Aberystwyth University

Anticipating a Covid-19 Memorial Landscape

Hoskins, Gareth; Maddern, Joanne

Published in:
Change Over Time

DOI:
10.1353/cot.2022.0010

Publication date:
2022

Citation for published version (APA):
Hoskins, G., & Maddern, J. (2022). Anticipating a Covid-19 Memorial Landscape: Quarantine and Migration Heritage as a Template? *Change Over Time*, *11*(1), 122-139. https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2022.0010

Document License
CC BY-NC

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Aberystwyth Research Portal (the Institutional Repository) are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Aberystwyth Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Aberystwyth Research Portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

tel: +44 1970 62 2400
email: is@aber.ac.uk

Download date: 23. Feb. 2024

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG1>

<T>ANTICIPATING A COVID-19 MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE</T>

<ST>QUARANTINE AND MIGRATION HERITAGE AS A TEMPLATE</ST>

<AU>GARETH HOSKINS</AU>

<AA>Aberystwyth University, Wales</AA>

<AU>JOANNE MADDERN</AU>

<AA>Swansea University, Wales</AA>

<Abstract>This paper examines the role and function of migration and quarantine heritage in the circulation of health-related stories of national purity and biological vigor (which continue to be enacted and normalized through emerging COVID-19 remembrance practices). After examining how material cultures of quarantine have defined the parameters of the "healthy" nation-state, we outline the role of heritage venues in seeding national stories and symbols of the contemporary pandemic era. What clues do existing heritage sites provide about the form and function of emerging COVID-19 memorial landscapes? What continuities and differences can we identify? What can previous interpretive regimes around disease, movement, identity, and foreignness reveal about the objects and landscapes that will persist as symbols of our current predicament? And what are the implications for the management of museum landscapes?</Abstract>

<TX>In an interview for ABC's *This Week*, in May 2020, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo affirmed various "lab-leak" narratives circulating in the public domain by stating "the Chinese have a history of infecting the world."[1] This echoed then-president Trump's cruder language, like "kung flu" and "Chinese virus," that gave tacit consent to an ongoing wave of anti-Asian violence across the United States. This pattern included, tragically, the killing of six people of Asian descent, eight

people in total, by a white gunman in Atlanta. Such xenophobia is part of a long history of exclusion, prejudice, and persecution of immigrants, particularly Asian immigrants, in the United States, as detailed in recent books *The Chinese Must Go*, by Beth Lew-Williams, and *Driven Out*, by Jean Pfaelzer.[2] In contemporary efforts to reduce infection, global leaders have repeatedly deployed tropes from their national memories about genetic purity, a fear of outsiders, and the perpetual otherness of nonwhite groups. Contemporary border control elements such as hotel quarantine for foreign arrivals, red lists, strategies to "send the virus packing," and characterizations of the SARS-CoV-2 virus as an "unknown mugger" or "assailant" "that attacks" play on migrant-related xenophobia that stems from US attitudes originating in the nineteenth century. These measures and beliefs cultivate anxiety about foreignness and cut against progressive shifts in the heritage and museum sector toward decolonization, reparation, and repatriation.

This paper connects Western migration and quarantine heritage to emerging commemorations of COVID-19 to compare their engagement with ideas about national identity, foreignness, and disease and, ultimately, make the case for more careful and sensitive approaches. To these ends, state-funded historic sites, monuments, museums exhibitions, and displays associated with the movement of peoples in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are examined. The analysis moves through six sections. First, we link the emergence of migration and quarantine facilities around the world to nativist sentiment and racist assumptions about ethnicity, morality, hygiene, and health. Then, we consider quarantine more broadly as a cypher for national understandings about self and the other. Subsequent sections outline the ideological functions of official migration and quarantine heritage sites and then provide coverage of the recent operational struggles experienced at these sites and their attempts to maintain relevance in a world of reduced travel and funding. The conclusion anticipates the emerging heritage landscape of COVID-19.

We include a number of examples of migration and quarantine from around the world, but our focus falls primarily on Ellis Island and Angel Island immigration stations, two well-established

points of arrival to the United States that involved inspection and quarantine between 1892 and 1924 (Ellis Island) and 1910 and 1940 (Angel Island). After a period of neglect and abandonment, these sites have since become national monuments operating under the National Park Service and California State Parks, respectively. As established and popular heritage destinations, Ellis Island and Angel Island now form a part of an international portfolio of historic sites, museums, and memorials dedicated to the histories of migration (figs. 1 and 2). [3] We see these sites as guideposts for our ongoing attempts to create a new heritage of COVID-19 because of their common concern with the cross-border movement of people and punitive surveillance of contagious disease.

