PATTERNS OF DISASTER COMMEMORATION IN LONG-TERM RECOVERY*

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ABSTRACT. The postdisaster landscape is replete with memorials that help communities collectively remember destructive events and recover psychologically. Although commemoration is intrinsic to all stages of recovery, little research from the disaster-science field engages memorial texts across disasters. Meanwhile, a rich body of work on memorials and their functions exists in the cultural geographic tradition. Drawing from this literature, the current study examines a sample of U.S.-based memorials to discern patterns within the postdisaster commemorative landscape. This research leverages discourse analysis to interrogate the meanings and mechanics of postdisaster memory work. Findings revealing that disasters catalyze remembrances that remake places, postdisaster memorial texts construct wide-ranging degrees of intimacy, and memorials distilling survivor memories impel community recovery differently than memorials that reconstruct imagined pasts. These identified patterns in postdisaster commemoration enable further systematic exploration of memory work in the long-term recovery process. *Keywords: disaster recovery, sense of place, social memory.*

$\mathcal{T}$his paper investigates the ways in which commemorations produced after disasters remember the locations, events, and lifeworlds of those impacted. Following Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman, we examine an array of memorial texts including tangible and intangible commemorations (2008). Physical memorials recast sites scarred by devastation as inviting spaces to collectively mourn and reflect. Commemorative rituals also serve as cathartic expressions of grief. Both types of commemorations aid community healing and are vital to the social, psychological, and cultural recovery of affected communities (Erikson 1976). Recognizing their importance, scholars have studied disaster memorial texts as landscapes of tragedy (Foote 1997), psychological coping mechanisms (Moulton 2015), symbols of renewal (Veil and others 2011), sites of touristic consumption (Miller 2017), and dynamic cultural reflections of their creators (Ashley 2016).

Our study departs from previous works by focusing on memorial texts produced during the long-term recovery process rather than those designated as disaster memorials; hence, our sample is defined by time rather than by subject. Using discourse analysis, we examine themes that recovery memorials ensconce within the postdisaster landscape and consider the differing ways these

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commemorations perform memory work (Hanna and others 2004). More broadly, this research articulates how commemoration remakes place through disaster recovery, thereby helping to nuance discussion of commemorative processes within the hazards-geography community and across the interdisciplinary disaster-science field.

COMMEMORATION IN RECOVERY

Disaster recovery is a period following a loss-causing event when people replace what was lost and restore their predisaster routines. Enrico Quarantelli notes how survivors and practitioners substitute other "R" words when discussing recovery: "rebuilding" physical infrastructure, "restoration" of physical and social patterns, "rehabilitation" of neighborhoods and communities, and "restitution" for losses or damages (1999). Though formative of the recovery process, none of these descriptors fully captures the breadth of activities that reshape the landscape in compressed time following a disaster (Pais and Elliot 2008). Another "R" word conspicuously missing from this list is "remembering," thus begging the question: where does commemoration fit into recovery?

In their seminal work on community recovery, Eugene Haas and colleagues identified commemoration as an intrinsic element of the recovery process (1977). They proposed a four-wave temporal model for recovery activities where the first two waves (the emergency and restoration periods) represent short-term recovery, and the second two waves (reconstruction I and II) represent long-term recovery. The model situates commemoration in the fourth wave of activity, only defining it in terms of physical reconstruction. The building of San Francisco's civic center complex after the 1906 Earthquake exemplifies how:

> "commemorative, betterment and developmental reconstruction projects serve three varied but sometimes interrelated functions: to memorialize or commemorate the disaster; to mark the city's post-disaster betterment or improvement; or to serve its future growth or development." (Kates and Pijawka 1977, 3).

MEMORIALIZING IN THE SHORT-TERM

Recent studies show that commemorative displays are not limited to long-term recovery. The emergence of roadside memorials (Reid 2009; Gibson 2011), spontaneous memorials (Haney and others 1997; Doss 2008), hurricane graffiti (Alderman and Ward 2007), and informal flood markers (McEwen and others 2012) have all been documented during the short-term recovery. Rather than serve future growth or development, these grassroots commemorations perform three distinct, interlocking functions: grief work, communication, and community formation (Eyre 2007).

In terms of grief work, memorials physically preserve reminders of the deceased within the landscape, allowing loved ones to psychologically cope with the loss (Doss 2008; Reid 2009). Sometimes this grief work begins before the

hazard event, like with hurricane graffiti, as individuals anticipate the imminent loss of their home (Alderman and Ward 2007). Memorials communicate not only grief but also warning to target audiences. For instance, roadside memorials remind motorists of the dangers posed by driving (Reid 2009), while hurricane graffiti admonishes trespassing and helps rescuers avoid secondary hazards (Alderman and Ward 2007). Informal flood markers inscribed on buildings also communicate caution by recalling previous flood heights and prompting the exchange of storm stories (McEwen and others 2012). Additionally, short-term memorials form (and reform) communities. At spontaneous shrines, collective rituals (for example, prayers, lighting candles) unite unacquainted participants as a single community of mourners (Haney and others 1997). Memorials can bind together existing social and cultural communities (Eyre 2007), or they can unify accidental communities of victims or survivors (Kofman Bos and others 2005). In both cases, greater solidarity among communities makes for more persistent postdisaster social memory (Kofman Bos and others 2005; Eyre 2007).

