

# VIVIENNE WESTBROOK

## What Remains of Rawleigh/Raleigh/Raleigh (1554-1618)<sup>1</sup>

Nations do not remember spontaneously and collectively any more than smaller groups do. Essentially, the bearers of national memory since the arrival of capitalism in each country are the upper middle classes and the intelligentsia, who have inherited the mantle from the aristocracies, lawyers, and clergy of previous epochs. Memory on this level can be spontaneous or manipulated; it can involve rhetorical discourses directed at internal or at external opponents; it can be internally divided and fought over. Its articulation belongs essentially to political elites, however, and is relatively rarely contested by other social groups—and very rarely with success.<sup>2</sup>

This paper explores how societies fail to remember the figures they seek to memorialise, and the extent to which those memorials retain, or fail to retain, significance across time and contexts, by focusing on some of the more prominent literary historical and artistic representations of Sir Walter Raleigh from the sixteenth through to the twentieth century.

In his seminal work *On Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs argued that collective memory cannot be described as preserving, but rather as reconstructing the past “with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present.”<sup>3</sup> Rather than trying consciously to preserve, the memorialising process, too,

intentionally and materially, reconstructs and in that process conveniently ignores the less desirable aspects of its subject.

Once constructed, all memorials require some social enactments of remembering that continually revive, refocus and make meaningful the figures of the past for the present. In the absence of such enactments memorials can come to be perceived as obstructions in the space of progress. There is a distinction to be made between internal context, a core memory of a thing that is usually retained, and an external context, the social context of a thing that is usually not retained in transmission. In his extensive research into social memory James Fentress has argued that versions of a tradition become blotted out as they are superseded by newer versions and that this happens in the first place because of changes in surrounding context.<sup>4</sup> This may help us to understand how a monumentalised figure may at one time occupy a significant space in the social memory of a society, only to be superseded by figures that better suit the changed context. The decontextualised monument must be recontextualised: that is to say, it must acquire new points of reference within the new space in which it stands, and be redefined by it. If it fails to do this it is, to all intents and purposes, a dead monument, signifying its own superfluity in the space of a society that has no desire or need to remember what it once stood for.

Why societies choose to remember some figures and not others in the first place is a question that Peter Burke's work on mythogenesis can help us to answer. He has argued that the attribution of mythogenic status to figures in terms of their biography is the remit only of literal-minded positivist historians since "myth often attributes qualities to them which there is no evidence that they ever possessed."<sup>5</sup> Burke offers his theory of "fit,"

which might be better understood in terms of typology, to explain the perception of a relationship between an individual and a type, or stereotype. He argues: “This ‘fit’ strikes people’s imagination and stories about that individual begin to circulate, orally in the first instance.”<sup>6</sup> Burke does not, however, explain how such a “fit” can occur without some element of biographical data to trigger this mythogenic perception. The narratives attached to a figure may be appropriated, redefined, embellished and partially lost in social amnesia in the process of reconstructing, as society deems necessary, or fit, a monument to a figure of the past. The monument itself and the space in which it stands synecdochically define the figure, erasing all other associations for which the monument might have stood.

To illustrate how this combination of social memory, social amnesia and synecdochical definition occurs in the process of memorialisation I have, in Rawleigh, chosen a figure whose biography contains a wide range of possibilities for triggering this process. William Stebbing has noted that the version “Raleigh” that is most frequently used now to refer to him is one that Rawleigh himself almost never used. The spelling of “Rawleigh” is appropriated from a work entitled *Rawleigh his ghost*—a translation and paratextual appropriation of a Jesuit anti-atheistic treatise as a defence of Rawleigh against the charge of atheism—to register not the immateriality, but the trace-materiality of Rawleigh the man to Raleigh the cultural monument, as it is determined by ever-changing ideas about what it is useful and necessary to remember.<sup>7</sup>

Rawleigh was a Courtier, Knight, Statesman, Adventurer, Sailor, Poet and Historian.<sup>8</sup> He was also labelled as a traitor, pirate, seducer, and in Lewis Stucley’s complaint to James I, “an angel of darkness who did put on him the shape of an Angel of

light at his departure.” He was like the Jesuits at Tyburn, he argued, insofar as they had died “in hope of false Martyrdome” and he “with a desire of a false popular fame.” When facing death, he further carped, Rawleigh was bent not on eternal rest, but on everlasting earthly fame bought at the cost of the reputations of his accusers: “No Coriolanus heart could bee more vindicative, then he was unto them to whom he did impute his fault.”<sup>9</sup>

Whilst the ability to perform on all occasions was a must for Elizabethan men who aimed at Royal advancement, Rawleigh demonstrated that he was not only a man of many parts, but that he could play any part extremely well. It was perhaps his consummate ability as an actor, to conceal whilst revealing, that also made him an object of suspicion. Rawleigh had a propensity for saying one thing and doing another. In his *History of the World* we read, with some irony, that “no man can long continue masked in a counterfeit behaviour.”<sup>10</sup> Whilst the generic expectation of a conduct book is that any advice given will be in the interests of improving the reader, Rawleigh’s *Instructions...* to his son, nevertheless offers further examples of his duplicity. He warned against the evils of wine, though a great deal of his wealth accrued from it; and, even as he was ransacking what was to become New England for Elizabeth, insisted that riches ought not to be sought by evil means: “take heed that thou seek not riches basely, nor attaine them by evill meanes, destroy no man for his wealth, nor take any thing from the poore.”<sup>11</sup>