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG1>

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG2>

Heritage venues of migration and quarantine generate and subsequently celebrate a productive "supercitizen," to use Honig's term from her 2001 book *Democracy and the Foreigner*. The supercitizen is problematic because it distracts from the story of race- and class-based exclusion at the border with a caricature of the eager immigrant known solely by their desire to access the nation state.[4] Therefore, the supercitizen is an archetype that brings the community together against a common external threat. We suggest that emerging commemorations of COVID-19, including museum-led efforts of collection, synchronous public spectacles of appreciation, ad hoc ceremonies, performance art interventions, and campaigns for memorials to the dead, pitch similar emblematic heroes against a foreign threat to obscure myriad ongoing oppressions.

But quite apart from what it might reveal about identity and exclusion, the emerging heritage of COVID-19 is, before anything else, an effort to recognize and pay tribute to the devastating loss of millions. Archaeologists have evidence of human memorials and funerary rituals as far back as the Upper Paleolithic period fifty thousand years ago.[5] But beyond a few exceptions relating to plague columns in medieval Europe and rare tributes to the deadliest disease event in

human history, the 1918 “Spanish flu,” like the one in the granite town of Barre, Vermont, our modern memorial culture most readily commemorates death through the lens of those lost in war. Additionally, just as military statues operate as symbols of sacrifice, gallantry, and patriotism, so the material heritage of migration and quarantine contributes to national stories in different ways. It is these heritage sites and their messaging around race, movement, disease, identity, and foreignness that are particularly relevant to the commemoration of COVID-19.

Migration and quarantine heritage sites are diverse and eclectic in their agendas and interpretive positions organized to serve different communities with a range of remits and political perspectives. Nonetheless, they often frame their content within a broader patriotic narrative of freedom and promise to all. Early commemorations of the COVID-19 pandemic while often well-intentioned if somewhat haphazard, seem to be subject to similar populist pulls toward a celebratory sanitized nationalism against more critical expressions of regret in the acknowledgment of injustice.

In a context of increasing anti-Asian bigotry and violence we must recognize that while commemoration pays tribute to the past, it also makes future worlds possible. Decisions about what to display and interpret at historic migration and quarantine sites highlight particular kinds of people, legitimate particular kinds of conduct, and justify particular courses of action such as inspection and incarceration. The emerging heritage of COVID-19 will therefore shape the national conversation about who should, or should not, be included in similar ways.

This article is not therefore a prediction of what COVID-19 memorial practices will look like but rather a sketch of a range of possibilities and a cautionary reflection about some of the potential consequences. Before moving to consider the strategic function of migration and quarantine heritage in contemporary nation building, it is useful first to outline the logics that underpinned their initial construction as border control facilities.

<A>Nativism, Racism, and Contagious Disease</A>

The modern US embrace of biological purity and race-based management of population through border control is demonstrated in Stolarik's edited volume *Forgotten Doors: The Other Ports of Entry to the United States*, which explores oft-overlooked sites of arrival to the United States including Philadelphia, Baltimore, Miami, and Los Angeles.[6] These alongside the US Immigration Stations at Ellis Island, New York, and Angel Island, San Francisco, were among seven official inspection centers strategically located around the country within a federal bureaucratic complex designed to regulate movement. From their inception, these sites played a pivotal role in defining how migration and foreignness were popularly understood as an external threat, according to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to "the good order of certain localities." The 1882 act targeted Chinese laborers and those employed in mining and suspended their entry to the United States for ten years while allowing entry to diplomats, teachers, students, merchants, and travelers.[7] Chinese laborers already in the United States were refused the right of citizenship and, if they left the country, they had to obtain a certificate to reenter. It formalized anti-Chinese animosity at the federal level, combining several earlier treaties and policies under one bill that was extended ten years later and made permanent in 1902. The legislation severely curtailed the Chinese population in the United States, reducing its size from 105,000 in 1880 to 61,000 in 1920.[8] The Exclusion Act separated families, placed individuals under constant fear of deportation, encouraged the abuse of Chinese workers, and brought about lengthy inspection procedures and expensive appeals. Inspection and detention required dedicated facilities at secure ports. Many of these remain as a material legacy of a national approach to immigration founded on theories of eugenics, the racialization of contagious disease, developments in modern bacteriology, and the resultant "germ panic" that underpins our contemporary disease consciousness. Shah notes perceptively that "the motivation to federalize quarantine and combine it with immigration control was the anxious perception that, '[e]very serious epidemic that this country [the US] has ever known has been traced

to the immigrant."[9] Contemporary scholarly research on nineteenth century plagues, epidemics, and immigration highlights the acute anti-immigrant and anti-Asian bigotry of that era.[10]

In 1890, Chinese immigrants were labeled a "menace" by US public health officials after an outbreak of bubonic plague that caused the quarantine of New York and San Francisco Chinatowns amid calls they be burnt to the ground. In response to cholera and bubonic plague pandemics at the turn of the twentieth century, Congress gave the federal government power over medical inspection of immigrants at port quarantine stations. Processes, institutions, and personnel proliferated to produce new medical knowledge and theories that shaped quarantine procedures worldwide. All were informed by a belief in the foreignness of germs. In 1916, Italians were deemed the cause of a polio outbreak along the East Coast, just as Irish immigrants with supposedly "poor hygiene habits" had been blamed for an outbreak of cholera a century earlier.

