

## Introduction

### Meaning, Memory, and Monument

*For as long as England endures, pilgrims from the mother-land will journey to the Memorial Garden that encloses the Well of Cawnpore*

– Edwin Hodder, 1882.<sup>1</sup>

*We wandered about the grounds of the battered, shell-shattered, bullet-studded Residency ... how proud we felt that night that we were British!*

– John Foster Fraser, 1899.<sup>2</sup>

*A very living interest, and all that pathos and romance which belong to a deed of great heroism, are associated with the Ridge at Delhi*

– Sir Fredrick Treves, 1905.<sup>3</sup>

The Cawnpore Well, Lucknow Residency, and Delhi Ridge were sacred places within the British imagination of India. Sanctified by the colonial administration in commemoration of victory over the ‘Sepoy Mutiny of 1857’, they were read as emblems of empire which embodied the central tenets of sacrifice, fortitude, and military prowess that underpinned Britain’s imperial project in the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> So central were these locations to British conceptions of India that Brigadier H. Bullock, head of the Graves and Monuments Section of the British High Commission, could still note their overwhelming significance as late as 1948. Writing specifically about the Cawnpore Well, Bullock claimed that it was still seen as ‘hallowed ground’ and was ‘one of the few things in India that every Briton has heard of’.<sup>5</sup> Whilst these sites acted as nodal points within colonial discourse, they have gradually been incorporated into India’s national story. The Lucknow Residency, for example, was designated a site of national importance in a ceremony marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of Indian Independence in 1972, during which the Residency

<sup>1</sup> Hodder, *Cities of the World*, p. 199.    <sup>2</sup> Fraser, *Round the World on a Wheel*, pp. 215–217.

<sup>3</sup> Treves, *The Other Side of the Lantern*, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> To avoid unnecessary confusion, this book retains the original place names as they are spelled in the primary sources.

<sup>5</sup> Brigadier H. Bullock, Minute Sheet, 18 November 1948, Minute Sheet, File 11/1b Historical Monuments in India: Mutiny Memorial Well at Cawnpore, fol. 43, OIOC, IOR/R/4/84, p. 43.

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was 'declared to be saturated with the blood of the Indian Martyrs, who had thus laid the First Foundation of the Freedom Fight, discounting the erstwhile belief that it was reminiscent of British Glory'.<sup>6</sup> Rededicated in honour of what is now officially known in India as the First War of Independence, and thus sacred to the memory of those who revolted against colonial rule, rather than those who saved it, the Cawnpore Well, Lucknow Residency, and Delhi Ridge are today proud signifiers of Indian nationalism.<sup>7</sup>

This book tells the story of these commemorative landscapes alongside other practices of memorialisation dedicated to the events of 1857 and, in so doing, uses them as prisms through which to view over 150 years of Indian history. Employing a methodology that sees memory as an inherently contingent and contested process rooted within the broader sociopolitical terrain, this book traces the ways in which commemoration responded to the demands of successive historical moments by shaping the events of 1857 from the perspective of the ever-changing present. From post-mutiny reconciliation, to the development of late-Victorian popular imperialism, and from the politics of post-war decolonisation, through to the rise of identity politics in post-colonial India, commemoration has consistently reflected and refracted the hopes and fears, aspirations and exigencies that defined the period. Accordingly, as the following chapters explore, the shifting practices of commemoration demanded by each of these historical contexts enables us to better understand a range of questions pertaining to identity, legitimacy, and power as successive generations (re)produce and (re)package the past for mass consumption in the constantly evolving present.

Whilst the last thirty years has seen commemoration become a focal point for studies examining a broad range of subjects including Europe's world wars, the holocaust, and the former Soviet Union, the memory building projects developed in colonial settings have been understudied.<sup>8</sup> This is a deficiency within the literature which is made all the more surprising when one considers that commemoration played a crucial role within the imperial project. An important component of empire's ideological apparatus, commemoration

<sup>6</sup> B. N. Chaubey to the Director General ASI, 17 August 1972, 'Improvements of Lucknow residency premises suggestion by B. N. Chaubey', NAI, ASI/HQ/Monuments/26/97/72-M.

<sup>7</sup> The nomenclature applied to the events of 1857 by different people at different times reflects divergent interpretations of the nature and causes of the conflict. In a very real sense, those commemorating the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and those commemorating the First War of Independence are memorialising fundamentally different events and their respective discussions require different terminology. This book therefore employs the most appropriate language in any given context.