He was able to adapt narratives of an event with all the dexterity of a playwright when necessity required it. In Walter Oakeshott’s assessment, Rawleigh was “like most Elizabethans, a champion liar.”<sup>12</sup> Anna Beer concludes her more subtle analysis by noting that throughout Rawleigh’s life and career, “the rewriting of a failure as a success, or the defense of the seemingly indefensible, would become a familiar one.... He would

attempt to explain away his political (and sexual) betrayal of Queen Elizabeth in the poetry of 1592, attempt to justify his lack of gold in his 1596 pamphlet, *The Discoverie of Guiana*, and deny his political betrayal of King James in the series of texts written in the months prior to his execution.”<sup>13</sup> Rawleigh’s rewritings extended to Scripture. In his *Excellent observations*, for example, he reinterpreted the message of peace at *Matthew* 5.9 as an endorsement of the violent means of ensuring it, on the grounds that God works by secondary means: “blessed are the Peacemakers, and therefore doubtlesse blessed are those means whereby peace is gained and maintained.”<sup>14</sup> In fact, in the process of rewriting the past for present purposes, Rawleigh appropriated the biblical text’s generic styles, its typologies and the authority of the text itself, continually rewriting in the light of the ever-changing spatial and political contexts in which he found himself. However, some contexts were easier to navigate than others.

As a Tudor courtier at a Stuart court, Rawleigh was out of place. Being implicated in the “Main Plot” to kill James and substitute Arabella Stuart did not make that context any easier for Rawleigh. He protested vehemently against what he perceived to be an unfair trial, and, demonstrating his consummate skill for appropriation, he invoked the apocryphal narrative of Susanna in his defence: “Susanna had been condemned, if Daniel had not cried out: Will you condemn an innocent Israelite, without Examination or knowledge of the Truth?” In this performative moment Rawleigh elided the unjustly accused Susanna with the just judge Daniel, and created for himself what I have elsewhere called a Tudor supertype.<sup>15</sup> By invoking the innocent and defenceless Susanna, condemned by corrupt authority, and Daniel demanding justice, Rawleigh configured himself both as the innocent victim and the wisest advocate of James’ corrupt court.

In his letters, too, which Stephen Greenblatt has described as Rawleigh's "miniature stages on which to perform, spaces to be filled with grand—usually tragic—gestures," we can see Rawleigh as the alienated David of the Psalms.<sup>16</sup> In his letter to Winwood bemoaning the death of his son in the disastrous expedition to Guiana he declares: "I would have left my body at S. Thomes by my sons, or have brought with me out of that or other Mynes, so much Gold oar, as should have satisfied the King. I propounded no vain thing; what shall become of me I know not, I am unpardoned in England, and my poor estate consumed, and whether any Princes will give me bread or no I know not."<sup>17</sup> Escaping the wrath of James, Rawleigh imagined himself as David, desolate and desperate even for food. He continued, I "beseech you to give a copie of this to my Lord Cecil: for to a broken mind, a sick bodie, and weak eyes, it is a torment to write many Letters."<sup>18</sup> Even here Rawleigh seems to be employing the expressive mode of David as the Penitential Psalmist.

Following his failed Guiana expedition, Rawleigh was met by Stucley at Plymouth. In an attempt to delay his departure to the Tower, Rawleigh employed Mannory to make a potion that would make him appear too sick to be moved. At his trial Rawleigh defended himself through an appropriation of I *Samuel* 21.<sup>19</sup> He protested, "I have an Example out of Scripture for my warrant, that in case of necessitie and for the safeguard of my life, David feigned himself foolish and mad, yet it was not imputed to him for sin."<sup>20</sup> Of course, feigning sickness, or madness, was the least of Rawleigh's faults and certainly was not the foundation of the case against him, but by rewriting it as such, and by founding it in Scripture, he attempted to obscure the more serious charges and ally himself with the chosen King.

On the morning of 29 October 1618, the superlative actor delivered an execution speech by which he clearly intended to shape his own monument as one of England's great heroes. One surviving account describes the scene in vivid detail:

Upon Thursday morning this Couragious, although Committed Knight, was brought before the Parliament house, where there was a Scaffold created for his Beheading: yet it was doubted over night that he should be hanged, but it fell out otherwise. He had no sooner mounted the scaffold, but with a chearfull Countenance and undaunted Look, he saluted the Companie. His Attire was a wrought Night-cap, a Ruff band, a hair-coloured Satin Doublet, with a black wrought Waste-coat under it, a pair of black cut Tassery Breeches, a pair of ash-coloured Silk stockings, & a wrought black Velvet Night gown; putting off his Hat, he directed his Speech to the Lords present.<sup>21</sup>

Rawleigh's theatrical presentation of his final scene effectively subverted the punitive function of the execution and fixed a heroic memorial in the collective memory of his age. Stephen Greenblatt has noted that "throughout his final declaration Raleigh manipulated the facts of his life in order to present the desired last image of himself, just as the writer of a history play manipulates the chronicler's facts to accord with his conception of the characters."<sup>22</sup> There was a great deal at stake in his final performance, and Rawleigh demonstrated that there was more than one way to present a life. Anna Beer has observed that Rawleigh's audience responded to his final scene as though it were a theatrical event:

In Raleigh's case, one reporter uses the discriminating tone of the theatre critic, commenting that his "voyce and courage never failed him (insomuch that some might thinke it forced than natural, and somewhat overdone)" (British Library, MS Harley 7056, F. 50r), whilst another argues that Raleigh's "performance" at the arraignment and on the scaffold were such that even the "severest critick could take noe just exception either against his countenance or carriage" (Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 830, F.103v).<sup>23</sup>

In the account of his final moments Rawleigh's biographer John Shirley notes that as he took his leave of Lord Arundel he "intreated him to desire the King, that no scandalous

Writing to defame him might be published after his Death.”<sup>24</sup> Rawleigh’s control over his own memorial was paramount.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the successful salvaging of his ruined reputation on the scaffold immediately generated published defences, or apologies, by those who were in some way responsible for his death, whose own reputations were now at stake.<sup>26</sup>

In *A Declaration of the Demeanor and Cariage of Sir Walter... King James’* defence began by maintaining that it was not the duty of a Sovereign to justify himself to the people, but that because of Rawleigh’s last speech it had been deemed necessary to offer some explanation as to why he deserved execution. The King’s part in Rawleigh’s disastrous expedition to Guiana was reconfigured as a magnanimous gesture. He didn’t believe that there was such a city of Gold, but because of the popularity of Rawleigh and his power with the people it was deemed necessary to indulge him:

Sir W. Rawleigh had so enchanted the world, with his confident asseveration of that which every man was willing to beleeve, as his maiesties honour was in a manner ingaged, not to deny unto his people the adventure and hope of so great Riches, to bee sought and atchieved, at the charge of Voluntaries.<sup>27</sup>

As Christopher Hill has pointed out, Rawleigh’s Guiana expedition was, in fact, revealed to the Spanish by James himself, thereby ensuring its failure.<sup>28</sup>

If Rawleigh had been guilty, as the *Declaration* insisted, of monumental ruin, it was as the rescuer of acts and monuments from the ruins of time that he was chiefly remembered by John Shirley in 1677. Rawleigh was, he said, one “who hath been [...] successfully industrious in retrieving the Actions of former Ages from the Ruines of Time, even in its very Infancy, in a well-compil’d masculine, and learned History of the World,”<sup>29</sup> a claim that was emblazoned on the title leaf of the *History* itself published in 1614. Shirley maintained that Rawleigh was so accomplished that authors were



perplexed under what to place him, whether of statesman, seaman, souldier, chymist, or chronologer, for in all these he did excel. He could make every thing he read or heard his own, and his own he could easily improve to the greatest advantage.<sup>30</sup>

### Rawleigh, Oblivion and Time

In Robert Naunton's earlier *Fragmenta Regalia* (1644) Rawleigh had been described as

a handsome and well-compacted person, a strong natural wit, and a better judgement, with a cold and plausible tongue whereby he could set out his parts to the best advantage, and to these he had the adjuncts of some general learning, which by diligence he enforced to a great augmentation, and perfection; for he was an indefatigable Reader, whether by Sea or Land, and none of the least observers both of men, and the times....<sup>31</sup>

Blessed with fortune's gifts Rawleigh was to become, as Naunton termed him, "fortune's tennis ball... for she tost him up of nothing, and to and fro to greatnesse, and from thence down to little more, then to that wherein she found him (a bare Gentleman)."<sup>32</sup> As a ladies' man, seaman, and adventurer, Rawleigh was certainly accustomed to a tossing. To Richard Hakluyt, Rawleigh was the latest in a long tradition of England's outstanding sea-faring adventurers.<sup>33</sup> To Edmund Spenser, his friend and patron, Rawleigh was clearly a source of inspiration for the *Faerie Queene*.<sup>34</sup> But his subsequent importance as a writer of influence rests chiefly on his *History of the World*, as Anna Beer has noted:

Through the 1620s and 1630s, Raleigh was used in different ways, by different people, to develop new ideas which often challenged the monarch's power. During the following two decades, the project of constructing a voice of authority, most clearly visible in *The History of the World*, had come to fruition: Raleigh had become an authority himself, cited, applauded, imitated, challenged and, during the 1650s, relentlessly published by mainstream printers and booksellers. Many of the politicians and writers seen as important to this period, such as Cromwell, Milton, Lilburne and Bradstreet, negotiated in one way or another with Raleigh and his written work, which had now achieved canonical status.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, Rawleigh's *History of the World* was one of only two texts that Cromwell thought worthy of recommending to his son; the other was the Bible. In a letter of 2 April 1650 Cromwell told his son Richard to "labour to know God in Christ, which the Scripture makes to be the sum of all, even life eternal.... Take heed of an unactive vain Spirit. Recreate yourself with Sir Walter Raughleye's History: it's a body of history, and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of story."<sup>36</sup> For Cromwell, it seems, Rawleigh's *History*, which, of course, drew on biblical history, most fully represented the historical unfolding of God's providential plan.

In 1658, as a tribute to Rawleigh, Milton published an edition of *The Cabinet Council*, a collection of aphorisms pertaining to liberty and the state, thought to be by Rawleigh. In his preface, Milton explained that he had stumbled upon the piece among his papers and

thought it a kinde of injury to withhold longer the work of so eminent an Author from the Publick; it being both answerable in Stile to other Works of his already Extant, as far as the subject would permit, and given me for a true Copy by a Learned Man at his Death, who had collected several such pieces.<sup>37</sup>

Mark Nicholls and Penry Williams have suggested that Milton may have had other motives for producing the piece, either "as an ironic criticism of Cromwell or because it gave advice on how best to endure tyranny."<sup>38</sup> Resistance to authority, a passionate defence of liberty and the promotion of alternative agendas for political and religious policy through writing are characteristic of Rawleigh's work, and discernible in the subsequent generation of writers for whom Rawleigh was clearly inspirational.