But the harshest treatment by far was targeted at Asian immigrants, particularly those from China and Japan. The locus of that treatment became Angel Island, a 740-acre hill rising steeply out of the San Francisco Bay just south of mainland Marin County. By the late nineteenth century, Angel Island had acquired a long and varied human history: as an Indigenous hunting ground for the Coast Miwok people, a survey base for the Spanish navy in 1775, grazing land for European ranchers, a safe harbor for Chinese fishermen, and, since 1850, a home to two army garrisons that included a detention and discharge complex for use in the Spanish-American War and subsequent Philippine Insurrection. In 1891, fear of an Asian-born health menace in San Francisco led to the construction of a quarantine station on Ayala Cove, Angel Island, where foreign ships could be fumigated and immigrants of all nationalities who were suspected of disease could be isolated. The adapted naval complex was composed of forty buildings including a disinfection plant, laboratories, staff quarters, and a four-hundred-bed detention barrack.[11] In 1896, after an outbreak of bubonic plague in China, all Chinese passengers entering San Francisco were taken through quarantine, whether or not any sickness was found on board. The preemptive detention of Chinese, Japanese,

and other Asian immigrants meant US Public Health Service officers carried out intensive and time-consuming bodily inspection using microscopes and X-rays. Medically untrained Department of Labor inspectors judged who was healthy enough to enter the country. Additionally, after the 1921 Emergency Quota Act of May 19, any inspector or surgeon could identify and deport anyone they thought looked Chinese or Asian.

The Ayala Cove Quarantine Station on Angel Island was eventually abandoned by the US Public Health Service, who moved operations to cheaper and more convenient premises on the mainland. Isolation, however, was seen as a valuable asset to the Bureau of Immigration in 1904, who selected a fifteen-acre site on the island's northern most point to build a dedicated facility. The Angel Island Immigration Station was opened on January 21, 1910, by the Department of Commerce and Labor. A complex containing a 120-foot wharf with baggage house, administration building, powerhouse, hospital, detention quarters, and workers cottages processed hundreds of thousands of immigrants seeking entry to the United States. Those suspected to be Chinese laborers were detained there for special scrutiny. In 1940 the main administration building was destroyed by fire, and operations moved to the mainland. The military assumed control over the remaining buildings from 1941, using them to secure German, Japanese, and Italian prisoners of war. Abandoned again after the war, the site was turned over to the Department of the Interior and eventually to California State Parks in 1963. State Parks still owns and oversees the island's cultural resources, but the immigration station site has, since 1997, been designated a National Historical Landmark and has acquired monies through a not-for-profit foundation to fund restoration, renovation, and retrofitting for visitor interpretation.

<A>Quarantine as Cypher</A>

Quarantine (from the Venetian *quarantena*, meaning "forty days," the duration of isolation required to prevent the spread of plague) was initially conceived as a response to the Black Death in

fourteenth-century France. Since then, the term "quarantine" has broadened to denote a direct medical intervention and, as we have indicated above, a rhetorical sketching out of abstract concepts such as territory, identity, and nationhood. Quarantine has become a cypher for who and what belongs, as well as who and what does not.

In his research on quarantine and the British Mediterranean world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Chase-Levenson illustrates how quarantine measures function to play out national and imperial rivalries. He gives examples of authorities suspending a ship's passage, destroying its merchandise, and detaining its passengers—actions driven by diplomatic and military concerns as well as fears about health. In contrast, historian Alison Bashford shows that quarantine and related debates about disease and transmission between nation-states were significant in shaping international diplomacy both "between European and Ottoman empires and between imperial powers in the Pacific."[12] But in regular conversation, the meaning of "quarantine" holds as an enforced state of "interruption" or "suspension." Contemporary refugees and asylum seekers with ascribed values, characteristics, and behaviors professed to be antithetical to the nation-state continue to be quarantined, often in substandard camps and institutions with infrastructure designed to contain individuals both physically and ideologically.

The near ubiquity of quarantine measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus during the recent pandemic has modified the term's meaning. Marie Gillespie, professor of sociology at the Open University, outlines in her research "COVID-19: Chronicles from the Margins" how lockdown restrictions present us with an opportunity to more fully appreciate the fear and uncertainly experienced by undocumented persons trapped within systems of asylum.[13] Our daily exposure to quarantine also modifies our understanding about how the practice has shaped our pasts and how its legacies persist. Questions about who should be quarantined, on whose behalf, and for what purpose are being considered anew in high-profile disputes including, for example, an individual's vaccination status and their right to participate in international sports events.