Short-term memorials perform these same three functions at a societal level (Haney and others 1997). They signify abrupt changes to the existing social order (that is, communication), mourn these changes (grief work), and call into question the prevailing cultural values that led to the tragedy (reforming community). Accordingly, memorials interpret and contextualize the disaster experience for a wider public.

MEMORIALIZING IN THE LONG-TERM

Monuments erected during long-term recovery differ from short-term memorials in their physical form (Eyre 2007). Designed for perpetual remembrance, they are wrought from durable materials like stone (Peelen 2009). Initially, these memorials fulfill the same functions of grief work, communication, and community formation. For instance, memorial markers erected after major tsunamis in Japan's Tohoku region communicate the extent of previous inundations, urge people to higher ground, honor the dead, and provide spaces for community rituals (Suppasri and others 2012; Bestor 2013). War memorials strongly resemble long-term disaster memorials in form and function. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., personalizes a sense of loss for visitors; the monument names the deceased and provides spaces for uses (that is, ceremonies, leaving mementos) which convey meaning (Theriault 2009). These examples illustrate that, in the long-term, a memorial's tangible form and intangible commemorative acts remember together. Hence, both must be analyzed.

As time passes, long-term memorials perform more memory work at the societal level. This memory work is simultaneously collective and selective. According to Halbwachs, individuals rescript their own memories through the recollection of others in the form of grief work (1980). Therefore, public

commemorations (tangible and intangible) play a substantial role in solidifying both collective and individual memories of a disaster event thus transforming grief into meaning. This point is key considering that culpability for loss comes into question during long-term recovery, as community altruism fades (Barton 1969; Picou and others 2004). To avert blame, politicians may reinterpret disaster events, causing disjunction between the government's portrayal of a disaster and victims' memories (Kofman Bos and others 2005). This disjunction is apparent in the 2001 Gujurat, India, earthquake and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Sri Lanka memorials: "In both instances, memorials [erected by survivor groups] have been used to consolidate and publicize political protest against the state, while the state has used memorials in an attempt to impose its authority" (Simpson and de Alwis 2008, 12). Thus, in the long-term, the communication function of disaster memorials encompasses political sentiment. Parallels can be drawn to other politically charged sites where disenfranchised groups contest a dominant collective memory (Legg 2005; Hite and Collins 2009; Schein 2009; Alderman 2010; Ashley 2016). Ashis Nandy contends that memory work "corrects for [the] inequity" found in the dominant collective memory which selectively remembers history in public space while ignoring those that contest dominant cultural accounts (2015, 599).

Underpinning the notion that a physical site's meaning and function are contestable is Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux des memoires* (1989). These sites of memory seem to encapsulate history, but instead, curate a selected past: "we must *deliberately* create archives, maintain anniversaries, [and] organize celebrations [...] because [...] without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away" (Nora 1989, 12, emphasis added). Disaster memorials constitute *lieux des memoires* because human decisions define a memorial's physical form and intended message. For instance, a committee selected symbols for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing monument (for example, Field of Empty Chairs, Survivor Tree) to promote themes of hope and learning while discouraging recollection of the gruesome event itself (Veil and others 2011). Similarly, high-water marks may be preserved and made permanent as disaster memorials where there is motivation to remember a destructive flood (McEwen and others 2012). If no motivation exists, however, these marks are allowed to fade or they are intentionally erased, "return[ing] to business as usual" (McEwen and others 2012, 7).

This alternative scenario, erasure, highlights the inverse of Nora's sites of memory because here forgetting is a deliberate action. Along these lines, Craig Colten and Alexandra Giancarlo show how prodevelopment land use policies enacted in long-term recovery (to promote normalcy) actually institutionalize forgetting (2011). Through the cyclical rebuilding of devastated areas, tangible reminders of previous disasters are buried beneath new construction. Recovery machine politics (Pais and Elliot 2008) and a shared desire among survivors and governing elites to remember disasters as random perturbations rather than endemic conditions (Blaikie and others 2004) impel these forms of

selective memory work. Cooperatively they reshape the physical postdisaster landscape and remake the collective sense of place.

PLACE MAKING AND MEMORY WORK

Place making is a process through which distinct and significant locations emerge from an otherwise unremarkable landscape (Tuan 1977). Locations gradually accrue meaning for individuals and communities through the repeated social interactions that occur there (Milligan 1998). These familiar routines, along with a site's physical characteristics, define the location's past, condition its future uses, and impart meaning; consequently, a location becomes a place. Time spent in familiar places nurtures feelings of safety, comfort, and even love (Tuan 1975). Unfortunately, disasters that suddenly alter the physical environment can damage these emotional and symbolic ties to place (Brown and Perkins 1992).