In post-Restoration England, Cromwell was dug up and hanged and Milton was arrested. In this new political space, Rawleigh's monument was also defaced. In his

biographical collection better known as *Brief Lives*, John Aubrey remembered a somewhat different Rawleigh through a series of anecdotes of seduction and whoring, and the memorably disdainful address to Rawleigh by James I upon their first meeting “I have heard Rawly of thee”—a pun that suggests that James, at least, was confident about the correct pronunciation of a name of which Stebbing has noted 68 versions in Rawleigh’s own and other correspondence of the time.<sup>39</sup> In his 1682 popular play *The Unhappy (or, unfortunate) Favourite* John Bankes depicted not Rawleigh, but Essex as the hero: an admired, noble and ambitious courtier desired by Elizabeth but with deadly enemies in Cecil and Rawleigh. In this play a marginalised and envious Rawleigh not only suggests that in dealing with Essex Elizabeth should have “snatch’d a Holbard from her nearest Guard, / And thrust it to his Heart,” he is also a willing accomplice in the swift despatch of Essex before Elizabeth has a chance to sign a countermand.<sup>40</sup> In 1719 George Sewell published *The Tragedy of Sir Walter Rawleigh*, a short five-act play in which he was morally hand-polished. The Prologue written by Major Pack and spoken by Mr. Ryan promised the audience,

An English Martyr shall ascend the stage,  
To shame the last, and warn the present age.  
The tragic scene with moving art will tell  
How brave he fought—how wrong’d the soldier fell.<sup>41</sup>

As Robert Lawson-Peebles has pointed out, “Sewell’s Rawlegh is so irreproachable that he fills his nation not only with ‘Contempt of Danger’ but also with ‘the Love of Virtue.’”<sup>42</sup> Sewell addressed the play to the Right Honourable James Craggs, esq., Secretary of State, who, in consummate prefatorial rhetoric, was assured that he bore the qualities of Rawleigh and that by accepting the play he would be participating in the

protection of the virtuous memory of Sir Walter, and, by extension, his own: “Protect the virtuous memory of the dead, as you do the brave acts of the living, and the world will be afraid or ashamed to censure what you approve.” Lawson-Peebles reads this play as a portrait of Rawleigh above all as a family man. In fact, the play begins with Rawleigh in the tower and ends with his execution, including only three domestic scenes between Lady Rawleigh and her son, of which Rawleigh is present in one.<sup>43</sup> Rawleigh’s scenes with Howard, Earl of Suffolk, are at least as important. Indeed, it is Howard who closes the play on a note of revenge for Rawleigh’s death:

Arms are no more; the Soldier’s friend is lost.  
Be idle then my sword, till happy time  
Shall bid thy Country arm; then shine again,  
Wave on the Deck, or glitter on the plain;  
Revening Rawleigh’s loss on guilty Spain.<sup>44</sup>

It was, indeed, as a good Protestant soldier that in 1735 Sir Walter Rawleigh took his place between King William III and Sir Francis Drake in the Temple of British Worthies at Stowe School: one of eight sculptures to the right of the temple commemorating those who had performed outstanding political and military service for



their country. These were complemented by a further eight sculptures to the left, of men of letters, ideas and architecture. Above Peter Scheemaker’s classically sculpted figure, rendered armless, George Lyttelton inscribed “Sir Walter Raleigh a valiant soldier and an able statesman, who endeavouring to rouse the spirit of his master for

the honour of his country against the ambitions of Spain, fell a sacrifice to the influence of that court, whose arms he had vanquish'd and whose designs he oppos'd.”<sup>45</sup> In the early eighteenth century, then, Rawleigh was remembered primarily as a great soldier, his execution for treason was forgotten in the collective amnesia of a culture that preferred, and needed, to reconstruct a history of victorious England. With such a morally ambiguous character and life as Rawleigh's, a certain amount of collective amnesia was certainly required, but once reconstructed the attributes of the monument redounded synecdochically to represent the whole figure unambiguously as heroic.

Throughout what might be termed the monumentalising nineteenth century, Rawleigh continued to be a popular inspiration for adventure stories and historical paintings, among the more famous of which is undoubtedly Millais' painting *The Boyhood of Raleigh* (1870). In reading this painting as a discourse of boundaries, “between the exotic man-sailor and the aristocratic English boys; between the parrot (nature) on one side and the toy ship (culture) on the other; between the land and the sea and the sea and the skies beyond: between the representation and the real as emphasized by the broken frame,” Regenia Gagnier also acknowledges that to the Victorian beholder of this painting, it might symbolise emigration from the UK and Ireland.<sup>46</sup> What we should not miss here is the fact that in this oblique memorial Millais has defined Rawleigh in terms of time and tide, as the boy Rawleigh avidly attends to seafaring tales of the kind in which he will later feature.