<sup>8</sup> Though this area remains understudied, a number of important texts should be noted including the collected essays published in Geppert and Muller (eds.), *Sites of Imperial Memory*; Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*; Rothermund (ed.), *Memories of Post-Imperial Nations*; Evershed, *Ghosts of the Somme*. For studies focusing on the legacy of empire in South Asia, memory of partition has become an important subject. See for example, Pandey, *Remembering Partition*; Saint, *Witnessing Partition*.

ceremonies, and public monuments were routinely deployed by European colonial powers working alongside an informal network of elite actors to propagate an official memory of empire. Developed for consumption by coloniser, as much as for the colonised, these programmes of commemoration constructed a licensed and self-aggrandising narrative of empire's past that, at any one time, both justified its existence in the present and legitimised its continued expansion in the future.

This ideological function of colonial commemoration is apparent from even the very earliest practices of memorialisation to be conducted by the British in India. Constructed in the immediate aftermath of Robert Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey and marking, therefore, a crucial juncture in the history of Britain's relationship with India, the first colonial monument to be built by the British on the subcontinent was explicitly concerned with justifying Britain's shift from trading power to territorial power. Taking the form of an obelisk, the monument commemorated the deaths of 123 innocent British prisoners who died in the notorious 'Black Hole of Calcutta', before going on to celebrate the fact that this 'Horrid Act of Violence' was avenged by 'his Majesty's Arms, under the conduct of Vice Admiral Watson and Coll. Clive'.<sup>9</sup> So construed, the Battle of Plassey is not remembered as it might well have been as a victory of conquest which was waged by the East India Company (EIC) against a legitimate local ruler with the intention of re-establishing lucrative markets and bolstering profits, but the conflict is instead justified and framed as a reaction to the cruel and merciless crimes of a tyrannical despot.<sup>10</sup>

This monument, marking the foundation of British superiority in India, was soon joined over the course of the following decades by additional statues dedicated to those who consolidated and extended British power in India. Accordingly, from the start of the nineteenth century onwards, monuments dedicated to men such as Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Mornington, the Marquis of Wellesley, began to become increasingly common sights in cities such as Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay.<sup>11</sup> Portrayed as great leaders who had succeeded in cementing British control of India, these monuments not only celebrated such men for their victories and successes in the name of Britain but also underscored the moral good they brought to India. Helping depict empire as a righteous, and sometimes even divinely ordained, mission that set out to rescue the grateful inhabitants of Asia,

<sup>9</sup> Inscription on monument. For more on this monument, see Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*. For an analogous case of colonial commemoration, see Brown, 'Inscribing Colonial Monumentality', pp. 91–113.

<sup>10</sup> For more on this monument and analysis of the (re)narration of the events it commemorates, see Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire*.

<sup>11</sup> For more on this period of commemoration in India, see Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, Chapter 9: 'India: Empire Building as a Moral Imperative', pp. 270–321.

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Africa, and the New World from the enthralls of a primitive and timeless barbarism, such statues conformed to empire's metanarrative which, from the early sixteenth century onwards, helped legitimise the colonial endeavour. Among the monuments constructed by the British in India over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, it is perhaps that dedicated to Lord Bentinck which most clearly embodies this. Portraying a governor-general who, as the memorial inscription tells its readers, 'infused into oriental despotism the spirit of British freedom, who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed, who abolished cruel rites, who effaced humiliating distinctions, who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion', Lord Bentinck is depicted as a ruler who generously laboured on behalf of India in an attempt to replace barbarism and superstition with the values and ethos of Europe.<sup>12</sup>

