reading', and 'a sound of quietness (for the quietness in this library was a sound in itself)'. She relishes the beauty of these invaluable hours of her life, but not without sarcasm, which is the specific flavour of Kincaid's style: 'the beauty of us sitting there like communicants at an altar, taking in, again and again, the fairy tale of how we met you, your right to do things you did, how beautiful you were, are and always will be.'[19]

Her portrait of the library, however, turns into a retrospective and nostalgic *lieu de souvenir* the moment she revisits the place. On her return to Antigua many years after she had left it, she discovers that the library had been moved from its former place to a dingy space above a dry-goods store in an old, run-down concrete building. Most of the books have been packed away into cardboard boxes, 'gathering mildew, or dust, or ruin'.[20] This is her portrait of the Antigua library:

> Antigua used to have a splendid library, but in The Earthquake the library building was damaged. This was in 1974, and soon after that a sign was placed on the front of the building saying, THIS BUILDING WAS DAMAGED IN THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1974. REPAIRS ARE PENDING. The sign hangs there, and hangs there more than a decade later, with its unfulfilled promise of repair. . . . REPAIRS ARE PENDING, and here it is many years later but perhaps in a world that is twelve miles long and nine miles wide (the size of Antigua) twelve years and twelve minutes and twelve days are all the same. The library is one of those splendid buildings from colonial times, and the sign telling of the repairs is a splendid sign from colonial times.[21]

Kincaid presents an autobiographical *lieu de souvenir* that is at the same time a *lieu de mémoire*. This cultural *lieu de mémoire* is itself a layered one, combining the colonial with a postcolonial site, recording two separate yet entangled histories and cultures. This *lieu* consists in

[19] Ibid. 42.
[20] Ibid. 43.
[21] Ibid. 8–9; see also 41–3.

an abstract institution with specific practices and material objects: the library's silence, books, rooms, and furniture, which are mobile and have, in the meantime, been moved from their former location. In telling us the specific history of this *lieu de mémoire/lieu de souvenir,* Kincaid makes us aware of how a specific site can tell different and conflicting stories, colonial as well as postcolonial, individual as well as collective, historical as well as contemporary.

7

In Conclusion: Palimpsests

Jay M. Winter

The central question posed by these articles is whether the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, developed by Pierre Nora to explore French national identity in the 1980s, can be employed in the very different terrain of imperial history. The answer is a resounding yes, though the term itself must be revised to fit the contours of colonial and postcolonial societies, which were and remain transnational in character. Rudyard Kipling put it succinctly in his aphorism: 'What does he know of England who only England knows?' Retreat from empire left so many traces in both colonizer and colonized that neither could wash off the marks of their shared past.

That is why one way to adapt the notion of *lieux de mémoire* in postcolonial scholarship is to insist upon the hybrid character of colonial and postcolonial sites of memory. Each and every one is a palimpsest, an overwritten text, with patterns emerging that varied from the intention of the authors. Here I would like to use the word 'palimpsest' as something that is reused or altered but still bears visible traces of its earlier form. The Oxford English Dictionary gives this example: 'This house is a palimpsest of the taste of successive owners.' It is possible to use the term to describe a manuscript which had an original meaning scraped away, but the usage I would like to borrow enables us to see better how we layer meaning on top of meaning to make sense of the world in which we live.

With this sense of the word 'palimpsest' in mind, we can understand more fully Aleida Assmann's powerful claim that we do not have the simple choice of seeing only amnesia or liberation narratives when we gaze at imperial *lieux de mémoire*. Surveying traces of imperial history reinforces the sense that sites of memory are destabilizing, in that they tend to undermine any simple account of the imperial past. Messages written over messages are rarely easy to decipher.

Part of the problem with assigning meaning to imperial *lieux de mémoire* is located in imperial military history. Native troops main-
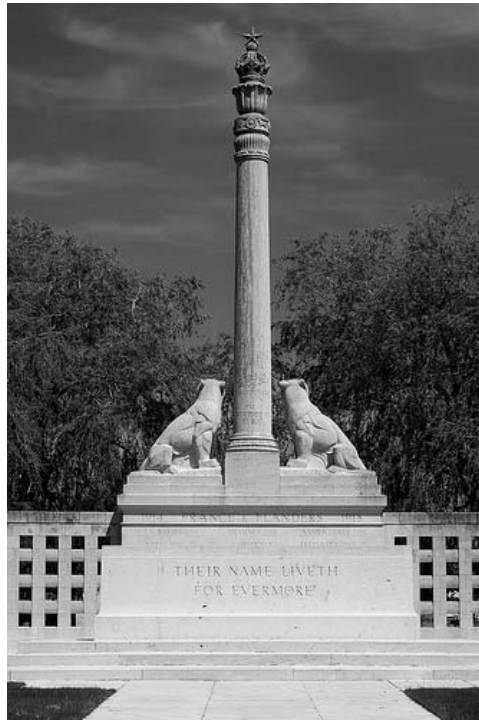
Figure 7.1. Neuve Chapelle.