The early twentieth century saw numerous appropriations of Rawleigh's glamour and seductiveness in the promotion of the habit of smoking. It defined him

synecdochically in the 1960s, winning for him a dubious lyric memorial from the also “legendary” Beatles: “Although I’m so tired I’ll have another cigarette / And curse Sir Walter Raleigh / He was such a stupid git.”<sup>47</sup> But if Rawleigh’s popularity was waning in the mid-twentieth century, Lawson-Peebles argues that Seamus Heaney’s 1975 poem “Ocean’s Love to Ireland,” in which Rawleigh’s anecdotal seductions are translated into England’s rape of Ireland, finished him off; since then, he observes, “Raleigh, it seems, has absented himself from British iconography.”<sup>48</sup>

The film industry, too, failed to optimise its technologies of capture to re-present a man who “enchanted the world” during and beyond his own lifetime.<sup>49</sup> To date, there are only three films of note in which Rawleigh has featured: Michael Curtiz’s *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939), Walter Forde’s *Time Flies* (1944) and Henry Koster’s *The Virgin Queen* (1955). For a man with all of the panache and performativity of a “Hollywood Great,” it is surprising to find that no late twentieth-century celluloid memorial was created. Indeed the lack of a Rawleigh is very pointedly made in John Madden’s 1998 *Shakespeare in Love* as Judy Dench’s Elizabeth trudges through a muddy puddle whilst her attendants fumble with their cloaks in sudden recognition of a precedent. Shekhar Kapur is now directing a sequel to his 1998 film *Elizabeth*, the film that historians enjoyed so much, with Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth and Clive Owen as Sir Walter Rawleigh, perhaps as an historical corrective to the omission in the prior film.

In considering the apparent demise of Rawleigh as a monumental figure in the twentieth century, I would like to turn to the debate over the removal of the Rawleigh statue from Whitehall as Britain prepared for the new millennium. The controversy over Sir Walter Rawleigh’s small, three feet high, statue in Westminster provides a suitable

example of how memorials can become divested of meaning, divided from the figure they originally memorialised, and even come to memorialise something entirely different. What we see in the parliamentary engagement is a growing frustration over where to relocate what is deemed to be a ridiculous monument in relation to the other monuments in that space. At no point during the debate is it suggested that the monument be demolished. Having agreed that its current location is inappropriate the debate circulates around what might be a more appropriate space in which to put it. But it is precisely this problem of appropriate space that leads us to much more complex questions about the role of memorials in society, and what topographical space they might justifiably occupy after they have ceased to occupy a space in the collective memory; after all, it is the collective memory that gives life to monuments, not the material from which they are constructed. In the computer-enhanced photograph below, the statue of Rawleigh that was at the centre of the debate has been decontextualised in order to facilitate our conception of it in the variety of suggested contexts that follow.<sup>50</sup>



On 12 April 1999 Baroness Trumpington enquired about progress regarding the removal of the Rawleigh statue from Whitehall “to a more appropriate site.”<sup>51</sup> It had been suggested that St Margaret’s churchyard might be suitable, a suggestion that had been approved in principle but denied planning permission by Westminster City Council in May 1997 and then again in November 1998. Baroness Trumpington remarked, “The point

is to move the statue from its present site where it looks ridiculous.” According to Lord McIntosh of Haringey, the House had agreed that “Sir Walter Raleigh’s statue is out of place on Raleigh Green outside the Ministry of Defence for no other reason than that it is much smaller than the other three statues sited there.” Attempting to circumvent the battle between Westminster City Council and the Dean and Chapter of St. Margaret’s, Lord Strabolgi argued that Rawleigh was a “national figure of historic importance” and that other sites associated with him throughout the country might be considered as alternatives. Lord McIntosh pointed out that the Public Statues Metropolis Act 1854 restricted Government intervention and that local authorities anywhere might similarly refuse permission for the relocation. Westminster City Council had refused permission for relocation to St. Margaret’s on the grounds that it would create a precedent, suggesting an anxiety that the locally cherished open space to the west of St. Margaret’s might become a dumping ground for dead monuments.

Lord Annan suggested the alternative sites of “Poets’ Corner, Millbank, near which Sir Walter lost his head, and Horse Guards Road... in a place between the statue of Lord Mountbatten and the statue of Lord Clive, where it would be in competition with neither[?]” Meanwhile, Lord Morris of Manchester was already thinking about what new memorial might replace Sir Walter Rawleigh’s and suggested an Anzac memorial, which he felt would be “warmly welcomed by the all-party Anzac group of MPs and Peers” of which he was the president.

Lord McIntosh, responding to Lord Annan, explained that St. Margaret’s churchyard was deemed more appropriate since Rawleigh was already buried there, thereby suggesting a relationship between the dead man and the dead monument. St.



Margaret's was, he said, "more appropriate than Old Palace Yard—our car park—where he lost his head." The space in which the scaffold speech, with which Sir Walter had changed the public perception of him, from pirate and traitor to national hero, had been delivered, had been culturally transformed to accommodate cars, and, it seems, it was this cultural transformation of what was undeniably an important space for Rawleigh that made the monument inappropriate. From the perspective of the cultural geology of the car park, Rawleigh's historical moment was merely a layer of cultural memory amid other chronologically layered and obscured cultural memories that had lost the argument for memorialisation, ultimately, to the utilitarian argument for the car park. What makes Lord McIntosh's remark amusing is not only the anachronism which transforms the narrative from an executioner's euphemism to a modern idiom for acting rashly, but the visual flash of Sir Walter in "our car park." The anachronism which makes this amusing and absurd stands in rhetorically for the inappropriateness of having such a memorial in such a space.