The first half of the nineteenth century therefore saw a range of memorials constructed in prominent public spaces dedicated to notable events and individuals considered worthy of public memory, but it was from the mid-nineteenth century onwards that the construction of colonial monuments reached its zenith in India. The popularity of monumentalisation in India during this period may well be attributed to a number of local and specific causes, not least the assumption of power by the Crown in 1858, but it also reflects broader trends in how nations were choosing to perpetuate the memory of significant events and individuals. The 1850s are often seen as the start of 'statue-mania' in Britain, a European-wide phenomenon that also found resonance in North America, and which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century and lasted at least until the outbreak of the Great War.<sup>13</sup> Within the British context, the popularity of public monumentalisation might be attributed to the widespread desire to commemorate the death, and celebrate the life, of Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel.<sup>14</sup> Following the great statesman's untimely death in 1851, after falling from his horse at Hyde Park Corner, a great cross-section of Britain's middle classes came together to mourn the death of a man whose life they saw as synonymous with their own rise to power and affluence in the first half of the century.<sup>15</sup> With monuments dedicated to the memory of Peel becoming especially profuse over the following decades in manufacturing and commercial centres across Britain, the commemorative statue became an increasingly popular form of public memorialisation utilised to mark any

<sup>12</sup> Additional details of this monument can be found in Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, pp. 46–48; Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, pp. 313–15; Groseclose, *British Sculpture and the Company Raj*, pp. 120–21.

<sup>13</sup> For a useful overview of 'Statue-mania' across Europe and North America, see Curtis, *Sculpture 1900–1945*, Chapter 2, 'The Tradition of the Monument', pp. 37–73.

<sup>14</sup> Read, 'The British Contribution to Statue-mania in the nineteenth century', pp. 370–77.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

number of prominent individuals and events over this period.<sup>16</sup> Nor was this trend isolated to Britain. With the monument ideal spreading to British territories throughout the empire, an increasing number of monuments were commissioned for Britain's colonial territories including India.<sup>17</sup>

Although this period of colonial commemoration remains an area but little studied, Mary Ann Steggles has been at the forefront of attempts to catalogue such monuments. Focusing on British monumentalisation in India, Steggles has shown the extent to which cities such as Calcutta had a rich strain of memorials generously erected throughout their cityscapes, making these colonial commemorative landscapes some of the most underappreciated examples of nineteenth-century public art anywhere in the world. Whilst many of the monuments erected by the British were designed and built by local artisans, a thriving trade developed between Anglo-Indian and European artists, who were commissioned to produce some of the grandest and most significant memorials constructed in the subcontinent. This trade brought statues and memorials designed by well-known sculptors including Baron Carlo Marochetti, Sir Thomas Brock, and Matthew Noble to urban India's many vistas, *maidans*, and public parks.<sup>18</sup> Though successive generations of colonial administrators continued to prove popular subjects for the artists who worked on these commissions, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, two additional motifs grew in significance.

The first of these was the British monarch. Developing in tandem with Queen Victoria emerging as the figurehead of a vast empire in the years which followed her elevation to Empress of India in 1877, statues of the imperial monarch became an extremely common sight in cities across the subcontinent. From Rawalpindi in the north to Bengaluru in the south and from Rajkot in the east to Kolkata in the west, dozens of monuments dedicated to Queen Victoria were erected in India over the course of her lifetime, as well as during the years that followed.<sup>19</sup> Alongside the various pageants and ceremonies which were hosted by successive Viceroys to celebrate Jubilees, coronations, and Royal visits, monuments dedicated to Queen Victoria and her successors embodied the veneration of the British monarchy that developed from the late nineteenth century onwards.<sup>20</sup> Acting as a unifying symbol, the imperial monarch made it possible to imagine Britain's Indian empire as a regimented and consolidated

<sup>16</sup> For useful discussions on the politics of commemoration in Britain during the latter nineteenth century, see the collection of essays in Pickering and Tyrrell (eds.), *Contested Sites*.

<sup>17</sup> Steggles and Barnes, *British Sculpture in India*.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> For details of the many statues of Queen Victoria which were sculpted in Britain and erected in India, see Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, pp. 178–214.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the relationship between monarchism and empire, see MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*. See also Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*.

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system into which princely rulers were integrated through their allegiance to the Crown. In this respect, it was those monuments that were financed in part or in whole by Indian princes which proved the most significant. An act of reverence and deference to the British monarch, such statues stood as enduring symbols of native loyalty to the established order.