Disasters simultaneously reshape physical and symbolic landscapes, in two successive waves. First, the hazard agent(s) (for example, floodwaters, wind) scour the physical landscape, which anchors personal memories and emotional ties (Erikson 1976; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). As a disaster coping response, survivors seek out familiar places where they previously derived comfort; however, vast changes to the physical environment, along with human displacement, make once-familiar places seem foreign. Consequently, survivors experience disorientation, homesickness, and nostalgia for the way things were before the event (Erikson 1976; Windsor and Mcvey 2005). Glen Albrecht and others (2007, S96) employ the term *solastalgia* to describe this "inability to derive solace connected to the negatively perceived state of one's home environment." Enduring equivalent emotional trauma, both displaced survivors and those remaining miss the predisaster place.

During disaster recovery, feelings of solastalgia can direct actions to restore a familiar sense of place to physical surroundings. Thus, reconstruction and memorialization activities, collectively, form the second wave of disaster-induced landscape change: they constitute place (re)making. Emily Chamlee-Wright and Virgil Storr demonstrate how sense of place motivated residents from New Orleans to return home and contribute to the city's rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina (2009). Similarly, in Princeville, North Carolina—the first U.S. town chartered by freed African-Americans after the Civil War—residents' strong collective sense of place compelled them to resist postflood buyouts that threatened to destroy historic, communal ties with place. Through recovery, both locations have come to symbolize "survival against racism, natural hazards, economic deprivation, and challenges to self-determination" (Phillips and others 2012, 410). Although tragic events shaped their histories, recovery has preserved these places in physical form and sanctified them within collective memory—not always the outcome after disaster.

In his U.S.-based study, Ken Foote describes a continuum of four place (re)making practices that memorialize tragic events while redefining the physical landscape (1997). At one extreme lie sanctification and designation. Sanctification entails making the site of a disastrous event sacred through ritual remembrance with both tangible monuments and intangible performances. These commemorations venerate people associated with the tragedy and champion values of martyrdom, heroism, or survivorship, which these individuals come to symbolize. Designation physically marks significant locations of tragedy but stops short of consecrating events or participants through ritual ceremony. At the other extreme, rectification and obliteration unmake places by erasing events from collective memory. Rectification returns sites to their prior use without designating the tragedy and is frequently observed following events framed as senseless accidents or acts of God (Foote 1997). Paralleling the aims of postdisaster recovery, rectification restores familiar routines (Quarantelli 1999) and pre-event development patterns (Kates and Pijawka 1977). The final category, obliteration, entails demolition and erasure of any tangible evidence relating to the tragic event in question. Residual guilt, stigma, or blame justifies obliteration, as these sites actively counter mainstream social values.

Foote's (1997) analysis demonstrates that dominant social values influence how disaster sites are memorialized; yet, these values are not static. Accordingly, commemorations and their ascribed meanings change with time as successive generations reinterpret their texts (Nora 1989; Ashley 2016) and negotiate whose version of history is represented on the landscape (Till 2012). Heritage tourism sites, being commemorations themselves, exhibit these periodic interpretative shifts to accommodate contemporary social sensibilities (consult Handler and Gable 1997). Representations of the past at heritage sites (for example, restored buildings, tours, artifacts) perform memory work by conjuring a version of the past for visitors (Hanna and others 2004; DeSilvey 2007; Azaryahu and Foote 2008; Johnson 2014). However, Lowenthal (1975, 27–28) cautions that such commemorations proffer only imagined pasts because "memory transforms the past we have known into what we think it should have been."

Bodies engaged in memory work layer emotional meaning upon a site, contributing concurrently to place making, collective memory formation, and heritagization. Susan Ashley explains how this process works at the Chattri Indian Memorial in England (2016). During an annual ceremony, the combination of the memorial's tangible form, the presence of ethnic-Indian bodies, and the enactment of culturally rooted rituals evokes an affective experience for participants, thus actively valuating the site. Originally a monument to British imperialism, this ongoing memory work redefines the memorial as a site of Indian cultural affirmation. Materiality, performance, and embodiment cooperatively (re)make places through memory work. We argue that postdisaster

commemorations engage in similar memory work while also constructing understandings about the recovery process and the community's postdisaster social order.

