Representing Women and Gender in Memory Landscapes

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Introduction

Representations of memory in the public landscape – monuments, memorials, street names – communicate how, what and, often, who are considered important to conceptions of a nation’s past. Such conceptions are always mediated by power, most commonly by the government and/or regime in power. Thus, representations of memory also have a politics. Choices are made about what and who has a place in the public memory landscape; commonly, they toe a political line, supporting and/or commemorating individuals, places and events that have resonance for a particular (and most commonly a government’s) interpretation of identity (national, community or religious, for example). Memory of the nation is ‘used’ in public landscapes, then, as a tool to reinforce certain aspects of the nation’s identity. The events in 2017 in Charlottesville in the US show how the past, and its representation in the public landscape, matter; how they intersect into our everyday lives; and how they have a longevity that also subjects them to changing interpretative contexts. Clearly, public memory is complex, and it matters to representations of the self in the present (whether that self is the nation, individual and/or community). We use this contention – that memory matters – as a pivot point to consider how women and gender are represented in memory landscapes, asking what kind of commemorative atmospheres these representations generate, contribute and (re)produce about the identity of/in those places.

Representations of memory tell us stories about identity. Concomitantly, they tell us stories about whom a nation thinks it ‘should’ remember. As critical feminist geographers, we also ask who is silenced and/or absent from these representations, how power is attributed (perhaps unevenly) and by whom. Such critical attendance to intersectionality in the memory landscape follows Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu’s (2010, 454) assertion that ‘a critical analysis of the politics of spatial inscription remains one of the most effective strategies for challenging essentialist claims to affixing stable identities to particular spaces’. In this vein, here, we turn our focus towards representations of women and gender in memory landscapes.

In writing this chapter, we each reflect our own experiences and perspectives on landscapes and memories. One of us, Janice, has a long-term interest in gender and feminist geography. Her awareness that monuments in the landscape reflect political and cultural priorities of those
with power emerged in her youth. As an undergraduate at the University of Sydney, she took breaks from reading at the State Library in the nearby Royal Botanic Gardens. Among classical monuments there were The Boxers – nude male figures whose pugilist poses conveyed physical power. Nearby were demure female figures of Spring, Summer and Autumn and of a weary old male, Winter. In her subsequent years as an academic in the US and as feminist scholar-ship emerged, she recalled those early images and turned some of her interests to gender representations in the landscape, locally and during her wider travels. Danielle’s research – on memory, place and identity – is often allied to her cultural heritage and has resulted in a sustained engagement with diverse discourses of Polish cultural identity and cultural memories, both with the Polish diaspora in Australia and in terms of public articulations of nationalism in Poland. Indeed, a conversation between Janice and Danielle was the starting point for this chapter, initiated on a tram in Kraków, Poland, after a conference session sponsored by the International Geographical Union Geography and Gender Commission.

Our focus here is twofold: to examine how women and gender are portrayed in articulations of public memory and to consider what these representations say about the identity and memory politics of the nation. The chapter is divided into two key discussion sections. In the first we detail a feminist approach to memorialization and identity maintenance, including an explication of how women and gender are represented in memory landscapes and what we can read about these representations. Integral to this section is a discussion of absence and allegory, showing how the feminine form, when actually portrayed in the memory landscape, often takes on ‘other’ forms. In the second section, we highlight examples from memory landscapes in the context of women in politics and women of war. We describe notable exceptions of women in memory landscapes and provide an analysis of how these examples ‘bear traces of deeper stories about how they were created, by whom, and for what ideological purpose’ (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, 168). To contextualize these two conversations, next we provide an overview of the thematics that are the key to our discussions of memory landscapes.

Memory landscapes
To begin an analysis of the representations of women and gender in public memory landscapes, we must first understand why public memorialization plays a key role in expressing, cementing and maintaining specific narratives of a nation’s past. Memories shape national identity and conceptions of belonging to the nation (Finney 2002; Gillis 1994). Rolston (2018, 5) calls those responsible for such shaping ‘memory entrepreneurs’, stating that it is their role to ‘articulate an interpretation of the past which enables a society to pull together and build a common identity’. In policy and politics, reinforcing collective narratives of national identity is a state imperative, because it creates consensus through collectivity and shared notions of what citizens of the nation remember as part of the nation’s past. Hoelscher and Alderman (2004, 350) have contended that in spatializing these collective notions, public memory landscapes, then, are: ‘explicitly designed to impart certain elements of the past – and, by definition, to forget others – such lieux de memoire are the sites where, as Nora (1989, 7) puts it, “memory crystallizes and secretes itself”’.