In spite of the objections raised by Westminster City Council that to place the Rawleigh statue in St Margaret's would be detrimental to the established character of the area, it remained, in many minds, the most appropriate space in which to resituate the memorial. Lord Burnham suggested that the monument would be no more detrimental than the hot-dog stands that currently occupy that space. The debate as it stood on the afternoon of 12 April 1999 was that the Rawleigh monument's current site rendered it ridiculous, that the car park where he lost his head would render it similarly ridiculous, and that it was considered to be a threat to the character of St. Margaret's in a way that hot-dog stands were not.

On the 14 November 2000 at 2.45pm the Rawleigh monument was yet once more on the parliamentary agenda. An exasperated Baroness Trumpington asked again, “When is this ridiculous saga about moving that tiny little statue of Walter Raleigh going to end?” Lord McIntosh concurred: “I entirely agree with the noble Baroness that it seems to be taking a very long time and that it is inappropriate to have the small statue of Sir Walter Raleigh next to three very much larger statues of 20<sup>th</sup>-century generals.”<sup>52</sup> Viscount Slim then remarked that his own father’s statue was next to Raleigh’s, adding “he would be very proud to be alongside a pirate”[?]. To this Lord McIntosh responded “My Lords, yes, I am well aware of that. I am sure the noble Viscount, Lord Slim, is right to say that, if we are thinking about the character of Sir Walter Raleigh. But it is not the character that is the issue here; it is the scale of the monument.” This debate about the memorial was not about Rawleigh at all, it seems, merely about the size of an object in relation to those with which it stood. Within this debate Rawleigh’s statue had become a dead monument occupying the space of a more appropriate memorial to come.

Lord Puttnam argued that the current choice of figures to memorialise suggested to visitors that England was a nation obsessed with militarism and politics. Lord McIntosh concurred but added that “Unfortunately, I am afraid that it is true that the vast majority of the population of this country and visitors pass by statues without ever looking at them, let alone looking at the names on the plinth.” His interesting reply raises a more provocative question as to the purpose of erecting public memorials. Public memorials that have no purchase on living cultural memory of the community in which they are erected are still-born monuments. Why erect a monument in the full knowledge that however public the space in which one situates it, the vast majority will not even

look at it? Such memorials have less to do with cultural memory and more to do with private vested interest; they are merely claims to power through the very public claim to public space.

The Lord Bishop of Wakefield argued that since Westminster Abbey was full of memorials to poets, artists and musicians, it would not be true to say that London was full of military statues, to which Lord McIntosh responded that visitors had to pay five pounds to get into Westminster Abbey. What we might reasonably conclude from this engagement is that although memorials to British culture are housed and accessible to those with the money and the will to pay, military and political memorials are in the public space and free, to be ignored. Lord Acton made the point that due to the prolonged debate over the Rawleigh memorial it had become, to members of the house who had to pass it each day, a memorial, rather, of Baroness Trumpington—very amusing—but once more demonstrating that it is not the object but the associations that are alive in the collective memory of a community that make it a memorial for that community.

Amid the growing exhaustion over where to put the statue of Sir Walter Rawleigh, petitions for it from East Budleigh, close to Rawleigh's birthplace, were met with repeated refusals. As Hugo Swire, M.P. for East Devon, reported on 17 February 2005, "My predecessor Sir Peter Emery tried hard to get the existing statue of Sir Walter moved from Whitehall Green near the House of Commons to East Devon, but he and subsequently I were thwarted in our attempts."<sup>53</sup> Mr Swire decided to approach British American Tobacco, and, much to his relief, they agreed to support financially the commission of a new full-length sculpture cast in bronze by the artist Vivien Mallock.<sup>54</sup>

Far from expecting no one to notice it, Mr Swire hoped that it would become a tourist attraction, adding that “I think it is very exciting that, after all these years, we will finally have a lasting tribute to our most famous local son.”<sup>55</sup> I asked Mr Michael

Prideaux, Director of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at British American Tobacco,



why B.A.T. wanted to fund the project, to which he replied: “it seemed to us to be a pity that there was no statue of Sir Walter near his birthplace.” He admitted that, unfortunately, it might be denounced by anti-smoking groups as “a cunning plan to sell more cigarettes.” When I asked Vivien Mallock what she hoped to convey in the new statue, pictured here as a ghostly apparition prior to bronze casting, she replied, “The brief was fairly open but essentially I was invited to show him in his prime, with an air of arrogance and a whiff of mischief!”<sup>56</sup>

Vivien Mallock has created a portrait sculpture of Raleigh, six feet tall, dressed in Elizabethan costume. His sheathed sword, which rests on his left hip, is half obscured by “the cape,” suggesting a negotiation between courtier and soldier. Raleigh’s shoulder carries all of the synecdochical weight of his representation to the new millennium. Only time will reveal whether this portrait sculpture of Raleigh will attract tourists, contribute to the economy of its locality, regenerate Raleigh’s reputation as a courtier and soldier in the collective memory of East Budleigh, or, indeed, whether it will resist the pressure of

progress to transform the space in which he is now defined. In the meantime, the “tiny little statue” of Rawleigh which formerly resided both outside Whitehall and within its debating arena as the new millennium approached, now stands outside the Royal Naval Academy in Greenwich and Rawleigh is synecdochically redefined there as the “great” Admiral.<sup>57</sup>