METHODS

To explore postdisaster commemoration, we utilize photographic data and observations collected independently by each author over thirteen years (2004–2017) of field-based study. Although our convenience sample includes a range of disaster event types, we draw on three specific cases selected for their ability to illustrate thematic contrasts in the memorial landscape: the 1907 mine disaster in Monongah, West Virginia; the 2011 EF-5 tornado in Joplin, Missouri; and Hurricane Katrina (2005) in Biloxi, Mississippi. Acknowledging that there exists "a wide range of media designed to facilitate remembering and forgetting of the past" (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, 167), we consider a variety of commemorative artifacts and performances as memorial texts (monuments, plaques, rituals) without distinguishing based on their form. Also following Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman, since the primary function of all memorial texts is remembrance, we use the terms commemoration and memorial interchangeably throughout our analysis (2008).

We utilized both photo documentation (Rose 2007) and photovoice (Wang and Burris 1997) to obtain photographs of memorial texts. We then employed discourse analysis to elicit themes from the textual (Fairclough 1995) and visual symbols (Rose 2007) in the photos. To aid interpretation, we consulted supplementary materials related to the commemorations (that is, interviews, news articles, government documents) and additional field work related to the Sea Island Hurricane (1893) in South Carolina and episodic flooding in Sarasota, Florida. Successive rounds of check coding impart validity to our analysis (Fairclough 1995), while theme triangulation between commemorations from different times, locations, and disaster event types increases the reliability of findings.

FINDINGS

Our analysis of postdisaster memorial texts revealed three pertinent contrasts that illustrate differences in the primary subject commemorated and in the mechanics of memory work performed by the memorial. These aspects empower commemorations to shape community recovery discourses. First, while some memorial texts focus on the disaster event itself, framing it as a significant historical occurrence, other memorials focus on place characteristics where the disaster happened. The former type of *event-based* commemoration is widely recognized by disaster scholars (see Foote 1997; Eyre 1999; Simpson and de Alwis 2008; Zavar 2018); however, the latter pattern of *place-based* disaster commemoration has not, to our knowledge, been identified in the disaster literature. Second, irrespective of a memorial's focus on a disaster event or a pivotal place, wide variation was found in how commemorated individuals

were humanized. We extend Ken Foote's notion of sanctification by observing how commemorative practices humanizing subjects foster differing levels of intimacy with memorial texts (1997). Third, sophisticated event-based memorial texts diverged from place-based texts in terms of how they performed memory work to remake places postdisaster. While event-based memorials re-created place by impressing the distilled memories of individual survivors onto the landscape, place-based remembrances inscribed collectively imagined historical pasts. Memory work in the former case united community members, whereas in the latter case, it unified and fractured social communities.

COMMEMORATING EVENTS OR PLACES

Texts from two historical markers designating coastal flooding disasters distinguish between commemorations centered on events and those centered on place. Event-based memorials recall the scope and scale of a defining hazard impact. Such memorials may recount people lost, injured, or affected by a tragedy; structures lost or areas affected may be referenced. Usually the text includes a timeline or description of cascading events responsible for the loss. A historical marker on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, commemorating the 1893 Great Sea Island Hurricane exemplifies these basic elements of event commemoration (Figure 1). After recalling the magnitude of the loss, particularly among descendants of enslaved people, the marker's text acknowledges the scale of relief efforts undertaken by volunteers.

An educational placard at the Celery Fields in Sarasota, Florida, serves as an example of place commemoration. Rather than concentrating on the disaster, place commemoration focuses attention on the characteristics, history, features, and conditions of a location. This area was acquired through a publicly funded buyout following a major flood in 1994. Although the storm precipitating the buyout is explicitly mentioned in the text, this event is not its focus. Instead, several photographs of celery harvesting and a description, entitled "a changing landscape," emphasize the land's agricultural heritage and present-day roles as a wildlife refuge, a community amenity, and a flood mitigation tool:

> "In the 1920s, the field became recognized for growing a valuable celery crop. [...] Today, this regional facility holds and treats stormwater and now also provides opportunities for passive public recreation such as birding, biking, and walking. This former sawgrass wetland is part of the Sarasota County's water resources heritage. It is also a working facility that provides the stormwater management cornerstone in the Phillippi Creek Basin."

Rather than qualify the loss or recovery from the flood, this text illuminates how physical site characteristics provide ecosystem services and risk reduction benefits to present-day residents. Additionally, the placard's text imprints the cultural memory of an agrarian past on the landscape.

Fɪɢ. 1—Sea Island Hurricane marker (Photo: Ronald Schumann). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

This example demonstrates that disaster events are not always the central focus of postdisaster memorials. Instead, a disaster may serve as the impetus for remembering the historical context of a place and recasting its role in the present. Place commemorations acknowledge that, irrespective of disaster-induced alterations to the landscape, a location may still hold much societal relevance. These findings imply that the definition of "disaster memorial" may warrant broadening from simply "permanent reminders of tragic events" (Eyre 2007, 452) or efforts "to memorialize [...] victims at the site of the disaster" (Foote 1997, 80) to include texts that alter places meanings in response to disaster events.