Some clues to the contemporary social significance of quarantine can be found in our designated material heritage. Looking at material remains and thinking about what gets collected, restored, and made “visit-able” provides a chance to consider what forms of restriction have been acceptable in the past and what might be tolerated now by an anxious public. Bashford’s recent volume *Quarantine* shows how the now aging material infrastructure of border control lends itself so readily as a heritage destination and popular framing as symbols of national identity:

<EXT>

> From the early modern period, a global archipelago of quarantine stations came to connect the world’s oceans. Often located on islands adjacent to major ports, they multiplied across every major body of water. In the process, great new carceral architectures materialised, many surviving into the present as magnificent ruins—Malta’s Manoel Island, for example. Other quarantine islands have been interpreted in the present by states seeking to sell and tell national stories of triumph over adversity—San Francisco’s Angel Island [Fig. 3], or South Africa’s Robben Island, for instance. And yet more have been “adaptively reused” as convention centres, exhibition spaces or five-star hotels with a dark tourism edge, as has Sydney’s “Q Station.” Such divergent current uses cover a far more consistent past in which these local geographies served remarkably similar purposes, designed to secure both global health and global commerce.[14]

</EXT>

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG3>

<A>The National Function of Migration and Quarantine Heritage</A>

The function of “the past” in contemporary society has been regularly considered across the humanities and social sciences, and within heritage studies in particular (e.g., Tuleja’s *Usable Pasts*, Smith’s *Uses of Heritage*, and Lowenthal’s *The Past Is a Foreign Country—Revisited*).[15] In a recent discussion on the use of history as a contemporary resource, social psychologist Constance de

Saint-Laurent asks us to consider "how the past is transformed and mobilised for the present as a resource to give meaning to present actions and groups as well as to imagine collective futures."[16] She points specifically to the current rise of nationalist discourses, in both Europe and the United States, which are accompanied by calls to protect cultural identities rooted in national myths. At the same time, we are witnessing a widespread challenge to traditional historic narratives. The "history wars" in Australia, "culture wars" in the United States, and "the war on woke" in the United Kingdom frame the backlash against national broadcasters, museums, heritage bodies, and universities that are all now pivoting to embrace diversity.[17] Recent decolonizing endeavors in the United Kingdom such as the "*The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales*," the National Trust's report *Addressing Our Histories of Colonialism and Historic Slavery*, and that same organization's Colonial Countryside project have been critiqued as an "ideologically motivated endeavour to rewrite history" by the Common Sense Group of more than fifty members of the British Parliament.[18] One flashpoint in the UK was the toppling of a statue of Bristol-based slave trader Edward Colston, which led to a change in English planning law to a new policy of "retain and explain," granting power to the secretary of state to review any application for a statue's removal to ensure the new law is followed.[19] Such tensions highlight the vulnerability of heritage to challenge and their symbolic power as anchors of tradition.

The global landscape of migration heritage includes immigration and emigration museums, preserved quarantine facilities, archives, collections, popular stories about journeys and belonging—as well as tributes to and tirades against economically motivated migrants. These structures and organizations collectively set the parameters for who belongs and who does not. Migration heritage is a venue to celebrate a national belonging in ways that crowd out less palatable stories of settler colonialism and Indigenous genocide.

Some sites achieve prominence, profile, and concentrations of funding while others with more complex histories are left to decay. For example, there has been little memorialization of the

UK's Port Sanitary Authorities sites, facilities introduced in 1872 to prevent the importation of infectious diseases.[20] Krista Maglen documents these sites as "the first line of defense" for British quarantine in the nineteenth century, following opposition to more widespread quarantine, which began at the beginning of the century and gained momentum over the following decades.[21] In contrast, Ellis Island and Angel Island have enjoyed high-profile recognition as points of arrival to the United States not least owing to the success of advocacy groups in securing official recognition and large budgets for conservation, restoration, and professional interpretative planning. These sites have been at the forefront in the global growth of site-specific migration museums and can act as guideposts to inform the emerging heritage of COVID-19.

<A>Heritage Struggles in a Covid World</A>

Now restored as high-capacity tourist destinations, Ellis Island and Angel Island immigration stations receive more visitors annually than they ever did as border control facilities.[22] They have, in an odd reversal, become imbued with the capacity to neutralize "foreignness" and are celebrated as transformative places or stages upon which to display the immigrant's intense desire for their destination: a desire that visitors are invited to participate in vicariously.[23] Ellis Island's proximity to New York, the Statue of Liberty and its popular association with the huddled masses melting-pot narrative triggered its conversion from abandoned border control facility to museum and tourist destination more rapidly and at a grander scale than at Angel Island. Ellis Island's thirty-three structures were declared surplus to requirements in 1955. Ten years later it became part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. It opened to the public in 1976 with fifty thousand visitors touring the main arrivals building that year, increasing to recent visitation levels of at least four million people annually. A campaign to raise funds for the facility's restoration began in the early 1980s led by President Reagan and Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca. The fundraising continues to this day, meeting costs for expansion and

development of the museum, a Family Immigration History Center, and rehabilitation of the island's hospital complex and recreation areas.