This idea of crystallizing a certain view/version of the past in public space fixes that narrative to place and makes it public, so that passing audiences read and view that memory in that place. It can also mean that that memory is celebrated as part of a commemorative and/or calendar ritual, such that it transcends material space and becomes both performances and practices of memory. In discussing the role that monuments play in public memory, Abousnouga and Machin (2010, 132) have argued that ‘visual elements and features combine and operate as part of a system or visual grammar’; they create ‘symbolic capital’ (Rose-Redwood 2008, 431).
Alderman (2008, 196) speaks specifically of the symbolic capital generated through toponymic naming. Placing memory in public landscapes in monumental form also brings ‘distinction and status to landscapes and the people associated with them’. Representations of memory form links to place identities, which increase in familiarity when embedded into everyday routines.

These representations of memory in the everyday have impact; such impact is, of course, not always straightforward. It is contested, and its reception is not necessarily assured. Yet much work by memory scholars and geographers has discussed the relationship between what is portrayed publicly about a nation’s past and its reception – that is, between what the public knows about a nation’s past and what it sees, hears and participates in. For example, Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) have discussed the critical relationship between memory and place; Rolston (2018) has investigated the role of propaganda posters in urban Iran; Verovsek (2017) champions the power of the past as a resource for political change; Winter (2014) has explored public perceptions of war memorials in regional Australia; and Bevan (2006) has discussed the destruction of built memory forms and the ensuing loss to local and national communities. Gender features only on the fringes of these discussions, if at all. Indeed, as Rolston (2018, 15) noted, ‘representations of women are rare’. This silence is not only context and culturally contingent (as in the case of Rolston’s research in Iran) but speaks to the heteropatriarchal dominance of scholarship about public memory landscapes. Furthermore, amid this corpus of work, and much more, the role of memory landscapes in influencing public discourse about the nation reveals that ‘a politics of memory operates in, on and with (re)productions of places and identities’ (Drozdzewski et al. 2016, 1). Dwyer and Alderman (2008, 168) note ‘that memorials typically reflect the values and world views of government leaders and members of the dominant class’; their comments point us in the direction of why this discussion of the relationship between public memory and its reception/perception is pertinent to our chapter on gendered memory landscapes. They continue by stating that, in choosing who and what to memorialize, ‘they [government leaders and the dominant class] tend to exclude the histories of minority and subaltern groups or appropriate these histories for elite purposes’ (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, 68). Thus, what is chosen for representation in the public memory landscape (or not), and how these representations, or lack thereof, have an impact and the potential to shape public opinion.

**Women and gender in memory landscapes: absence and allegory**

When we critically examine public memory landscapes, representations of women are few and far between. As Puwar (2004, 6) notes, ‘women’s inclusion into the nation has been quite specific’. Women often do not appear at all, or they appear in allegorical and/or mythical form. Further, and in reference to women on war monuments, Abousnnouga and Machin (2013, 105) found that they are often depicted in ‘the form of protected wives and daughters, or mythical figures personifying nations, place and values’. In this section, we delve into these two facets: the absence of women in memory landscapes and representation of femininity in non-human forms. To explain both, we draw from examples of two women in the Planty, the parkland that encircles the Old Town of Kraków, Poland. The remainder of this section is structured by first outlining each of the two aforementioned facets, followed by a worked example of the gendered representation of women in the Planty.

First, to speak of an absence of women in memory landscapes, it is necessary to flag up that men dominate memory landscapes (Puwar 2004). Men also often appear as themselves rather than as transmuted mythological creatures. This domination and form of depiction tells an important story about the types of masculinities, memories, achievements and losses that are validated and valorized in society, as well as those who receive less, or no, attention. As
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Weidenmuller et al. (2015, 438) have argued: ‘this gendered nature of statues and monuments of people is important because their psychical solidity contributes directly to the seeming finality of these landscapes’, and thus to ‘the ongoing gendering of space, and thereby perpetuate, normalize, and naturalize a gendered society through landscape.’ The paucity of monuments commemorating women is indicative of how society (and the governments and regimes that make choices about public memory) values women’s achievements. Monk’s (1992, 129) assertion that ‘power over the built environment remains in male hands and women have limited control over its form’ means that it is of little surprise that ‘the normative figure of leadership and especially in battle has been masculine’ (Puwar 2004, 6).