Furthermore, the impersonal tone of both memorial texts is striking. As evidenced by the literature, commemoration is an inherently political act (Schein 2009; Alderman 2010), yet these two memorial texts purposefully take a neutral stance. Visitors examining these texts side-by-side may be unable to detect what motivations underlie the displays. Although these texts recall human contributions to place making (victims, responders, and laborers), these people are not memorialized as individuals. The next section

explores how memorial texts, to varying degrees, humanized the disaster experience.

<div align="center">DEGREES OF INTIMACY</div>

Some postdisaster commemorations serve to designate (Foote 1997), while others establish more intimate connections between those memorialized and memorializers. Commemorations of this latter kind do so by emphasizing the lived experience of individuals involved in the disaster event. Their texts humanize the survivors, victims, volunteers, and others connected with the tragedy, often revering their remarkable character as human beings through sanctification (Foote 1997). In some instances, the memorial text transitions beyond humanizing the loss, depicting individuals as suprahuman for what they overcame. Commemorations that sanctify individuals to this degree abstract human qualities to the point that the memorialized become unrelatable to memorializers. Building upon Ken Foote's 1997 work, we identify complexities in sanctification that produce varying degrees of intimacy with the human experiences being memorialized.

To illustrate the range of intimacy that postdisaster memorials display, we utilize four commemorations in Monongah, West Virginia, that remember the 1907 Coal Mine Disaster. The first is a historical marker erected in 1963, shortly after the fiftieth anniversary of the mine explosions. The other three commemorations mark the 100th anniversary of the disaster: granite monument, dedication ceremony, and women's statue. Although the first memorial merely designates the tragedy, the other three engage in sanctification (Foote 1997).

The historical marker in the center of town describes the event: "On the 6th of Dec., 1907 361 coal miners, many of them from countries far across the sea, perished under these hills in the worst mining disaster of our nation. The four[1] who escaped died of injuries" (Figure 2). This marker's text exemplifies event-based commemoration. It quantifies the deceased and injured, framing the event's scale as the "worst mining disaster of our nation." Although the marker mentions that many of the deceased coal miners immigrated to the area, little detail is given regarding their lives or the disaster's impact on the community.

A centennial anniversary granite monument erected by the Italian government mourns the miners' deaths and the losses born by surviving family members (Figure 3). The monument features an etching of a group of male miners grasping the hands of their young sons as they enter the mine. The monument, in part, reads: "These men, mostly buried within the arms of this cemetery, left their wives and children in this Country and in lands far away." This text, in combination with the etching, reinforces familial bonds and effectively humanizes those impacted by the disaster. Whereas the historical marker provides statistics, the image and focus on family provides a more intimate portrayal of the victims and survivors. The emphasis on distant nations by capitalizing "Country" and referencing "lands far away" speaks to the disaster's

Fɪɢ. 2—Monongah Mine Disaster historical marker (Photo: Jamison Conley and Lee Ann Nolan). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

international reverberations. The granite monument facilitates recovery by remembering the bereaved both in Monongah and in Italy, the birthplace of many of the miners. By foregrounding their cultural heritage and illuminating the familial reasons prompting their migration, the monument forms an intimate connection between the deceased and memorializers viewing the monument.

Similarly, the 100th anniversary ceremony, which dedicated the granite monument, humanizes experiences with the disaster. The ceremony consisted of tolling a bell cast in the Italian province from which a quarter of the perished miners hailed. A procession to the cemetery and reading of deceased miners' names by local students followed (Pitz 2007). Rather than referencing a summative number of deceased, the reading of each name personalizes and

Fig. 3—Monongah Mine Disaster granite monument (Photo: Jamison Conley and Lee Ann Nolan). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

distinguishes individuals from the group. Cardenas (2012, n.p.) argues that "reciting their names symbolizes a vocal affirmation of an individual's identity and legacy. This oral tribute keeps memories of those who died alive by ensuring that these individuals do not become simply another statistic." Akin to the granite monument's symbology, this commemorative recitation of names humanizes the loss of life. By evoking a shared sense of loss, these two memorial texts co-create a community of descendants (Haney and others 1997; Eyre 2007). The humanness common to the memorializers and the memorialized, as shown through names and family relationships, renders the victims and survivors worthy of remembrance.

Finally, a fourth memorial, a monument also erected in 2007, venerates to a suprahuman degree the remarkable traits of wives and children who survived the miners (Figure 4). This monument, entitled "Monongah Heroine," stands adjacent to the historical marker in the town's center and consists of a statue of a woman holding two young children. Beneath the stone figures, the inscription reads:

"In the excess of her sorrow[,] Brave beyond words[.] In memory of the widowed wives and mothers of the victims of the Monongah coal mine disaster

FIG. 4—Monongah Heroine Statue (Photo: Jamison Conley and Lee Ann Nolan). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

December 6, 1907. All of them long-gone but ever in our hearts. We hear their ghostly pickaxe in the shuttered mine."