This paper has focused on just a handful of British monuments to Rawleigh, but he has, of course, been memorialised elsewhere in the world. You would not be surprised to learn that the eponymous U.S. town of Raleigh, North Carolina, owns a larger-than-life eleven-foot-high bronze statue of the man, but you may be surprised to learn that Rawleigh is still on the move. Due to the conversion of a pedestrian site to a vehicular route, Sir Walter has been on excursion to Cincinnati where, it was reported, he was “lovingly hand polished and covered with a coat of protective wax.” When the sculpture returns to Raleigh the Historic Districts Commission will have the transatlantic headache of where to put it. Once more an appropriate historical site for Rawleigh’s monument has lost its argument to the utilitarian need for everyone else to travel.<sup>58</sup> For the present, then, Rawleigh seems to have survived the threat of oblivion. What remains of Rawleigh has yet to be determined.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper was first presented at “The Tudors and Stuarts on Film” Conference, Hampton Court Palace, London, 7-8 September 2005, organised by Dr. Thomas Freeman and Dr. Thomas Betteridge. Thanks are also due to the following for their kind cooperation with this research: Dan Becker, Michael Bevington, Dean Fox, Vivien Mallock, Dr. Mark Nicholls, Michael Prideaux. The three major spellings of Rawleigh’s name have been included in the title to facilitate electronic searches.

<sup>2</sup> James Fentress, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; 1998), 127.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 119.

<sup>4</sup> Fentress, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory" in Thomas Butler, ed., *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, 97-113), 101.

<sup>6</sup> Burke, 104.

<sup>7</sup> Leonardus Lessius, *Rawleigh his ghost*, trans. A. B. (Saint Omer: G. Seutin, 1631), STC 15523. See William Stebbing, *Sir Walter Raleigh* (London: 1891), JRL 942.055/R7.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

<sup>9</sup> Lewis Stucley, *To the Kings Most Excellent Majestie. The Humble Petition* (London: Bonham Norton and John Bill, 1618), STC 23401, 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (London: William Stansby, 1614), STC 20637 (sig. A2r).

<sup>11</sup> See: "Take especiall care that thou delight not in Wine, for there never was any man that came to honour or preferment that loved it; for it transformeth a man into a Beast, decayeth health, poisoneth the breath, destroyeth natural hear, brings a mans stomacke to an artificiall heat, deformeth the face, rotteth the teeth, and to conclude, maketh a man contemptible, soone old, and despised of all wise and worthy men; hated in they servants, in they selfe and Companions; for it is a bewitching and infectious vice...." *Sir Walter Raleigh's Instructions to His Sonne* (London, 1633), STC 20644, 83-4.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet* (London: Faber, 1960), 96.

<sup>13</sup> Anna Beer, *Sir Walter Raleigh and his Readers in the Seventeenth Century: Speaking to the People* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 4.

<sup>14</sup> "I confesse that peace is a great blessing of God, and blessed are the Peacemakers, and therefore doubtlesse blessed are those means whereby peace is gained and maintained. For well we know that God worketh all things here amongst us mediately by a secondary means, The which meanes of our defence and safety being shipping, and Sea-Forces, are to be esteemed as his gifts, and then only availeable and beneficiall, when he withall vouchsafeth his grace to use them aright." Walter Raleigh, *Excellent Observations and Notes, Concerning the Royall Navy* (London: T. W., 1650), Wing R161, 46.

<sup>15</sup> See Vivienne Westbrook, "Paratextual Typologies in Reformation Contexts" (*Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* 17, 2003), 117-134.

<sup>16</sup> Greenblatt, 24.

<sup>17</sup> *Remains of Sir Walter Raleigh* (London, 1657), Wing R180, 12-13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>19</sup> See Francis Bacon, *A Declaration of the Demeanor and Cariage of Sir Walter Raleigh* (London: Bonham Norton and John Bill, 1618), STC 20652.5, 48.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>21</sup> *Remains*, 199.

<sup>22</sup> Greenblatt, 19. He cites Sir Edward Harwood's letter to Sir Dudley Carleton concerning Rawleigh's conduct at his execution, as such that it "made all believe that he was neither guilty of former treasons nor of unjustly injuring the King of Spain," and "Sir John Eliot, who had been present as a follower of Buckingham, the king's favourite, recalled, 'Such was his unmoved courage and placid temper that, while it changed the affection of the enemies who had come to witness it, and turned their joy to sorrow, it filled all men else with emotion and admiration,'" 23.

<sup>23</sup> Capp suggests that the successful salvaging of his ruined reputation on the stage of the scaffold immediately generated memorial ballads on his execution, which were promptly suppressed. Bernard Capp, "Popular Literature" in Barry Reay, ed., *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-century England* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 166.

<sup>24</sup> John Shirley, *The Life of the Valiant and Learned Sir Walter Rawleigh* (London: J.D., 1677), JRL 22639, 236.

<sup>25</sup> Even his invitation to his audience to pray with him was perceived by Shirley as a sign of his evident belief in God: "he abundantly baffled their Calumnies who had accus'd him of Athiesm," 238.

<sup>26</sup> Bacon explains: "because of Rawlegh's execution speech it has been deemed necessary to offer some explanation as to why he deserved execution." Francis Bacon, *A Declaration of the demeanor and carriage of Sir Walter Raleigh* (London: Bonham Norton and John Bill, 1618), STC 20652.5.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 4.