Just as the emergence of statues dedicated to members of the Royal family marked the widespread veneration of the British monarchy that developed in the late nineteenth century, monuments constructed to honour the lives and deeds of imperial soldier heroes captured the growth of popular militarism which spread throughout the empire during approximately the same period.<sup>21</sup> Idealised symbols of masculinity which were represented so as to embody all the attributes of the late nineteenth-century soldier hero, such monuments were erected to honour the glorious deeds of valiant British soldiers or else immortalise the contributions of whole regiments who took part in one or another of the various colonial ‘small wars’ that characterised the age.<sup>22</sup> Though there was certainly no shortage of military engagements to commemorate on the subcontinent, and still more British soldier heroes whose legacies seemed to demand memorialisation, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 stands out for the unprecedented outpouring of commemorative attention it received. The subject of enormous commemoration ceremonies and the inspiration for numerous statues and large-scale public monuments, the mutiny of 1857 became a cultural lodestone in the late Victorian era and continued to grip British attention in India until the very last days of the Raj.

Though the mutiny of 1857 would quickly emerge as the most commemorated military conflict of the era, it started out as little more than a skirmish in the garrison town of Meerut, before rapidly growing into the most serious armed challenge faced by the British empire in the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Spreading quickly to neighbouring stations before engulfing much of north India, the mutiny brought violence to many of the region’s most important towns and cities before the colonial superpower succeeded in crushing the rebellion with military resources brought to bear from across the empire, enabling the British administration to formally declare an end to hostilities in mid-1858.<sup>24</sup> Even before the conflict was over, the mutiny became the subject of considerable attention for writers approaching the subject from a range of

<sup>21</sup> For more on Britain’s changing attitude towards the military from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as well as its relationship with imperialism, see the collection of essays brought together in MacKenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850–1950*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. See also Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*.

<sup>23</sup> One of the best accounts of how the mutiny developed in Meerut can be found in Palmer, *The Mutiny Outbreak at Meerut in 1857*. See also Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857*.

<sup>24</sup> Though hostilities were formally brought to an end in mid-1858, the final embers of rebellion would not be extinguished until early 1859.

perspectives.<sup>25</sup> In addition to ubiquitous narrative histories which continue to be written to the present day, those analysing the causes and nature of the uprising number among the most abundant.<sup>26</sup> Focusing on a diverse range of issues including the professional grievances of sepoys, real and imagined religious violations committed by the EIC, and the political and social changes of the previous decades, this body of literature has helped us understand the dynamics of the uprising in interesting and informative ways.<sup>27</sup> If the causes and nature of the uprising have attracted interest from scholars concerned with imperial historiography, then the same has been true for the mutiny's impact on colonial rule. Focusing on post-mutiny trajectories of British rule, this body of literature has investigated the numerous ways in which the mutiny influenced the emerging shape of colonial policies in India in particular and the empire in general.<sup>28</sup>

Though the causes, nature, and material implications of the uprising remain important subjects for historians, the last forty years have seen the emergence of scholarship concerned with the mutiny's impact on British imperial culture. As this body of work has highlighted, the mutiny became an almost obsessively rehearsed story and a central component of colonial identity. Focusing on the written word and analysing how the mutiny was recorded in Britain's literary imagination, scholars working in this area have analysed an enormous number of texts often written by some of the most prominent authors of Victorian England. Poets including Lord Tennyson and Christina Rossetti, historians such as Sir George Trevelyan and Charles Ball, authors from Rudyard Kipling to Charles Dickens, and popular novelists such as George Alfred Henty and Meadows Taylor each contributed to a vast archive that has become the focus for studies interested in Britain's literary imagination of 1857.<sup>29</sup> Though far from identical in nature, the theoretical frameworks adopted by these studies have overwhelmingly been shaped by post-colonial theory and therefore profess a debt of gratitude to the methodological approach

<sup>25</sup> For an excellent study of British debate on the causes and nature of the mutiny during the conflict itself, see Malik, *1857: War of Independence or Clash of Civilisations?*

<sup>26</sup> For a good recent narrative history, see David, *The Indian Mutiny*.

<sup>27</sup> For recent contributions to this debate, see David, *The Bengal Army and the Outbreak of the Indian Mutiny*; Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857*; Chakravarty, 'Mutiny, War, or Small War? Revisiting an Old Debate', pp. 135–46, (London: SAGE, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Classic statements on the impact of 1857 on colonial policy in India can be found in Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*; Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*. For an inciteful recent analysis of how 1857 had a broader transformative effect on colonial policy throughout the empire, see Bender, *The 1857 Uprising and the British Empire*.