The monument's linguistic and visual elements together communicate this sense of suprahuman fortitude. The descriptor "Heroine" honors the women for their ability to persevere through adversity, while the phrase "Brave beyond words" suggests a level of courage unfathomable, let alone attainable, for viewers reading the text. Visually, the statue depicts a solemn-faced, emotionless woman and a young girl, both of whom gaze straight ahead. The woman cradles a baby with one arm and holds the girl with the other. Their stoic body language, specifically the squared shoulders and forward gaze, further communicates their determination to carry on despite tragedy.

A final line of the inscription juxtaposes these suprahuman connotations in tone and language. Rather than venerate the women as superior, this line invites memorializers to hear the sounds of the "ghostly pickaxes" alongside the wives and children, and to be haunted, together, by them. In salvaging a collective memory for viewers, this line humanizes the women, but does not offset the monument's suprahuman aloofness.

Whereas the previous granite monument recalls relatable familial bonds and the pain associated with loss, the Monongah Heroine communicates courage and strength while ignoring this grief. In fact, this 2007 commemoration of the widows and children of deceased miners directly counters what observers reported in the immediate aftermath of the 1907 mine explosions: "the women around the mine... were like slaves to their emotions" (Schmoll 2013, 40). Even accounting for potential misogynistic bias in disaster reporting from this era, the mere display of emotion contradicts the statue's message. By depicting the heroine's capacity to bear overwhelming loss for her children's sake, unphased by sorrow, this memorial depicts the ultimate survivor—suprahuman, yet wholly unhuman.

These four memorial texts depict the Monongah mine disaster and those connected to it with varying degrees of intimacy and humanization. Such variety in representation demonstrates how memorial texts are continuously reinterpreted over time in light of contemporary social attitudes (Nora 1989; Handler and Gable 1997). Although repeated rituals gradually sanctify sites of tragedy with time, in turn, facilitating psychological healing (Foote 1997; Eyre 2007), the successive memorial texts that remember the Monongah disaster did not iteratively accomplish this task. Instead, low-intimacy designation gave way to intimate sanctification, and finally cold, supra-human depiction. In a slightly different intimacy trajectory, Ken Foote describes how commemorations following the 1909 coal mine disaster in Cherry, Illinois, sanctified the deceased miners with a statue on the disaster's second anniversary and seventy-five years later designated the mine itself with a marker (1997). Commemorations in both Monongah and Cherry illustrate that designation does not necessarily precede sanctification, nor do commemorations become universally more or less

intimate over time in depicting humans and their lifeworlds. In fact, Haney and others argue that individuals possess agency to challenge culturally defined timeframes for bereavement by determining the timing and frequency of their own memorial actions (1997). In the next section, we further explore representations of human lifeworlds in the postdisaster landscape, showing the power of these commemorations to both unify and fracture communities.

MEMORIALIZING LIVING MEMORY OR IMAGINED PASTS

The third contrast identified through discourse analysis centers on emotionally sophisticated memorial texts that leverage embodied experiences to commemorate a disaster event or a place. They circumvent Foote's (1997) sanctification concept because, though they may tangibly memorialize a disaster, they do not venerate personal heroism, martyrdom, or survivorship. These commemorations, instead, more closely resemble historical tours (Hanna and others 2004), cultural ceremonies (Ashley 2016), and pilgrimages (Azaryahu and Foote 2008), which fuse materiality, performance, affect, and positionality to do powerful memory work. Comprising these same ingredients, event-based and place-based commemorations are distinguished by the means and the ends of their memory work. Whereas event-based commemorations were found to distill living memory for a unifying effect, place-based commemorations recalled imagined pasts to both collective and divisive ends. Examples from Joplin, Missouri, and Biloxi, Mississippi, illustrate this contrast.

The Butterfly People placard (Figure 5) in Joplin, Missouri, part of the commemoration to the 2011 EF-5 Tornado, exemplifies the former event-based
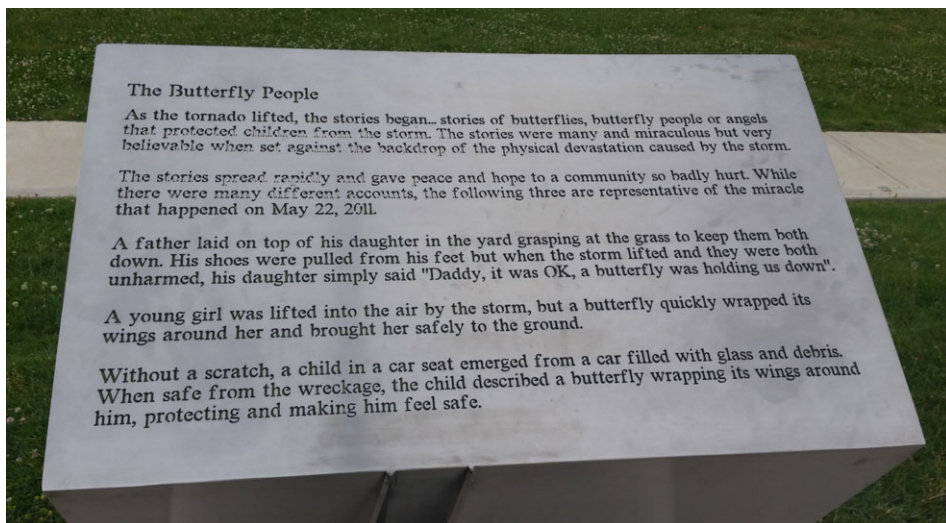