The recent global pandemic, however, together with restrictions on travel and the risks associated with crowded spaces, has threatened the viability of Ellis Island and Angel Island at a time when their messages are even more relevant. Angel Island Immigration Station in particular has made efforts to adapt its programming and continue its activities with virtual exhibitions, fundraising campaigns, and educational events. Anniversaries of key events such as the rediscovery of hundreds of poems carved by detained Chinese immigrants into the detention barracks' walls trigger outreach and awareness-raising activities. For instance, the month of May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, June is Immigrant Heritage Month. Moreover, regular connections are made between the historical events and experiences of migrants processed through the island and an array of present-day incarceration-related issues. Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation's partnership with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Migration Museums Network is one example that worked to promote the site's contemporary relevance celebrating International Migrant Day. The foundation's statement of allyship with the Black community is another:

<EXT>

As we have all continued to navigate the impacts of COVID-19 and the increasing xenophobia directed against Chinese and Asian communities, we have also witnessed the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Ahmed Arbery, Breonna Taylor (and too many others in the Black Community whose names may or may not get mentioned in the news). They remind us that our nation still does not treat all communities with respect and justice. . . . AIISF remains committed to helping to ensure that our nation keeps its promise of liberty and freedom. AIISF will continue to explore programming that lifts up the histories and diversities of immigrants whose journeys from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Central and South America,

Europe and Australia brought them through the former U.S. Immigration Station at Angel Island.[24]

</EXT>

This statement reveals an ambivalence common to many heritage enterprises dealing with issues that are hotly contested. While the core function to denounce racism and fight for social justice is clear, the statement nonetheless sustains the national narrative of freedom, liberty, and promise invoking the supercitizen indirectly. Across from the barracks facing north, a Public Health Service hospital built in 1910, closed in 1946, and saved from demolition by the local Asian American community, has been converted into the soon to be opened Angel Island Immigration Museum. This heritage facility connects the uncomfortable history of racist exclusion to broader policies around West Coast immigration as a whole. COVID-19, however, has exerted financial pressure on the already strained ferry company connecting Angel Island to the mainland, leading to a drastic reduction in provision and threatening regular public access to these sites entirely.

In contrast, Ellis Island in New York, despite embedding a critical historiography within its interpretative programming, seems to have been relatively quiet in connecting its past to the present moment of infection anxiety and heightened border control. This leaves space for others to make their own comparisons that may not be fully in line with the national monument's celebration of diversity. Writing in the online newspaper the *Hill* about the COVID-19 pandemic, opinion contributor Matt O'Brien calls for the facilities of Ellis Island, Angel Island, and East Boston Immigration Stations to be reinstated to "combat biological threats from abroad":

<EXT>

Our policymakers should take cues from their Ellis Island forebears and take appropriate action to make public health surveillance a regular part of immigration inspection and vetting procedures. The health of both the American public and immigrants depends upon it. Public health security is national security.[25]

</EXT>

Much of the actual quarantining that took place on Ellis Island occurred on the south side of the facility, and this remains relatively underdeveloped and less accessible to tourists. While "hard hat tours are possible," a squeamishness about the material objects and architectures of incarceration is palpable. By contrast, the Registry Room on the second floor of the main immigration station building had much of its benching and all of its internal fencing removed to provide a more "comfortable" experience of processing for the visitor.

<A>Anticipating the Covid Heritage of the Future</A>

In contrast to the commemoration of quarantine at Ellis Island, Angel Island, and other historic border control facilities around the world, the commemoration of COVID-19 is occurring without the gap of many years of forgetting, abandonment, and ruin. Indeed, memorializing COVID-19 began while the pandemic was underway and well before the end is in sight. Therefore, there are both similarities and differences in the way these forms of heritage make sense of the content they cover. First, the similarities. The modes of commemoration currently emerging with respect to COVID-19, such as ad hoc memorials, handclapping for carers, and efforts to collect and archive pandemic-related objects and experiences, sometimes repeat logics of health and national identity familiar to established migration heritage. They conjure into the public imagination an ideal citizen-subject or national archetype who is aware of an external threat and aware that their own freedoms depend on the sacrifice of others. The appeal to unity through collective burden, however, works to hide socially uneven vulnerabilities to disease and death and also obscures the kleptocratic way in which funding for testing, treatment, and vaccine programs were allocated. In his treatise *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton explains that social memory is maintained from one generation to the next through "the performance by celebrants of proscribed procedures, [and] the re-animation of prototypes."[26] The late British army officer Captain (and subsequently knighted) Sir