<sup>29</sup> Trevelyan, *Cawnpore*; Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny*; Tennyson, *The Defence of Lucknow*; Rossetti, 'In the Round Tower at Jhansi, June 8, 1857', p. 160; Kipling, 'The Undertakers', pp. 234–55; Dickens and Collins, 'The Perils of Certain English Prisoners', pp. 237–327; Taylor, *Seeta*; Henty, *In Times of Peril*.



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pioneered by Edward Said in his ground-breaking text, *Orientalism*.<sup>30</sup> Heavily influenced by post-structuralist theory and especially the power/knowledge nexus developed in the work of Michael Foucault, Said set out to show that the west's hegemonic discursive construction of the east was an essential technology of colonial expansion.<sup>31</sup> Writing in this vein, a slew of studies produced by literary theorists including Patrick Brantlinger, Gautam Chakravarty, and Grace Moore have interrogated Britain's literary archive to better understand how Britain's literary representation of the conflict contributed to colonial discourse and thus helped support European imperialism in the decades that followed.<sup>32</sup>

This vast and voluminous literary outpouring occasioned by 1857 was nevertheless matched by an unprecedented period of colonial commemoration. Focusing on monuments dedicated to 1857, as well as commemoration ceremonies held to mark anniversaries of the uprising, this study engages with a different, though no less significant, repository of meaning and memory that both helped shape and reflect how the mutiny was remembered in the decades that followed. Indeed, the cultural significance of 1857 is readily seen if one focuses on the practices of commemoration dedicated to the mutiny. In addition to the many small and localised commemorative acts performed on a largely ad hoc basis in conflict zones across India by both soldiers and civilians in the mutiny's immediate aftermath, the first plans for large-scale commemoration and monumentalisation began to be discussed long before the conflict was even over.<sup>33</sup> This early desire to memorialise the mutiny did not subside with British victory, rather the number and the complexity of proposals to commemorate the mutiny grew exponentially over the following decades leading to the construction of mnemonic landscapes in areas most closely associated with the conflict. Among these, however, it was the Cawnpore Well, Lucknow Residency, and Delhi Ridge, which succeeded in transcending their local environs to become three of the best known, and most instantly recognisable sites, and sights, of empire. When James Ricalton came to compile *India Through the Stereoscope: A Journey through Hindustan*, some fifty years after the mutiny, the author

<sup>30</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>31</sup> See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, Alan Sheridan (Trans.) (London: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>32</sup> Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, see Chapter 7, 'The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857', pp. 199–224; Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination*; Moore, *Dickens and Empire*. For a very different approach to the subject, see Herbert, *War of No Pity*.

<sup>33</sup> Among the first organisations to consider how the conflict should be commemorated was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which began discussing the subject in October 1857. Minutes of the Standing Committee of the SPG for 29 October 1857, 'Minutes of the Standing Committee, 1857-9', Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, p. 56, USPG/Standing Committee Minutes 1857-9/26. For more on this proposal, along with other early discussions on large-scale commemoration, see Chapter 2 of this book.



no doubt thought it only natural that he should include these mutiny monuments among the 100 most important sites in India.<sup>34</sup> If such sources provided remote access to these commemorative landscapes for the many, the monuments became popular destinations for the more wealthy or adventurous who wanted to personally bear witness to them. Travelling to South Asia in order to fulfil work commitments or visiting the subcontinent purely for leisure, thousands of individuals considered visits to these sacred sites to be among the most important components of their travel itinerary within India.<sup>35</sup>

Visitors to these sites did more than passively experience them, rather these sacred spaces were (re)developed by successive generations impelled by the need to negotiate the past in light of the constantly evolving present and accordingly, the last British memorial dedicated to the conflict was not unveiled until 1938.<sup>36</sup> Even then, it is likely that monumentalisation could have continued into the 1940s had the government not decided that further commemoration should be discouraged owing to the politically precarious condition of India.<sup>37</sup> Nor did commemorative attention cease with formal Indian Independence in 1947. In keeping with a broader discourse on 1857 which awards it the distinction of being the prime mover within a linear nationalist narrative of the Indian Independence Movement, sites of colonial memory such as the Cawnpore Well, Lucknow Residency, and Delhi Ridge have been transformed into nationalist monuments celebrating the ‘First War of Independence’. Remembered as a heroic, if unsuccessful story of resistance to colonial rule which is as replete with iconic national heroes as it is with episodes of brutal and indiscriminate retributive colonial violence, 1857 stands as a powerful element within the official history of the modern nation state’s own foundation. The subject of countless new monuments constructed by a range of actors in prominent locations across north India, as

<sup>34</sup> Ricalton, *India through the Stereoscope*.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard Cohn helped coin the phrase ‘Mutiny Pilgrimage’ to describe the visits made by British tourists to these sites. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, pp. 165–211. See also Goswami, ‘“Englishness” on the Imperial Circuit’, pp. 54–84. For more on the Mutiny Pilgrimage, see Chapter 3 of this book.