Fɪɢ. 5—Butterfly People memorial in Joplin, Missouri (Photo: Elyse Zavar) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

case. Situated along a path containing poignant yet normative recovery motifs (Wasserman 1998; Eyre 2007; Veil and others 2011), the Butterfly People memorial is unique. It depicts accounts of "angels that protected children from the storm." As the text suggests, these consistent and miraculous memories gave "peace and hope to a community so badly hurt." To render an affective memory, this simple steel placard relies on more than the communicative power of its words alone; it also engages intertextually with preceding memorial displays (Dwyer and Alderman 2007), constructing an embodied memory as visitors traverse the commemorative path (Ashley 2016).

A walk through the butterfly garden symbolically moves visitors through four stages of grief: accepting loss, processing pain, adjusting to life without who (or what) was lost, and moving forward while remembering (Drury University, n.d.). Thus, the journey to reach the Butterfly People memorial performs foundational memory work. Upon entry, visitors engage somatic memory by walking through steel-framed skeletons of three destroyed houses, their outlines suggesting homes lost but not forgotten. Further along, a therapeutic water wall contains a break representing the discontinuity in the community's life at the exact moment the tornado sliced through town. Visitors then read a series of placards that recount disaster losses and sanctify the volunteers. Arriving at the Butterfly People memorial, visitors are primed for an affective climax. In reading the final placard of the series, the recovery discourse communicated is one of renewal, second chances, and unified optimism for the future. Regarding the Butterfly People text itself, the utilization of children's intimate disaster memories and their reconfiguration into a singular community narrative contribute to its effectiveness. While use of the former conveys a simplistic yet hopeful perspective, the latter fashions a phoenix story from the scattered survivors' voices. In doing so, this event-based memorial re-makes place by offering themes of rebirth and rebuilding to memorializers (Miller and others 2017).

Like the Butterfly People memorial set within a larger commemorative landscape, a sign on Point Cadet in Biloxi, Mississippi, constitutes one of several place-based commemorations performing memory work in a neighborhood decimated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The sign (Figure 6) advertises the future site of the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum. Touting a public/private partnership, the text implores viewers to donate because it is "Our History, Our Culture, and Our Time to Rebuild." The sign leaves unanswered the question of whose place-based stories will ultimately be remembered (or forgotten) since three cultural communities successively shaped the Point's landscape and seafood heritage: French colonists (1700s); Croatian immigrant families (late 1800s—late 1900s); and Vietnamese boat people and their descendants (1975—present). In 2005, Hurricane Katrina's storm surge largely leveled the neighborhood and displaced most of the Vietnamese population.

FIG. 6—Maritime Museum sign (Photo: Linh). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonline library.com]

The storm and subsequent recovery activities have transformed the Point's physical landscape into a memorial one, thus remaking place. Lifeless city blocks populated by empty concrete foundations remember Katrina's ferocity and the former lifeworlds of the three displaced groups. Three extant buildings owned by each cultural group function as tangible heritage memorials. Former Point residents and those tracing their roots to the neighborhood regularly converge in these structures to perform memory work as separate communities. The structures institutionalize their respective commemorative performances (Nora 1989) and make competing territorial claims to the neighborhood.

At the Vietnamese Buddhist Temple, lion dances in the courtyard celebrate the Lunar New Year and renew congregants' stake in the neighborhood as their regional cultural hearth (Figure 7). Though only temporarily, this ceremonial assembly of ethnic-Vietnamese bodies literally repopulates the Point. The ritual lion dance performance, along with the gathering space it creates, coalesces remembrances of a cherished common heritage, a perilous shared journey, a collectively built new home, and a community's survival despite devastation. As such, it functions as an emotionally evocative place-based memorial and constitutes the remaking of place.

Fig. 7—Lion dance performance in Biloxi (Photo: Thomas). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

A few blocks away, the Slavonian Lodge and French Club host weekly suppers, weddings, and holiday celebrations. Like the lion dances at the Buddhist temple, these are also spaces of heritage where familial ties predicate access. Although their respective communities of Croatian fishermen and French settlers are no longer majority groups on the Point, these distinct communities still reconvene to reimagine the neighborhood in their heyday. Equally emotionally evocative, these gatherings of mostly aging bodies function as place-based memorials that reenact community life in a place that no longer exists. Through unique acts of heritagization, these former residents employ commemoration to reinsert themselves and their pasts into a denuded landscape that, due to postdisaster realities, they can inhabit only in memory.