Tom Moore might be identified as a national prototype for this pandemic in the UK. Before tragically dying with coronavirus in February 2021, he raised £33 million for National Health Service charities by walking laps of his garden and captured the public's imagination by affirming national traits such as the stiff upper lip, persistence, and good cheer. Front-line healthcare workers and vaccine scientists are common alternatives elsewhere. Another example is Dr. Li Wenliang of Wuhan Central Hospital, one of the first to sound the alarm about a new virus before eventually succumbing to the disease. His final post on social media platform Weibo has become a living memorial attracting millions of messages of support for speaking out against pressure from authority.

As well as similarities, there are important differences between past and current forms of heritage. One key difference is the relative speed at which personal tragedies are refashioned into mourn-able public resources. A sense of urgency in the collective push to commemorate victims of COVID-19 has produced a more piecemeal, ad hoc, and hence unpredictable politics of memory. Faith leaders, politicians, and family members of victims hurry to integrate their own sense of loss into a broader, more purposeful narrative. The deceased might become a warning to others or a tribute to self-sacrifice. Jenny Edkins notes this rush to remember with respect to the trauma of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. [27] Other scholars have considered the speed at which heritage making serves as a social emollient. Spontaneous memorials prefigure and sometimes awkwardly coincide with state-sanctioned ceremonies that are less emotionally volatile (e.g., the controversy surrounding merchandising sold at Ground Zero cited by Hurley and Trimarco or the difficulties of commemorating through consumerism and kitsch at the Oklahoma City National Memorial).[28]

The National COVID Memorial Wall outside St Thomas' Hospital in London (fig. 4) features 150,000 hand-drawn pink and red hearts to represent those who have died after contracting the virus and stretches nearly five hundred meters between Westminster and Lambeth Bridges.

According to the *National* newspaper, “It’s organic, not planned, it hasn’t been worked out by a committee, and that makes it all the more powerful.”[29]

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG4>

Another key difference between established migration and quarantine heritage and emerging heritage-making activities linked to COVID-19 is the self-consciousness of living through a significant moment in social history. Objects and stories of lockdown are being collected in anticipation of their future historical import. In the United States, the Anacostia Community Museum, in its Moments of Resilience online initiative, collects stories from individuals about their resilience during the pandemic, and expanded this to include resilience in the face of racial injustice.[30] Similarly, the National Museum of American History’s Pandemic Perspectives events connect COVID-19 with relevant social issues such as mask wearing, using Zoom, essential-worker rights, vaccination, Black Lives Matter, and voting during a pandemic.[31]

More object-orientated initiatives include the New-York Historical Society’s “race to collect ephemera” by gathering artifacts as diverse as homemade masks, store closure signs, hand sanitizer, early PPE, and a street artist’s portrait of White House chief medical advisor, Dr. Fauci. The Museum of London has followed suit with its exhibition *CollectingCOVID* to tell future generations about life in the capital during the pandemic. The exhibition has already amassed more than five hundred items, including key and essential worker support signs, diaries, masks, and photographs. No longer is heritage the result of what remains after years of neglect. Neither is its meaning dictated by the passing of time.

In recent months, events and objects have become instantly historical as the gap between past and present has collapsed. It is as if producing COVID-19 as history helps us to move on. Museum scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett wrote of “the reciprocity of disappearance and exhibition,” the tendency to value and collect and display material culture only after it has ceased to be contemporaneous.[32] Our eager memorialization of COVID-19 takes that process as its core

endeavor, as if heritage making puts the virus and its associated threats behind us. And yet heritage is no substitute for more equitable vaccine distribution and investment in global health. Making COVID-19 into a memory thus tends to reinforce Western-centric presumptions that the situation is nearing its end rather than continuing to disproportionately effect poorer countries where access to health care is not guaranteed.

Yet another difference from the well-established heritage sites of migration and quarantine is that today's memorial practices are occurring not in a moment of social inclusion and public investment but in the context of a widespread rejection by some in society of traditional heritage, particularly imperial statuary and heroic sculptural forms. Current campaigns for permanent memorials like that spearheaded by the conservative-supporting *Daily Mail* newspaper in the UK for a "magnificent memorial to 127,000 COVID-19 victims in St Paul's Cathedral" is endorsed by faith leaders, grieving family members, and Prince Charles. But this cannot be divorced from our febrile climate of statue toppling and might indeed be considered a way to recuperate the traditional memorial form with a cause everyone can get behind.[33]

