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Traditional War Memorials and Postmodern Memory

Susan Elizabeth Hart

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

Traditional War Memorials and Postmodern Memory

Susan Elizabeth Hart

War and how it is remembered are still timely and significant subjects for many Canadians as witnessed by the recent ceremony to mark the reburial of Canada's Unknown Soldier in the newly completed tomb at the base of the National War Memorial in Ottawa. Although literature on Canadian war memorials is plentiful, the memorials have been primarily discussed in terms of their production and meaning within an historical context. As we enter a new millennium, it is time to look at our abundant heritage of twentieth-century war memorials through a new lens, a lens which does not seek to document or decode, but rather seeks to examine the relation of traditional war memorials to the present time and to discuss them in terms of postmodernism in order to consider the following question: Can our traditional twentieth-century war memorials be meaningful memory markers for the twenty-first century? Barbara Steinman's *Cenotaph* (1985-86) acts as a nucleus from which discussion radiates outward, and through a series of chapters that address the interrelated issues of form, function and ideology, a theory of postmodernism in the context of war memorials is developed. Chapter Two looks at how traditional and postmodern monuments differ in their use of formal elements including text. Chapter Three considers the ways in which monuments function: as permanent installation; as ephemeral entities such as temporary, traveling, or disappearing installations; and as sites of performance, both ritual and interventionist. Chapter Four discusses the ideologically intertwined constructions of nationalism, race and gender in traditional and postmodern monuments, before wrapping up the discussion in the final chapter.

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ONE

Toward a Theory of Postmodern Monuments

Monuments...have to do with people's thoughts and feelings, and those are constantly changing. The way memorials are treated depends on whether their statement continues to be heard and understood by the community.

-Robert Shipley¹

From coast to coast, Canada is dotted with monuments and memorials that commemorate our country's participation in wars of the twentieth century: the Boer War (1899 - 1901), World War I (1914 - 1918), World War II (1939 - 1945), and the Korean War (1950 - 1953). While literature on Canadian war memorials is plentiful, the memorials have been primarily discussed in terms of their production and meaning within an historical context. As we enter a new millennium, it is time to look at our abundant heritage of twentieth-century war memorials through a new lens, a lens which does not seek to document or decode, but instead examines the relation of these memory markers to the present and discusses them in terms of postmodernism in order to consider the question: Can our traditional twentieth-century war memorials be meaningful memory markers for the twenty-first century?

The vast majority of these memorials were erected in the decades following the First World War to pay tribute to the sixty thousand Canadian soldiers who lost their lives fighting in that conflict. Following World War II and Korea, many of the existing monuments, such as the National War Memorial in Ottawa, were simply inscribed with the dates of these two subsequent conflicts. Although it has been more than a half-century since Canada's involvement in a "world war," war and how

¹ Robert Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*, (Toronto: NC Press, 1987), 161.

it is remembered is still a timely and significant subject for Canadians. Recently Canadians learned that Canada's premiere overseas war memorial, Walter Allward's Vimy Memorial in France (dedicated 1936), needs a \$1.1-million repair job, a price tag almost equal to its original cost of \$1.5 million. On August 4, 1999, near a remote lake in northwestern Quebec, a bronze plaque commemorating 1,200 people (mostly Ukrainian) who were imprisoned at Lac Beauchamp (Spirit Lake) between 1915 and 1917 was unveiled. In February 2000 the Museum of Civilization in Hull hosted an exhibition entitled *Canvas of War: Canada's Military Art*. As well as canvases by the Group of Seven, this exhibition featured Allward's half-size plaster models for five of the figures on the Vimy Memorial. As we enter a new century, the continuing need to remember the wars of the past century is demonstrated by Canada's highly elaborate ceremony this past May 2000, wherein the "Unknown Soldier" was exhumed from his grave in France, returned to Canada where he lay in state at Parliament Hill, then reburied in the newly completed tomb at the base of the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Literature on Canadian memorials covers a range of themes and perspectives. Robert Shipley's 1987 publication *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials* surveys the memorials that exist from coast to coast and puts them into a historical narrative.² Jonathan F. Vance, in his 1997 publication *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*, looks at a spectrum of socio-cultural production, including popular songs, fiction, films and war memorials, that collectively remembers, celebrates and mythologizes the Great War.³

² Robert Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*, (Toronto: NC Press, 1987).

³ Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

Alan R. Young's 1989 *Journal of Canadian Studies* article, "We Throw the Torch: Canadian memorials of the Great War and the mythology of heroic sacrifice," takes into consideration three specific examples of war art: the Book of Remembrance in the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill, Canada's National War Memorial in Ottawa, and the crucifixion motif in Canadian Great War memorials.⁴ To date, literature on the topic of Canadian war memorials has been object/artist- and/or period/theme-oriented.