tained order in Africa and South Asia for generations. In the two world wars, they fought and died for their imperial masters. Was their service part of the price they paid for freedom? Or did they engage in co-exploitation of their own people? Why were the pensions paid to the Tirailleurs Sénégalais so miserable? As Brigitte Reinwald has shown, in the First World War, 30,000 of the 170,000 sub-Saharan African men who served in French forces were killed. This death rate equalled that in the army as a whole. That the French did not recognize their sacrifice in adequate material or symbolic ways is hardly surprising, given the fact that about 1.5 million French soldiers lost their lives in the war. African losses constituted about 2 per cent of the total.[1]

The same problem applies in India. Since 1817 Gurkha soldiers had served in British uniforms, first for the East India Company and then for the Queen Empress. Millions of other Indians saw service in the British Indian Army in the two world wars. Did they perpetuate the Raj or indirectly help liberate their country? Both are true.

When we survey war memorials to Indian troops either on the Western Front or in India, the same ambiguities surface. The Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission built and still maintains an Indian war memorial at Neuve Chapelle, in northern France (see Fig. 7.1). The motifs at this *lieu de mémoire* are imperial and

[1] Jay M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (2nd edn., London, 2000), table 3.4, 75.

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Indian. There is in the centre a fifteen-metre high column, with a lotus capital, the Star of India and the Imperial Crown. On either side of the column are two stone tigers. Why did the men buried there die? Did they help liberate India or renew its oppression? No one need choose between these stark and inseparable alternatives. Many narratives are imbedded in the very same site.

Sir Edwin Lutyens's India Gate or All India War Memorial in New Delhi (see Fig. 7.2) shows the same ambiguities. The inscription on the gate dedicates it: 'To the dead of the Indian armies who fell honoured in France and Flanders Mesopotamia and Persia East Africa Gallipoli and elsewhere in the near and the far-east and in sacred memory also of those whose names are recorded and who fell in India or the north-west frontier and during the Third Afghan War.' Were they really honoured in France? Was theirs the same cause as those who died on the north-west frontier of the British Empire in India? Does the Roman triumphal arch constructed by Lutyens salute empire or those who died in its defence? And what does it mean now, nearly a century after the Great War and sixty years after the end of the Raj?

If there are palimpsests embedded in war memorials, how much more so is this true with respect to statues or other traces of the Sepoy mutiny of 1857, or of other moments of violence and repression? Imperial power was always based on brute force, even when it appeared to be the peaceful conduit of *la mission civilisatrice.* The name 'Jallianwala Bagh' in Amritsar is forever associated with the massacre of hundreds of peaceful protestors, mowed down by machine gun fire on 10 April 1919. Bullet holes in the adjoining buildings have been carefully preserved near a monument to the fallen unveiled in 1961. Who was responsible for this atrocity? General Reg-

Figure 7.2. Lutyens' India Gate.

inald Dyer, who was born in India, gave the order to open fire. The troops manning the guns were Gurkhas, Pathans, and Baloch. The term 'co-exploitation' seems to be appropriate for their behaviour, but why not extend it to their service just a few months before when they were fighting for Britain and against Germany?

To be sure, such an interrogation might be applied as well to native-born working-class soldiers of all combatant countries in the same war. Did they die to preserve the privileges of their social superiors and to share the spoils of empire? Yes and no. In this respect, the effect of research on imperial themes is to demand greater sophistication in the application of the term *lieux de mémoire* to domestic sites as well. And this is right and proper, since it is clear that we must avoid simple definitions of memory and remembering as fixed categories with assigned meanings and unchanging rituals conveying them to *national* populations.

For students of the 'memory boom' of the last forty years, this is good news. It is becoming more and more established that we have to adopt a dynamic approach to the work of remembrance in general and to the interpretation of *lieux de mémoire* in particular. Here we have good company among scholars in other disciplines. The work of cognitive psychologists has reinforced the notion that the act of recalling the past is a dynamic, shifting process, dependent on notions of the future as much as on images of the past.[2] From this perspective, we need to see that memory is the product of a multitude of separate impulses, drawn together in the form of a collage, or approximation of a past event. Daniel Schacter notes that our memories are not photographic, producing snapshots of the past. Instead 'we recreate or reconstruct our experiences rather than retrieve copies of them. Sometimes in the process of reconstructing we add feelings, beliefs, or even knowledge we obtained after the experience. In other words, we bias our memories of the past by attributing to them emotions or knowledge we acquired after the event.'[3] Memories are overwritten time and again, and even when considering the same event or object,

[2] Endel Tulving and Martin Lepage, 'Where in the Brain is the Awareness of One's Past', in Daniel L. Schacter and Elaine Scarry (eds.), *Memory, Brain and Belief* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 209–11.