A final difference is in the global financial outlook that could precipitate heritage formats very different from the well-funded restoration projects we are familiar with. According to new research by UNESCO and the International Council of Museums, 13 percent of museums worldwide may never reopen after the COVID-19 shutdown.[34] The funding landscape in this emerging commemorative era will be very different, and we already see signs of adaptation. Established heritage venues continue their activities with virtual exhibitions that connect their mission to aspects of the pandemic and serve as venues for activism and social therapy. The Smithsonian Institution blogged that museums can be "multi-vocal" and not simply represent the values of the nation state:

Museums can serve their communities by providing a supportive space—even when physical spaces may be closed—for personal reflection and shared connections. The events of the past year have shared who we are as a people and directed the course of history with several new challenges and opportunities ahead.[35]

</EXT>

Public memory researcher Timothy Stone argues that spaces of memory have a significant responsibility in portraying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but who will write the official account and how will its meaning be policed in a context of such disquiet and uncertainty?[36] Stone draws our attention to the Plague Columns throughout Vienna built by Emperor Leopold I that celebrate the end of the plague in the seventeenth century with angels ascending a baroque cloud-like column to remind residents of God's mercy (fig. 5). Today's moments marking the end of COVID-19 will more likely be modest secular tributes to scientific breakthroughs or online memorials for loved ones lost to the disease.

<INSERT COT202201007_FIG5>

An important part of heritage making is the role of "forgetting." Just as the diverse experiences of Angel Island and Ellis Island have been selected to emphasize the promise of arrival, aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic will be consigned to the dustbin of history. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction* provides clues about how this may be organized.[37] He begins with post–World War II Germany choosing to forget the bombing-out of almost every town and city—in its films, its literature, and its popular culture. It may be that in our rush to collect vast quantities of ephemera, we are unable to forget. Government authorities may wish to downplay their missteps, whether that be the early reluctance to implement stay-at-home orders that costs thousands of lives, the fatalistic notion of herd immunity, or the persistent rule breaking by those in power.

It has become clear that appeals to national identity and a shared spirit of sacrifice is as much a way to deflect from civil unrest as it is a public health strategy. So what stories will survive

as symbols of our current predicament? What monumental places can we expect to emerge from this current situation in the future? And how will that heritage frame the xenophobic sentiments, the anti-immigrant, and particularly anti-Asian, violence that the pandemic has brought to the surface? Just as established forms of heritage about quarantine and migration have become venues for academic critique and social science research, we need now to extend the analysis to race and identity politics of the heritage of COVID-19.

<A>Conclusion</A>

Of course, any assessment about the shape our future COVID-19 heritage might take is speculative. We can, however, express caution that the rush to memorialize may obscure this pandemic's persistence elsewhere while emphasizing solidarity over instances of inequality and division. We can also assume that those with the most power will use heritage to establish their legitimacy, and we need to pay close attention to how this is done. Heritage can never present the past in an objective neutral way, but it needs do more than echo the politics of the day and platform the loudest voices. Our responsibility to "the past," and to site visitors, requires judgment and sensitivity alongside an informed and respectful translation of stories that critique racism and lean toward social justice. Sociologist Ulrich Beck identifies a condition of "emancipatory catastrophism" as a hidden upside of global risk.[38] When a civilization faces existential crisis, positive "common goods" can emerge in a "reformation of modes of thought, of lifestyles and consumer habits, of law, economy, science and politics" as a way to avoid destruction.[39] In this pandemic our moral compass has been redrawn as nations share research, equipment, and infrastructure. It will be fascinating, in time, to see how this spirit of cooperation and mutual support might offset the more nationalistic impulses baked in to our heritage of quarantine thus far.

</TXT>

<A>Notes</A>

[1] "China's Coronavirus Response Was a 'Classic Communist Disinformation Effort': Pompeo," ABC NEWS, accessed February 18, 2022, https://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/video/chinas-coronavirus-response-classic-communist-disinformation-effort-pompeo-70478299.

[2] Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2018; Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[3] Laurence Gouriévidis, *Museums and Migration: History, Memory and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2014); Claire Sutherland, "Leaving and Longing: Migration Museums as Nation-Building Sites," *Museum and Society* 12, no. 2 (April 2014): 118–31; Christopher Whitehead, Katherine Lloyd, Susannah Eckersley, and Rhiannon Mason, eds., *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe: Peoples, Places and Identities* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[4] Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[5] Paul Pettitt, *The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial* (London: Routledge, 2010) .

[6] M. Mark Stolarik, ed., *Forgotten Doors: Other Ports of Entry to the United States* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1988).

[7] Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, HR 5804, 47th Cong., 1st sess. (May 6, 1882), Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789–1996, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives, accessed March 15, 2022, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act.

[8] Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), 112.

[9] Nayan Shah, "The Empire of Medical Investigation on Angel Island California," in *Quarantine Local and Global Histories*, ed. Alison Bashford (London: Palgrave, 2018), 104.

[10] Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, and Deviance in San Francisco*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

[11] "Quarantine Station," Angel Island Conservancy, accessed February 18, 2022, https://angelisland.org/history/quarantine-station.