A lack of power leads to a diminished and gendered assignation of the value of women’s contributions to a nation’s history and its identity, and normalizes women’s absence in public landscapes. For example, a list of public art in the City of Sydney catalogues 102 items of public statuary.1 There are 13 women depicted in these public monuments. However, there are only five representations of ‘real’ women, and two of these are of Queen Victoria. Of the remaining eight, seven represent women allegorically – for example, in the Venus Fountain – and one depicts religious iconography.

In a more recent example, these narratives of absence and their outcomes have featured in popular media. For example, in Time magazine, Rhodan (2017) discussed that in San Francisco the lack of female representation in the city’s memory landscape sends the message that ‘women did not participate and they do not deserve the respect that men do who are portrayed across the country’. Recently, however, ‘comfort women’ statues are now appearing in cities in the US. These statues depict young teenage girls – usually from Korea, China and the Philippines – as symbols of sexual slavery. They commemorate the tens of thousands who were detained in ‘rape camps’ by the Japanese Imperial Army in World War II (McGrane 2017).

Across the Atlantic Ocean, Schwartz (2017) outlines that ‘among the UK’s 925 public statues, 158 are women, 29 of those depict Queen Victoria’. Capps (2016), writing for the CityLab blog, referred to the lack of female representation in public landscapes as the ‘Gender Gap in Public Sculpture’. She also notes that women ‘hardly ever [appear] as real women from lived history, with first and last names’. In the news website CNN, Peled (2017) quotes the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s online inventories catalogue to state that ‘of the 5,575 outdoor sculpture portraits of historical figures in the United States, 559 portray women’. These examples substantiate a growing interest in the absence of women in the memory landscape. Yet it was more than three decades ago that Marion Warner (1985), in Monuments and Maidens, used feminist theory to discuss gendered representations in memory and public landscapes. Warner (1985, 331) drew attention to the fact that ‘men often appear as themselves, as individuals, but women attest the identity and value of someone or something else’. It is with this contention that we turn to the example of the women represented in the Planty in Kraków, Poland.

The Planty is the former moat that surrounds the Old Town of Kraków. Represented in the Planty are two of the three bards of Polish literature, Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. The works of both poets remain pivotal to Polish nationalism and are symbolic of the Polish struggle for freedom from the oppression of foreign occupation (Krzyzanowski 1968, 1978; Milosz 1969). Exceptionally, both poets are represented in the Planty through the leading female characters of two of their poems, Grażyna and Lilla Weneda, respectively. Their representation attests to the allegorical significance of the two characters or, in Warner’s (1985) words, the ‘something else’. By using these two examples, we will show how, even when women are represented in the landscape, their representation rarely relates to an individual ‘real’ woman’s achievement but instead to women’s supportive role, to the femininity of their form and/or to some other moral virtue.
In Mickiewicz’s poem, Grażyna upholds her husband Litawor’s honour by foiling a disreputable pact. Under this pact, Litawor was to help the Teutonic knights to overthrow the ruler of his homeland, the Grand Duke of Lithuania. However, Grażyna took up arms against the Teutonic knights and died in battle protecting her homeland, while saving him from the dishonour of an alliance with the enemy. Grażyna appears in the Planty as a warrior – she is dressed in her husband’s armour, carrying a sword and wearing a helmet. She is ready for battle. Warner (1985, 147) has argued that armed ‘maidens’ are symbols of strength and

Figure 24.1 Grażyna and Litawor (1823), Planty, Kraków.
Source: 36 108mm/digital/exp.auto/DD.
virtue: they ‘work magic on the side of good against the bad’. Furthermore, Warner (1985, 258) has contended that, to represent ideals of justice, virtue and fortitude – ideals upheld by Grażyna in Mickiewicz’s poem – a woman’s body ‘must have its surface reinforced’, literally in armour, to strengthen woman’s inherent physical and metaphorical weakness. Bulbeck (1992, 2) has contended that the ‘female form is often sealed or strengthened with armoury’, because ‘real females are fragile “leaky” vessels’ (see also Longhurst 2001). Grażyna, like other allegorical women warriors, is armed, and her armour makes her body masculine though the ‘buckler, breastplate, helmet and spear’ (Warner 1985, 124). Such reinforcements, Warner (1985, 124) argues, invoke a sense of women’s ‘law-abiding chastity, [and] their virtuous consent to patriarchal monogamy’. The intersectionality of Grażyna’s representation is telling of the unevenness power and devaluing of her contribution based on her gender. Grażyna’s character is strong and heroic. Her strength is emphasized through her willingness to champion the plight of her country. Yet, her heroism towards and for the nation is not enough; and this standpoint is signalled by the fact that her defence of her husband’s morality is a key element of the narrative. As Weidenmuller et al. (2015, 452) have contended, such characters of mythical femininity, while providing examples of women with a sense of power and strength … only [do so] in a mythical or fictional sense, as if women can only be heroic and strong in myth or as if strength and courageousness can only be something of legend.

