

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/when-monuments-fall-the-significance-of-commemorating/>

This video discusses the complex relationship between memory and monuments, particularly focusing on the act of commemoration and the emerging trend of "de commemorating." The speaker, an historian of memory, highlights the paradox that while monuments are meant to represent memory in a fixed form (stone), memory itself is fluid and constantly changing.

The speaker references psychologist Charles Frederick Charles Bartlett's theory of memory as an imaginative reconstruction that evolves over time. Monuments, however, become static and can lose relevance as societal contexts shift. To maintain their connection to memory, monuments must be continually "recharged" with new meanings.

"De commemorating" is introduced as a process that can involve the destruction or defacement of monuments, often sparked by social movements or public dissent. While these acts may appear to signify forgetting, they can paradoxically serve as forms of remembrance by drawing attention to what the monuments represent and instigating new dialogues about their meaning.

The speaker provides historical examples, such as the frequent attacks on the statue of King William III in Dublin, to illustrate that de commemorating often follows a cyclical pattern of destruction and subsequent restoration or re-commemoration. This video cyclical relationship is evident in various social movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the removal of monuments associated with colonialism.

The speaker calls for a deeper understanding of de commemorating as a valid historical phenomenon, deserving study on its own merit alongside traditional commemorative practices. Ultimately, the act of dismantling monuments may inadvertently reinforce their significance, as participants often believe they are erasing memory when in fact they are actively engaging with it.