[3] Daniel L. Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remember* (Boston, 2000), 9–11.

each memory is unique. Conceiving of memory as a palimpsest is more useful than sticking to the more mechanical and misleading metaphors describing our minds or our memories as libraries, archives, hard disks, and the like.

This approach to the notion of memory as unstable, plastic, synthetic, and repeatedly reshaped is entirely suitable for the exploration of collective remembrance in postcolonial times. Instead of focusing on symbols as stabilizers of national identities, we observe the ways in which symbols and cultural practices reflect plural identities, contradictory histories, and contested narratives about national identities, colonization, imperial power, and their aftermath.

Multi-vocality is the order of the day, and the studies of British India and French Africa presented in this collection show the absurdity of retaining an internal, inner-directed, narrowly national framework for the study of remembrance either in the core or on the periphery, however defined. The central point here is that national populations were not homogeneous in the late nineteenth century, when empires were at their apogee, and they are even less so today. In the heyday of the formation of national identities, massive immigration from Eastern to Western Europe and across the Atlantic created hybrid populations with multiple identities throughout the world. As Reinwald points out, the very last French veteran of the Great War who died at the age of 110 in 2008 was not French; he was Italian. He was given a state funeral, and the French President celebrated the life of this one man as pointing away from nations at war and towards a united Europe.

From the time of Ernest Renan[4] at the end of the nineteenth century to Benedict Anderson's seminal study of 'imagined communities',[5] the nation-state and the mobilizing power of nationalism have provided the force and focus of several generations of scholarship on *lieux de mémoire*. Since the 1960s, though, a different international environment and a different intellectual climate have emerged. The term 'transnational' is a snapshot of what has happened, and has substantial advantages over the term 'globalization'. In some important respects, what we term globalization is merely the reiteration of

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[4] Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?' in Philippe Forest (ed.), *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation? Littérature et Identité Nationale de 1871 à 1914* (Paris, 1991).
[5] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983).

trends in motion before the First World War. But whatever term we use, the huge movements of capital, goods, and labour in the late twentieth century and after present us with a changing demographic transnational landscape. To be sure, the nation-state has not died; but its power has been eroded in part by a surge in emigration from what we now term the 'South' and to the 'North'. An unspecified but very large part of this population movement is illegal. That is, people have moved from 'developing' to 'developed' nations through normal visa channels if they can, but through illicit channels when they must.

It is necessary, therefore, to update the notion of *lieux de mémoire* to reflect the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of the world in which we live. It no longer makes sense to divide our subject into national units or more generally into European and extra-European domains. Too many people have voted with their feet against the old divide, and are around us, visible if we choose to see them.

This dramatic move in population history is a challenge to the integrity of the nation-state. In many parts of the world, the state is less that institution with the authority to declare war than that institution with the power to determine who enters its territory. That power is now in question. The result is the presence among us of very large 'silent' trans-national populations, people who live in two countries at the same time. They are silent, in that they are not supposed to be here. If they speak up, they are likely to call attention to their illicit presence. They occupy menial jobs in developed economies, and constitute a huge reservoir of poorly paid labour. They are silent, too, in that they have no political voice in the country to which they have come. On occasion, that can mean they have no rights at all, and face hostility, harassment, abuse, violence, exploitation, arrest, and deportation.

This changing demographic reality has had an effect on the way we look at the nation-state, and at the historical questions we ask about our common cultural heritage. If 'memory' and 'forgetting' bracketed our understanding of nationhood and nationalism at the high water mark of what Charles Maier termed the 'age of territoriality',[6] then now, in a transnational age, it is important for us to

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[6] Charles Maier, 'Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era', *American Historical Review*, 3 (2000), 807–31, esp. 807–8.

develop a wider vocabulary to explore the sphere of signifying practices in the contemporary world.

To this end an insistence on the multi-layered nature of the narratives we construct about the past is an essential first step. If a palimpsest is an overwritten text, then that is what we have when we reflect on the incompatible and contradictory stories we tell ourselves and each other about our violent, imperial history. That past will not go away. Nor will the reflexes of great powers to preserve or restore their domination of countries nominally independent. In the media, the nation still has its troubadours who will sing its song for a fee. There are other songs to be heard, though, both about today and about yesterday, songs in different languages and with different rhythms. They celebrate plurality and embrace contradiction as our unavoidable fate. It may not be easy to find one line or one *national* story when we visit *lieux de mémoire*. But when we look at them, and gaze at the mixed messages they transmit, we may come to see how mirror-like they are, reflecting back the faces of us all.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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