American professor and Holocaust scholar James E. Young has taken a different approach to "memorial texts" in his 1993 book *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*.⁵ Young does not offer a survey or a strictly aesthetic critique of Holocaust memorials in Europe, Israel and the United States, but rather a textured analysis of the past within the present. Young writes:

...neither a purely formal nor a historicist approach accommodates the many other dimensions at play in public monuments. I suggest, rather, that the 'art of public memory' encompasses not just these memorials' aesthetic contours, or their places in contemporary artistic discourse. It also includes the activity that brought them into being, the constant give and take between memorials and viewers, and finally the responses of viewers to their own world in light of a memorialized past.⁶

Although the scope of Young's project is beyond the reach of my thesis, I have taken my cue from his methodology by moving away from a strictly formal or historical approach to a more textured analysis of twentieth-century Canadian war memorials. This analysis of Canadian war memorials takes place within the context of a growing body of literature such as James Young's on the construction of memory through the use of 'memory

⁴ Alan R. Young, "We Throw the Torch: Canadian memorials of the Great War and the mythology of heroic sacrifice," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24.4 (Winter 1989), 5-28.

⁵ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

markers' and within a growing European tradition of "countermonuments" such as Jochen and Esther Gerz's *Monument Against Fascism* (Harburg, 1986), and Horst Hoheisel's *Aschrott Fountain* (Kassel, 1988).⁷

Public countermonuments such as those in Germany do not exist in Canada most likely because they are a response by a new generation of German memory-artists to a difficult Nazi legacy. Therefore, to provide a textured analysis of the Canadian context I will use a work that many would argue does not fit into the category or typology of public war memorial - Barbara Steinman's *Cenotaph* (1985-86) (Figure 1). Steinman's *Cenotaph* will act as a vehicle and a foil to examine issues around the notion of postmodernism in Canadian war memorials. These issues will include: **form**, that is the use of architectural or formal elements from the past, as well as the use of text on monuments; **function**, that is the monument's function as a site of performance, both ritual and intervention, as well as issues of endurance (permanent installation) versus ephemerality (temporary, traveling, and disappearing installations); and **ideology** with regard to Canadian identity in the areas of nationalism, gender and race. Steinman's *Cenotaph*, an installation work in the National Gallery of Canada, exhibits many postmodern tendencies and offers a nucleus from which discussion may radiate outward. As well, *Cenotaph* will function as the foil with which traditional monuments may be contrasted and other postmodern memory markers compared. Through a series of three chapters that address the interrelated issues of form, function and ideology, the concept of

⁷ The Gerz monument will be described and discussed in following chapters but one can read further about these and other countermonuments in: Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 172-189; and *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999) - this issue "Constructions of Memory: On monuments old and new," contains numerous articles by various authors such as James E. Young's, "Memory and Counter-Memory," which specifically discusses Hoheisel's and other artists "countermonuments."

postmodernism as it applies to war memorials will be developed.

Although these chapters will address the central question - Can our traditional twentieth-century war memorials be meaningful memory markers for the twenty-first century? - the thesis will not offer a definitive answer. While the concluding chapter may be read as the logical consequence of a textured and reasoned analysis, it is not intended as an end point, but rather as a starting point of a more comprehensive way of looking at and understanding Canadian war memorials as we enter a new century.

For those who have reservations about the validity of comparing or contrasting *Cenotaph*, an installation work the artist did not create or intend as a "war memorial" per se, with traditional civic war memorials, I would counter with this observation by Andreas Huyssen: "Boundaries between museum, memorial, and monument have indeed become fluid in the past decade in ways that make the old interpretation of the museum as fortress for the few and of the monument as medium of reification and forgetting strangely obsolete."⁸ While there are those who would argue that *Cenotaph's* indoor setting - in particular the National Gallery of Canada - puts it into an entirely different, indeed sanctified realm removed from the domain of public sculpture, I offer James Young's

⁸ Andreas Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age," *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1994), 12. When questioned about the title of her piece and its connection to monument tradition, Barbara Steinman responded that the title came after the work and was partly chosen for its easy translatability - French: cenotaphe, English: cenotaph - and because the installation represented a place where there was no physical body yet meant to invoke those who had vanished. The piece itself was a response to the locale of its first installation - the old city center of Lyon, France a site of wartime Nazi activity and the present (1985) site of St. Joseph's prison where Klaus Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon" was awaiting trial for his Nazi war crimes. Steinman points out that the piece does not explicitly mention events of WWII, viewers are left to make their own connections. As well, the artist felt that the boundaries between public war memorial and her installation were quite fluid, and that her piece enjoyed an ephemerality that public monuments do not. Interview: Montreal, July 26, 2000.

insight that the nature of all memorials and exhibitions is a fundamentally dialogical, interactive one.⁹ The memorial and the exhibit both require the visitor. Through the chapters that follow I expect the boundaries between public space memory markers and gallery/museum space memory markers will be shown to be as fluid as Huyssen and Young suggest. Yes, differences exist between *Cenotaph* and traditional war memorials; however, there are many similarities.