The monument of Lilla Weneda presents a more evocative image of the female body. A snake extends up from the ground around Lilla’s naked torso, towards the harp held aloft in her hands. Lilla’s eyes are closed and her demure composure presents a familiar representation of the feminine figure in public statutory. Bulbeck (1992, 2) suggests that ‘the exposed breast’ is congruent with ‘the abundance of nature, mediated by the “Motherland” or the state’. Similarly, Warner (1985, 324) states that feminine nakedness expresses a close association with nature outside the realm of our ‘flawed and fallen world’. Słowacki, the author of the poem Lilla Weneda, wrote about the rise and fall of a nation through using two mythical and ancient ‘tribes’ pitted against each other. One tribe, the Weneds, were the original owners of the land who fought the invading Lechs. The interference of a trivial character, who disrupts the des-tiny of and ultimately victory for the Weneds, is integral to the poem’s narrative of struggle. Słowacki’s external world was flawed, because it was a world in which his homeland Poland no longer existed.

The means of regaining independence for the Weneds was the harp held aloft in Lilla’s arms. Despite its closeness, she was unable to secure victory and freedom for her family and tribe. The proximity of a snake to the harp represents the external threat closing in on their autonomy – the ever-present vulnerability of a nation’s autonomy – yet also the vulnerability of the female form and female gender (Bulbeck 1992). Abousnouga and Machin (2013, 111) proffer that the use of feminine nudity can be read as representing ‘women not as the vulnerable, but as the spiritual ideal’. Warner (1985) lambastes the use of nudity in public statutory, equating it with sexual desire. She cautions that the use of nude females straddles a complex narrative line. One foot is aligned with the sanctity and virtue of the naked human form, and the other foot with the capacity of that body to incite carnal sin. In both points, the female body represents ‘something else’: virtue, desire, fragility, rapture. These values are what Warner (1985, 12) also identified as ‘generic and universal’ characteristics – ones ‘with symbolic overtones’. 
Figure 24.2  Lilla Weneda (1839), Planty, Kraków.
Source: 36-1088mm/digital/exp.auto/DD.
Women in memory landscapes: women of politics and women of war

Exceptionally, and perhaps with increasing incidence, real women do appear in public memory landscapes. Most commonly, representations of women, as women, commemorate the achievements and/or notoriety of women involved in politics, including female heads of state and political activists, and women's roles during war (though this is not an exhaustive list). In what follows, we point to these two categories to draw the distinction on their ‘exceptional’ character.

**Women of politics**

In choosing who, what and how to remember, a concomitant choice is made about what not to remember. Dwyer (2004, 423) suggests that ‘forgetting is intrinsic to the act of commemoration’, primarily because it directs attention away from the event being forgotten towards that event being remembered. The dualism of remembering and forgetting is important when observing the gendering of memory landscapes, because the near absence of women renders the message that their contributions are not only unrecorded but undervalued and apparently non-existent. In the context of monuments commemorating political contributions, women’s formal involvement in politics is relatively recent, given that women’s legal right of involvement began only around 130 years ago. Nonetheless, there are still few women chosen for public commemoration and, indeed, few monuments denoting political movements involving women, such as suffrage. For example, ‘out of nearly 150 public historical statues in New York City, only five of them are historical female leaders’ (Gross 2018, np). The act of selectively ‘remembering otherwise’ (Esbenshade 1995, 87) is undeniably gendered; reading the memory landscape, then, tells us an important, though more obfuscate, story about the politics of memory, power and identity of the nation.