[12] Alison Bashford, *Quarantine: Local and Global Histories* (London: Palgrave, 2016), 4.

[13] Marie Gillespie, "COVID-19 Chronicles from the Margins," COV19: Chronicles from the Margins, accessed March 2, 2022, https://cov19chronicles.com.

[14] Bashford, *Quarantine*, 4.

[15] Tad Tuleja, *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997); Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2016).; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country—Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[16] Constance de Saint-Laurent, "Uses of the Past: History as a Resource for the Present," *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science* 53 (March 2019): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-018-9463-5.

[17] Neville Meaney, "Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography," *Australian Historical Studies* 32, no. 116 (2001): 76–90; James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

[18] Task and Finish Group, *The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration*, November 2020, revised December 2021, accessed February 18, 2022, https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/the-slave-trade-and-the-british-empire-an-audit-of-commemoration-in-wales.pdf.; Sally Anne Huxtable, Christo Kefalas, and Emma Slocombe, eds., *Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery* (London: National Trust, 2020), accessed February 18, 2022, https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/documents/colonialism-and-historic-slavery-report.pdf; Jessica Murray, "Politicians Should Not 'Weaponise' UK History, Says Colonialism Researcher," *Guardian*, February 22, 2021, accessed January 10, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/feb/22/politicians-should-not-weaponise-uk-history-says-colonialism-researcher.

[19] Ministry of Housing, "New Legal Protection for English Heritage," press release, January 17, 2021, accessed February 18, 2022, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage.

[20] Krista Maglen, *The English System: Quarantine, Immigration and the Making of a Port Sanitary Zone* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[21] Krista Maglen, "'The First Line of Defence': British Quarantine and the Port Sanitary Authorities in the Nineteenth Century," *Social History of Medicine* 15, no. 3 (December 2002): 413–28.

[22] "Ellis Island Timeline," History, last modified April 20, 2021, accessed February 18, 2022, https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/ellis-island.

[23] Gareth Hoskins, "On Arrival: Memory and Temporality at Ellis Island, New York," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30, no.6 (January 2012): 1011–27.

[24] "Black Lives Matter," Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, June 11, 2020, accessed February 18, 2022, https://files.constantcontact.com/f93b06e9001/421678fc-ba9d-46a8-9119-273130126667.pdf.

[25] Matt O'Brien, "An Ellis Island Lesson for the Coronavirus Era," *Hill*, September 4, 2020, accessed February 18, 2022, https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/491433-an-ellis-island-lesson-for-the-coronavirus-era.

[26] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 63.

[27] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[28] Molly Hurley and James Trimarco, "Morality and Merchandise: Vendors, Visitors and Police at New York City's Ground Zero," *Critique of Anthropology* 24, no.1 (March 2004): 51–78; Martia Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

[29] Laura Webster, "Covid Memorial Wall: Boris Johnson Is Asked to Visit 'Moving' London Site," *National*, April 21, 2021, accessed May 7, 2021, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19248846.covid-memorial-wall-boris-johnson-asked-visit-moving-london-site.

[30] Ashley Naranjo and Melanie Adams, "How Museums Can Be Spaces for Reflection and Connection (Even with Their Doors Closed)," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 12, 2021, accessed February 18, 2022, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2021/02/12/how-museums-can-be-spaces-reflection-and-connection-even-their-doors-closed/.

[31] "Pandemic Perspectives: Stories Through Collections," National Museum of American History, accessed February 18, 2022, https://americanhistory.si.edu/pandemic-perspectives.

[32] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 56.

[33] Inderdeep Bains, "Covid Memorial Donations Reach £300k in Just Two Weeks as 9,000 Readers Donate to Campaign for Monument," *Daily Mail,* May 19, 2021, accessed February 16, 2022, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9593925/Daily-Mail-St-Pauls-Cathedrals-Covid-19-remembrance-campaign-reaches-300-000-donations.html.

[34] "COVID-19: UNESCO and ICOM Concerned about the Situation Faced by the World's Museums." UNESCO, May 18, 2020, accessed February 18, 2022, https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-unesco-and-icom-concerned-about-situation-faced-worlds-museums.

[35] Naranjo and Adams, "How Museums Can Be Spaces for Reflection and Connection."

[36] Timothy Stone, "Memorializing American Public Health Crises: Public Memory and Physical Commemoration of Infections Disease Outbreaks," November 29 2021, accessed March 3, 2022, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e569507af6f847929ba0a9996ad2bc8c.

[37] Winfried Georg Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (London: Notting Hill Editions, 2012).

[38] Ulrich Beck, "Emancipatory Catastrophism: What Does it Mean to Climate Change and Risk Society?" *Current Sociology* 63, no.1 (2015): 75–88.

[39] Ibid., 79.