- <sup>28</sup> Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965; 1980), 154.
- <sup>29</sup> Shirley, A3r-v. Rawleigh maintained in his preface to his *History of the World* that his text was a mirror only to those who saw it as a mirror, a rhetorical manoeuvre that enabled him to escape responsibility for any historical connections with the present that his readers might make. Rawleigh feared nothing from malicious readers of his *History* that had not already been done to him by those who had misread his life, ill readers to whom he owed thanks for this leisure time in the Tower in which to write the *History*. See Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (London: William Stansby, 1614), STC 20637.63.
- <sup>30</sup> John Shirley, *The Life of the Valiant and Learned Sir Walter Rawleigh* (London: J. D., 1677), JRL 22639, 242.
- <sup>31</sup> Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia* (London, 1641), Wing N250.
- <sup>32</sup> See also John Donne's letter, addressee unknown, circa 1600, in which he uses the same analogy to describe Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel (1524-1600): "that last dyed (that tennis ball whome fortune after tossing and banding brikwald into the hazard) in his imprisonment used more than much reading, and to him that asked him why he did so he answerd he read so much lest he should remember something."
- <sup>33</sup> See Robert Lawson-Peebles, "The many faces of Sir Walter Raleigh" (*History Today* 48.3, 1998, 17-24), for a discussion of Hakluyt's treatment of Rawleigh.
- <sup>34</sup> See J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt, eds., *Spenser: Poetical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). Spenser playfully describes Rawleigh as a rival poet for Cynthia's (Elizabeth's) affections in the poem, addressed "To the right noble and valourous knight, Sir Walter Rawleigh, Lo. Wardein of the Stanneryes, and lieftenaunt of Cornewaile," 413. In "The Third Booke of the Faerie Queene Conteyning The Legend of Britomartis or Of Chastitie: 4" Spenser praises Rawleigh's poem to "Cynthia" (Elizabeth) as "...that sweet verse, with Nectar sprinckeled, / In which a gracious servant pictured / His Cynthia, his heavens fairest light? / That with his melting sweetnesse ravished," 4. 4-7.
- <sup>35</sup> Beer, 139.
- <sup>36</sup> Wilbur Cortez Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 6.
- <sup>37</sup> See *The Cabinet-Council Containing the Chief Arts of Empire, and Mysteries of State... By the Ever-renowned Knight, Sir Walter Raleigh* (London, 1658), A2r-v.
- <sup>38</sup> Mark Nicholls and Penry Williams, "Sir Walter Raleigh" in *New DNB on-line* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2006).
- <sup>39</sup> For what is still considered to be the best biography of Rawleigh, see Stebbing. Aubrey's *Lives* were deposited in manuscript in 1693 in the Ashmolean, Oxford, and went through many editions in the nineteenth century, often bowlderised.
- <sup>40</sup> John Bankes, *The Unhappy Favourite* (London, 1682), Wing B663.
- <sup>41</sup> George Sewell, *The Tragedy of Sir Walter Rawleigh* (London, 1719) JRL R66880.
- <sup>42</sup> Lawson-Peebles, 7.
- <sup>43</sup> Sewell, 1.3, 3.3 and 4.3.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 5.3.
- <sup>45</sup> Photograph by courtesy of Michael Bevington. Copyright, Michael Bevington, Stowe School Photographic Archives. The other statues in the collection are as follows: on the left are the men of letters, thought and architecture—Alexander Pope, Sir Thomas Gresham, Inigo Jones, John Milton, William Shakespeare, John Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir Francis Bacon. On the right are those familiar for their actions in political and military service to their country—King Alfred, the Black Prince, Queen Elizabeth I, King William III, Sir Walter Rawleigh, Sir Francis Drake, John Hampden, and Sir John Barnard. 16 in all. They represent the Whig ideals of Lord Cobham's group at this time.
- <sup>46</sup> Regenia Gagnier, "Boundaries in Theory and History" (*Victorian Literature and Culture* 32.2, 2004), 403-4.
- <sup>47</sup> The Beatles, "I'm so Tired" from the *White Album*, 1968.
- <sup>48</sup> Lawson-Peebles, 11.
- <sup>49</sup> See Bacon, 4.
- <sup>50</sup> Original photo by Vivian Lu and Mulan Wong.
- <sup>51</sup> *Hansard on-line*: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199899/ldhansrd/vo990412/text/90412-01.htm>.

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<sup>52</sup> The statue of Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Commander of the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army is by Oscar Nemon. That of Viscount Slim, Commander of the British 14<sup>th</sup> Army, is by Ivor Roberts-Jones. The third sculpture is of Viscount Alanbrooke. See *Hansard* Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 1992 “written answers to questions” in which the matter of the removal of Sir Walter’s statue is first raised in connection with a planned statue of Viscount Alanbrooke at Raleigh Green.

<sup>53</sup> Hugo Swire, <http://www.hugoswire.org.uk/index.jsp>.

<sup>54</sup> The actual cost of the sculpture was £25,000+ VAT, according to Michael Prideaux, Director, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, B.A.T. Personal email, 2 September 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Swire.

<sup>56</sup> Photograph of Rawleigh-in-process courtesy of Vivien Mallock.

<sup>57</sup> The statue was resituated in 2001. A statue of Rawleigh occupies a site in Perth, Western Australia, called “London Court.” This street of little shops was built in 1937 to represent England during Elizabeth’s reign. The statues of Sir Walter Rawleigh and Dick Whittington face each other from the far sides of the court, encapsulating for the Australian public Elizabethan England! The absent Rawleigh statue in Raleigh Green, like the absent synecdochical cape in *Shakespeare in Love* occupies a space in the collective memory of the moment, more noted in its absence.

<sup>58</sup> According to Dan Becker, Executive Director of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, the statue is “presently undergoing another restoration and cleaning. No final decision or arrangements have been made regarding its next location.” Personal email, 5 June 2006.