The examples that follow explicate what it takes to memorialize actual women in public. Of note in the two cases (one in New York, the other in Washington, DC) is that the monuments were not instigated by the state but rather through private endeavours and sponsorship. While private sponsorship of monuments may be common in different geographical contexts, the necessity of private money – and, with it, individual momentum – to commemorate women indeed provides revealing clues about the politics of the memory landscape. The first example centres on Central Park in New York City (NYC). Currently, of the 23 statues in Central Park, none represents an actual woman (Blakemore 2015). Substantiating our claims in the first sections of this chapter, the two female characters that do appear in the park are allegorical and fictional – Alice in Wonderland and Shakespeare’s Juliet. Seeking the representation of a woman in the park, a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, the Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony Statue Fund, Inc., sought permission from the NYC Parks Department to donate a work of art. To do so, the organization began a long, bureaucratic process alongside a substantial fundraising campaign ‘to bring the first statue of a woman to Central Park’ (MonumentalWomen 2018). With the hashtag #MonumentalWomen, the organization has been successful in raising over USD 1.5 million to contribute to a statue to be located in New York’s Central Park that would commemorate America’s women’s suffragist movement. It has also received the necessary approval from NYC Park’s Department. While the forthcoming statues of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony represent a step towards public recognition of women’s political achievements, it remains that there is ‘no women of color represented in the Park’ (Carlson 2018, np).

This example from Central Park demonstrates that monuments honouring women’s political achievements (may) take decades to achieve significant placement. In another example from
the US, the Portrait Monument located in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington DC celebrates three leaders of the suffrage movement of the late-nineteenth century – Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The monument – originally called the Woman’s Movement Monument – was gifted to the United States Congress in 1921 by the National Woman’s Party. Two days after receiving this ‘gift’ on behalf of Congress, the ‘all-male Joint Library Committee’ relegated it to the basement (known as the crypt) of the building (Weber 2016, 3). It remained there for 75 years. Further, the inscription on the monument, ‘Woman first denied a soul, then called mindless, now arisen, declaring herself an entity to be reckoned’ was removed by Congress (Boissoneault 2017, np). It was not until private donors and a founder of the National Women’s History Museum became aware of its banishment that discussion about moving the monument began. Organizers from the Museum worked (initially with sympathetic members of Congress, including Senator Ted Stevens [Alaska], whose mother had been an active suffragette), to have it moved. By raising significant private funds, they managed to arrange the arduous and complex task of its removal in 1996 to the Rotunda. Since then, more than 39 million visitors have viewed the monument (Stone 2017). In both cases, the suffragist monuments have been initiated by private (and predominately female) interest groups. Women have lobbied for their representation, funded the provision of this representation and have still, in the case of the Portrait Monument, struggled to hold the same space in the public memory landscape as men. Clearly, what the suffragist movement achieved – the right for women to vote and participate in the country’s politics – is still stymied by uneven and gendered politics. If #MonumentalWomen or the National Women’s History Museum had not taken issue with whether and how women were represented, there would still likely be no statue in Central Park and one still gathering dust in the crypt on Capitol Hill.

Other international examples commemorating suffrage evince the significant lag time to commemorate women in public memory landscapes. In New Zealand, for example, women first gained the franchise in 1893, with rights accorded to all (including Indigenous Māori) women over 21 years of age. Only on the centenary of this date was a celebratory monument established in Christchurch. That monument features life-size sculptures of Kate Sheppard and other women, including Helen Nicol (women’s suffrage campaigner from Dunedin), Ada Wells (who worked for education of girls), Harriet Monson (in support of employed women), Meri Te Tai Mangakāhia (of Te Rarawa, Ngati Te Reinga, Ngati Manawa, Te Kaitutae, who was, in 1868, the first woman to speak in any New Zealand parliament) and Amey Daldy of the Auckland Women’s Christian Temperance Union (Grimshaw 1972). They are carrying a petition for women’s suffrage to Parliament. Surrounding the figures are scenes of women’s everyday lives.

In the case of suffrage monuments in Britain, it was only in 2018, also a century after suffrage was achieved, that a monument to the leader, Millicent Fawcett, was unveiled in London’s Parliament Square. The campaign to place the monument was initiated by feminist activist and journalist Caroline Criado Perez, originally from Latin America. The significance of this monument is augmented by the fact that only 2 per cent of statues recognizing women in Britain are of women other than members of the British Royal Family. The location of the British suffrage monument, not just its establishment, is worthy of further explication. Stevens (2015, 40) has argued that meaning arises not only from the design and form of a monument but also from the ‘spatial relationships to other buildings and memorials, and public activities around it’. Location, thus, affects who sees a monument. Location influences the temporality of the viewing (for example, would the monument be sited on an everyday route to work or shopping or located in a crypt), the viewing vantage point (Abousnnouga and Machin 2010) and also the context (for example, located independently or amid other monuments) (Stevens 2015). The suffrage
monument’s location shares space with both British and international political figures, including Winston Churchill and Nelson Mandela. Its location at London’s Parliament Square relates the tenor of the monument to the social and cultural context of the location.