<sup>36</sup> There were, in fact, two monuments dedicated to 1857 erected in 1938. The last of these was unveiled on 1 December 1938 at Badli-ki-serai, a few miles outside of Delhi. Anon, ‘Form and Order of the Unveiling and Dedication of the Memorial to the Gordon Highlanders at Badli-ki-serai near Delhi on Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938’, ‘Correspondence as Colonel of the Gordon Highlanders 1912–49’, Papers of Gen. Sir. Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, Lidell Hart Military Archives, Kings College London, HAMILTON-10-31.

<sup>37</sup> The unveiling of the monument resulted in a motion of adjournment being tabled in the Central Legislative Assembly by Sri Prakasa and Radhabai Subbarayan to ‘censure and condemn’ the Government of India for their involvement in its construction. See Extracts from Central Legislative Assembly Debates, 2 December 1938, Vol. III, 1938, published in Chatterji and Gopal (eds.), *Towards Freedom*, pp. 995–1001. For the British response to this and other suggestions to commemorate 1857 at this time, see ‘Extract from Lord Zetland to Lord Lithgow, 6 December 1938’, p. 14, Films Offensive to Indian Public Opinion Pts. XIII–XIX, OIOC, IOR/L/PJ/8/128 Coll. 105/A. For more on this, see Chapter 5 in this book.

well as regular commemoration ceremonies held at the national, regional, and local levels, the memory of 1857 is still alive and salient today.<sup>38</sup>

In comparison to the burgeoning literature on Britain's literary imagination of the mutiny, commemoration has been the subject of only piecemeal investigation by separate scholars.<sup>39</sup> Though significant in helping us understand elements of memorialisation, these fragmentary vignettes fail to situate the seemingly isolated memorial activities they focus on within a broader programme of commemoration. This book, therefore, offers the first systematic and comprehensive study of the subject from the immediate aftermath of the conflict up to the present day. In charting the commemoration of 1857 over this period, this book shows how a sustained focus on memorialisation helps us understand broader questions relating to Indian history. By viewing commemoration as a ship sailing upon the sociopolitical ocean of the past 160 years, this book tells us as much about the ship as the ocean, when charting its course over this period. Accordingly, the commemoration of 1857 is a lens through which a wide range of issues and sociopolitical developments which occurred over this period may be evaluated and better understood. By telling the history of India through the transformation of mnemonic space, this study reminds us that remembering the past is always a political act. Specifically, this book emphasises the extent to which the events of 1857 are in a perpetual state of becoming, as the past is negotiated by successive generations living within the ever-changing present. Before further interrogating the practices of commemoration deployed to memorialise the events of 1857, it is first necessary to outline the methodological framework utilised to understand this process, and, in so doing, it is necessary to make clear exactly what is meant here by the twin notions of 'remembering' and 'forgetting', as well as how these concepts relate to practices of 'commemoration'.

### **Meaning, Memory, and Monument: Commemoration and Collective Memory**

Within popular western thought, and no less within much of the psychological literature on memory, remembering and forgetting are generally seen

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 7 of this book for more on commemoration in India today.

<sup>39</sup> The most wide-ranging attempt to study the commemoration of 1857 can be found in Jones, *The Great Uprising in India 1857–58*, Chapter 7, 'Mutiny Memorials', pp. 180–206. For other studies which consider elements of commemoration, see Chakrabarty, 'Remembering 1857', pp. 1692–95; Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature, 1830–1947*; Hannam, 'Contested Representations of War and Heritage at the Residency, Lucknow, India', pp. 199–212; Heathorn, 'Angel of Empire'; Bates and Carter, 'An Uneasy Commemoration: 1957, the British in India and the "Sepoy Mutiny"', pp. 113–35; Nagai, 'The Writing on the wall', pp. 84–96.