

Symbolic Space, Collective Memory: Monuments, Politics and Identity in Montreal

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the symbolic landscape of Montreal and the ways in which conflict over collective memory is waged between the Anglophone and Francophone population of the city. I contribute to the existing geographic literature on politics and memory by analyzing four monuments: the Nelson Column, the monument to Queen Victoria, the *Monument aux Patriotes* and *Debout (Monument à Félix Leclerc)*, illustrating the development of dual symbolic landscapes in Montreal. I argue that it is the existence of two distinct symbolic landscapes that has diffused most potential conflict between the two dominant linguistic groups, noting that it is only where the symbolic landscapes overlap (near the Nelson Column) that overt conflict has occurred. I aim to show how monuments act as spatial anchors for the collective memories of particular groups, and that these locales are sites of powerful symbolic negotiations of cultural and political legitimacy.



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