**Women of war**

Women’s wartime contributions, roles and actions in the public memory landscape are often commemorated in line with specific social and cultural norms. For example, Abousnnouga and Machin (2010, 105) note about World War I (WWI) monuments that female ‘representations played an important part in the decontextualization of social practice … [thereby] deleting women’s actual roles during the war’. Similarly, Bulbeck (1992, 8) has suggested that, as depicted in war memorials, women often ‘mimic the memorials to men’ as ‘patriot and martyr’. Yet women’s wartime contributions extended well beyond the battlefield; they played a pivotal role in wartime in arms factories, in other arenas where jobs had traditionally been held by men, and, for some, at the front as nurses. However, these more ‘active’ roles do not commonly feature in the memory landscape (Abousnnouga and Machin 2010, 105). Rather, women were often depicted as ‘protected wives and daughters’, as caregivers and as recipients of the courage and bravery of male combatants (Abousnnouga and Machin 2010). Moreover, and as we have
discussed, Abousnouga and Machin (2010) also connect women in war memory landscapes with their representation as mythical creatures alongside male war heroes (represented as themselves). For example, it was in the early 1990s when Janice first saw a statue of a US Civil War hero, General Sherman (located at the south-eastern corner of Central Park). In glistening gold, Sherman is positioned astride a majestic horse, preceded – not led – by a winged female figure holding a palm frond. She is a delicate, virginal figure, keeping pace with the forward movement of horse and rider (Rosenblum 1984, cited in Monk 1992). This *Winged Victory* (cf Inglis 1987, 41) portrays women as synonymous with peace yet also with a moral virtue, passivity and beauty. This idyll is far from what the nurses on the home front felt during both world wars or, indeed, what the women working in factories and at home embodied.

In a small number of cases, women have achieved comparable representation in war monuments. Inglis (1987) identified where women have been named collectively or individually on WWI monuments in Australia. For example, he noted that women’s names – often those of the 2,300 nurses who served overseas – appear alongside men’s names in war memorial roll calls. Further, he specified that many a ‘local memorial lists one or more nurses with the soldiers, and thereby classifies them as equals’ (Inglis 1987, 37). Yet in other examples, such as in Wallsend, New South Wales, nurses’ names have been added afterwards to those existing at the time of the initial unveiling.

In Washington DC, the Vietnam War monuments are indicative of incremental change in the normative status quo of war commemoration. The *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, designed by the then 21-year-old woman architecture student, Maya Lin (it was selected from a competition in which the names of entrants were not identified) depicts women and men in the same format, as names listed in the wall. The nearby *Vietnam Women’s Memorial* depicts three nurses: two support a wounded male soldier, the third scans the skies. While the memorials demonstrate movement towards acknowledging women’s roles in armed conflict, that war shared temporal space with progressions in the women’s rights movement, and thus differs from older memorials established shortly after World Wars I and II. Yet the broader spectrum of women’s war commemoration in the US tells a different and equally intriguing story. The *National Women’s Memorial* is ‘the only major national memorial honouring all servicewomen – past, present and future’ (Women’s Memorial 2017, np). Unveiled in 1997, the remit of this memorial encompasses the commemoration of ‘3 million women who have served or are serving in or with the US Armed Forces, starting with the American Revolution’ (Women’s Memorial 2017, np, our emphasis). At the memorial, women who served can register their names as part of the memorial’s database. In 2016 and as a ramification of the cessation of Congressional funds to support the memorial five years earlier, a fundraising call was made for private donations to keep the memorial open (see www.armytimes.com/military-honor/saluteveterans/2016/11/19/america-s-only-memorial-to-military-women-needs-your-help/). The campaign, coordinated by the AcademyWomen MilitaryWomen eMentor Community, stated that the cost of running the memorial without public funding jeopardized its future. Its website included the following passage:

The Women’s Memorial would not exist today except for the vision and efforts of military women who 20 years ago began fundraising to build and open this memorial. It’s up to military women now, to ensure the memorial stays open for another 20 years.