Both Joplin and Biloxi examples are complex, multipart commemorations that defy Foote's (1997) sanctification label in different ways. Instead of venerating deceased martyrs or human survivors, the Joplin memorial used emotional stories of supernatural beings to craft a positive, forward-looking recovery message for memorializers. In Biloxi, the buildings and activities of the three memorializing groups worked to expunge the memory of the disaster, and instead, reanimate the neighborhood as they remembered it before.

Although both commemorations lent context to a focal disaster and created sacred places, varying degrees of uniformity in postdisaster memory produced diverging results. In Joplin, the Butterfly Memorial placard relayed homogeneous recollections. Regardless of narrator background or whereabouts when the tornado struck, the memorial framed the individual accounts of winged protectors as remarkably consistent. Repetition of their singular message, then, generated a collective memory of suprahuman survival that united community members in performing grief work (Halbwachs 1980; Doss 2008).

Meanwhile in Biloxi, three factors produced heterogeneous memories about the neighborhood: heritage, time, and solastalgia. Distinct heritagization practices imagined the Point's historic sense of place by anchoring and valuating the past relative to each individual's cultural identity (Lowenthal 1975; Phillips and others 2012; Ashley 2016). Furthermore, the dominant time period in a group's collective memory (that is, when their impression on the Point's landscape and community life was most pronounced) shaped their nostalgic commemorations (Lowenthal 1975). Finally, grief work inherent across the memorials suggests that solastalgia might explain the observed territoriality in defining the Point's historical narrative (Albrecht and others 2007; Nora 1989). Rather than generating a single unifying recovery message, as in Joplin, these differences in individual recollections refracted collective memory, in turn, producing divergent visions for the Biloxi neighborhood's recovery.

Conclusions

This study of postdisaster commemoration examined memorial texts produced during long-term recovery to identify not only their themes, but also to elicit the mechanics of their memory work. Our findings highlight the primacy of place in disaster commemoration, demonstrating that postdisaster replacement activities also re-place the meanings of locations. We distinguished event-based commemorations from place-based commemorations. Place commemoration went beyond designating locations where tragic events occurred or sanctifying places to mourn disaster victims; rather, these commemorations revealed an effort to preserve place-based memories that bore new relevance because of disaster impacts and recovery-related repercussions. Place-based commemorative texts contained, at most, cursory references to the extreme event prompting their creation, suggesting that traditional analyses of "disaster memorials" have not fully explored the roles that these commemorations play in the community recovery process.

Additionally, we identified the embedded complexities of sanctified sites (Foote 1997) by showing varying levels of intimacy in postdisaster memorial portrayals of life experiences. Stylistic elements responsible for making disaster victims and survivors more or less relatable to memorializers were identified; thus, we demonstrated the capabilities of memorials to humanize, dehumanize, and characterize those impacted by disasters. Although we observed that fluctuations in intimacy levels over time were not consistent across events, from the

literature, we posited that the sense of community generated by bridging lived experiences of memorialized persons with those of present-day memorializers aided long-term psychological healing.

Finally, we observed differences in how sophisticated event-based and place-based texts performed memory work. Elements of materiality, embodied performance, affect, and positionality all characterized these commemorations, but these ingredients were leveraged in unique ways to differing ends. While place-based memorials helped memorializers envision competing historical pasts, event-based memorials interwove individual survivor stories into a greater whole. The former employed imagination and solastalgia in remaking places relevant to culturally unique survivor groups, while the latter transformed scattered, miraculous accounts into a singular renewal narrative. Though both types of memorial texts lent context to a focal disaster, they produced bifurcating pathways toward community recovery.

By considering how disasters remake place and the ways in which postdisaster memorials perform memory work, this research contributes to the geographic literature by uniting disparate perspectives on place and memory from critical human geography and hazards geography. Building on this study, we envision future opportunities to explore the role of place-based commemoration in the disaster recovery process. Given that commemoration is not static, particularly in the digital age, which quickens reinterpretation, we question how digital reinterpretations will remember and frame recovery. Additionally, work is needed to understand the potential impact on a community when collective recovery expectations prescribed by memorial texts do not match the lived recovery experience. While this study focused on themes embedded in the production of memorial texts, a potential limitation was its limited consideration of how such texts were consumed. Therefore, future scholarship should consider the audiencing of these postdisaster memorial texts to better understand how place- and event-based commemorations with varying levels of intimacy may contribute differently to a community's long-term recovery vision. Finally, since we limited our investigation of postdisaster commemoration to only a few types of traditional memorials, there exists ample opportunity to explore similar themes in less conventional memorial texts.

NOTE

[1] The actual death toll and survivor count are still debated (Tropea 2013).

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