_AcademyWomen 2018_

While the outcome of this campaign has been somewhat difficult to track, the more pertinent point for this chapter is that it involves women asking other (military) women to help to support their own memorial. The idea of mobilizing like-minded support tells us something
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about what is required to sustain such a monument in public space and who might ‘care’ about the longevity of the monument (or not). It also ties this example back to the case studies noted in our section on ‘Women of politics’ – non-public interest and funding both helped to initiate the monument and is required to sustain it.

Like the National Women’s Memorial, the Monument to the Women of World War II was unveiled on Whitehall, London, in 2005, as a statement of national recognition of female contribution to WWII. Almost half the funding for the monument was generated by a national campaign initiated by Baroness Betty Boothroyd, who designated it as the beneficiary of her winnings in a television programme (Who Wants to be A Millionaire?). The monument does not specifically name individual women; rather the inscription states: ‘This memorial was raised to commemorate the vital work done by nearly seven million women in World War II’ (IWM 2018, np). The implication of anonymity in the inscription and the absence of specific individual inscriptions – in contrast with (more) traditional war monuments, which show roll calls of the deceased – is confirmed in the monument’s design.

While this is a monument to women, it does not feature actual women. Rather, uniforms and female attire hang from hooks concealed by hats. These articles of clothing are sculpted as if they are being worn, yet the figures have no legs, arms or heads. The sculptures take the form of a female body, but the articles of clothing are hung up as if signifying the hanging up of uniform at the end of a day’s work. In representing women’s contribution under the auspices of ‘a day’s work’, a certain level of ordinariness of contribution is implied. In The Unwomanly Face of War, Svetlana Alexievich (2017) has argued that:

Women’s war has its own colours, its own smells, its own lighting, and its own range of feelings. Its own words. There are no heroes and incredible feats, there are simply people who are busy doing inhumanly human things.

Alexievich (2017) sought to capture the everyday missing details of women’s involvement in the Soviet military campaign of WWII. Further, she sought to tell these stories to counter the louder heroism consistent in male histories of the war. National war memorials commemorating women raise intriguing questions about how women of war are represented in the public memory landscape. As our examples have shown, often these memorials do not depict actual women or name them, but use the female form and ‘represent’ the achievements/contributions of women.

Conclusions and aims for movements forward

Returning to Warner’s (1985, 331) comments that women are often represented as ‘something else’ gives us pause to consider the examples presented here. In not using actual women, such memorials do a disservice to the contributions of the women whom they represent. Do they (and their discursive narratives) embody the actual character of these contributions, as per the everyday remit that Alexievich (2017) details and the significant mobilization of female support that the National Women’s Memorial and its campaign demonstrates? We need to consider that women’s wartime contributions usually take the heteronormative form and shape of male monuments to war. But, if women are not portrayed this way (as real women in heroic or active pose, for example), is there a risk of a broader scale (and) continued undervaluation of their contributions, especially to audiences for whom the representation of women of war already presents an anomaly in the memory landscape?

Many more monuments and works of commemorative public art feature women – too many to feature in one chapter. For those who do not have the tools to read these monuments...
outside of their orthodox contexts, how can we (and should we at all) challenge the normative
depiction of courage, strength and heroism in the action that we see in monuments depicting
combatants and chivalrous infantry? How then can we show that women’s contributions were
as valuable to the overall cause – but different? What these questions demonstrate is that the
geographies of remembrance are complex (Drozdzewski et al. 2016). Overlaying a critical fem-
inist lens to the memory landscape raises more questions. It highlights the uneven and gendered
politics and make us think, judiciously, about how these representations matter, how they tell
important stories and possibly also how we can lay foundation stones for more equal represen-
tation, on our own terms.

We end this chapter with a call to action, to push beyond the pervasive images of women
and genders in public places of memory. What are the opportunities to enhance the range of
representations of women in public monuments, to recognize their achievements? We recall
that as feminist research and teaching developed in the early 1980s it critiqued the existing
practices of historians’ histories for their focus on men’s lives and orientation to ‘kings,
war, and politics’. The endurance of public monuments perpetuates similar masculinist
perspectives to those that these feminist scholars were challenging. Following their lead, we
thus advocate research and teaching that also identify the diversity of women’s achievements
and offer some examples from other arenas of life in the arts and literature. We can start
to think about pushing these agendas by asking, for example, students to look around and
analyse the monuments, sculptures, streets and parks of their university and home towns,
following the model of Weidenmuller et al. (2015). Who is represented there, to what effect,
what are the silences, who sponsored the items and what are the students’ hopes for the
types of public memory markers in the future? Further, recognition of unevenly constructed
memory landscapes and providing the tools to make that assessment are as important. For
example, coordinating walking tours with students or joining existing tours that use critical
lenses on the gendering of public space are useful starting points for change. Can attentive-
ness to public places, and the tutelage of these critical geographic skills, generate a capacity
to look and think differently about the memory landscape?

In some places, action has been taken and change initiated. For example, Lynette Long
established the EVE (Equal Visibility Everywhere) organization, with the mandate of ‘Changing
the face of America, one symbol at a time’ (EVE 2018). Long has campaigned for a statue to Amelia
Earhart in National Statuary Hall. New York City’s ‘She Built NYC’ is to ‘commission public
monuments and sculptures that properly recognize women’s history’ (‘Tired of Monuments’
2018, npn). The ‘Spark Movement’ established a campaign in cooperation with Google ‘To Put
Women on the Map’. They have mapped ‘100 amazing and impressive women, and connected
their stories with landmarks and locations significant to their lives in dozens of cities and 28
countries around the world’ (Spark 2015). To cite just a few examples of monuments commem-
orating women who attained international and national reputations in arenas other than war,
we note the statue recently erected in Wellington, New Zealand, to celebrate the locally born
writer of the early twentieth century, Katherine Mansfield.

The Woman of Words statue was sponsored collaboratively by three groups: the Katherine
Mansfield Society (a literary group); the private Wellington Sculpture Trust; and Wellington
City Council. In Bergen, Norway, tour guides draw attention to the statue of feminist nov-
elist and political activist Amalie Skram, whose writings in the early-twentieth century drew
attention to the implications of marriage and family relations for women. In Barcelona, a bust
of the distinguished early-twentieth-century Catalan painter, Pepita Teixidor, a visible acknow-
ledgement of woman’s creativity, is located in the key city park of La Ciutadella. In Sydney,
Figure 24.4  Woman of Words. Katherine Mansfield statue, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Source: Lynda Johnston.
Australia, the ‘Jessie Street’ Gardens on Loftus Street honour her activism for human rights, including those of Aboriginal people, also featuring two sculptures, one honouring pioneer women settlers, the other the women military of WWII. A nearby plaque honours the woman founder of a local theatrical endeavour.

On the completion of their ‘feminist walk of London’s monuments to women’, Rosie Martin and Louise Rondel (2017) stated: ‘We feel that we are occupying a different city to other people and through this occupation, we are making the city differently’. In the early 1990s, and in an Australian context, Bulbeck (1992, 3) urged us to look more closely for monuments of women: because there are ‘fewer signposts to women’s memorials’, they are often not written about in guidebooks or given central stage in parks or public squares. Of course, we maintain that there are fewer representations of women per se, and even fewer of real women who are commemorated for their actions, heroism and civic duties. We urge scholars to look for them, note them and tell others about them.

Notes
1 This catalogue is located at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_public_art_in_the_City_of_Sydney.
2 See http://docs.wixstatic.com/udg/a1edeb_1fbb6e825ec4897a4e4fa898bf10e76.pdf.
3 A commitment has been made, however, to complete another statue of suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst in Manchester in 2019. See www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-35360244.
4 The fundraising webpage states that the campaign ended on 4 February 2018, with only $114,508 raised (approx. 8%) of the total $1.5M goal. Yet, on the official Women’s Memorial webpage, further information about this shortfall is non-existent (see for example: https://fundrazr.com/SaveTheWomensMemorial?ref=ab_21b79q8pFX21b79q8pFX and www.womensmemorial.org/).
5 Of these examples, we would like to point readers not only to the accomplishments but also to other recurring challenges. These have accompanied aspects of the design of the South African Women’s Monument in Pretoria (Marshall 2004). McDowell’s (2008) article analyses the protracted and frustrating struggles of addressing male dominance in ‘gendering the past and present in post-conflict Northern Ireland’. Davidson’s (2018) recent article, ‘Three Stories about a Statue’, in discussing the commemoration of Asian ‘comfort women’ provided for military men, notes how these are complicated by both the dynamics of ethnic diversity in US sites and of contemporary international relations with the regions from which the women originated.

Key readings

References
AcademyWomen. 2018. “Save the Memorial that Honors Military Women.” Available at: https://fundrazr.com/SaveTheWomensMemorial?ref=ab_634mHbcI9pa634mHbcI9pa (accessed 15 August 2018).