At this point it seems prudent to offer a number of preliminary definitions/explanations to start this investigation with a common understanding which will grow as the thesis progresses. The first clarification involves my use of the terms "memorial" and "monument." In an article about Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, art critic and philosopher Arthur C. Danto clearly delineates what he perceives to be the differences between monuments and memorials. He writes:

We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build memorials so that we shall never forget.... Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends.... Very few nations erect monuments to their defeats, but many set up memorials to the defeated dead. Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life. The memorial is a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor the dead. With monuments we honour ourselves.¹⁰

Danto's distinction between monument and memorial made sense in light of the subject, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. However, James E. Young brings Danto's distinction into question by pointing out the dualistic nature of some monuments and memorials. Young writes that "[a] statue can be a monument to heroism and a memorial to tragic loss; an obelisk can memorialize a nation's birth and monumentalize leaders fallen before

⁹ James E. Young, "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History," *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1994), 21.

¹⁰ Arthur C. Danto, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *The Nation*, 31 August 1985, 152.

their prime. Insofar as the same object can perform both functions, there may be nothing intrinsic to historical markers that makes them either monuments or memorials.¹¹ Young then goes on to formulate his own distinctions. He states: "I treat all memory-sites as memorials, the plastic objects within these sites as monuments. A memorial may be a day, a conference, or a space, but it need not be a monument. A monument, on the other hand, is always a kind of memorial."¹² In Young's formulation "memorial" is a globalizing construct, while "monument" (a subset of memorials) is the material/plastic object. For the purpose of my study I have chosen to make no distinction between the two words. I use "monument" and "memorial" interchangeably to signify a site of memory or a memory marker. Where I choose to make a distinction is not in the naming of the memory marker as either memorial or monument, but in the function of the memory marker. Where dictionaries define monuments and memorials as things that preserve memory, I will distinguish between memory sites that tend to preserve memory and memory sites that tend to provoke memory: sites of closure and sites of disclosure.

The task of defining the term "postmodernism" is not quite so straightforward. Indeed there is no simple definition for this term and it may be understood in multiple senses: as a period of time; as a style of representation; as an ideology, to list a few. John Storey's 1993 *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* tells us that although the term postmodernism had been in cultural circulation since the 1870s, it is only in the 1960s in the work of people such as Susan Sontag and Leslie Fiedler that we see the beginnings of what is now

¹¹ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

understood as postmodernism. Storey writes that postmodernism "is a sensibility in revolt against the normalizing function of modernism; its rebellion is an attack on the canonization of modernism's rebellion, an attack on modernism's official status as the high culture of the modern capitalist world."¹³ Ideologies of postmodernism gained currency in the 1980s with the writings of cultural theorists and philosophers such as Jean-Francois Lyotard and Fredric Jameson.¹⁴ In their writing, to be very general, postmodernism refers to the calling into question of the unified and universalist metanarratives of Western culture as we have known them.

Within the academic world there is no consensus on the ideological usefulness of postmodernism. On the one hand, some authors embrace postmodernist demythologizing concepts (deconstruction) to theorize change within their own fields of culture. In his 1997 publication *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*, historian Daniel Francis debunks "core myths" taught in many high school history classes. Among his conclusions, Francis writes that: "The myth of the RCMP, for instance, has been used for years to obscure the coercive power of the state. The CPR turns out to have inflated a railway into a national dream as a highly successful public relations ploy...and the myth of the North and the myth of the master race were used to secure the pre-eminence of Canada's British heritage while minimizing the role of other

¹³ John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 155.

¹⁴ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), and Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in Hal Foster ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, (Washington: Bay Press, 1983), 111-25.

cultural groups."¹⁵

On the other hand, Robert Fulford, Canadian journalist and former editor of *Saturday Night*, offers this rather caustic, assessment/definition of postmodernism in a Canadian cultural context:

Deconstruction, of course, is an essential ingredient in post-modern thought, and perhaps it is as a post-modern state that Canada can be best understood. If a casual student of post-modernism studies Canadian history, post-modernist terms spring frequently to mind. The events of the last three decades, for instance, have 'decentered' Canada, making it unsure what is the core and what is the periphery, a condition that post-modernism regards as highly desirable. As a post-modern state we recognize the 'indeterminacy' (another key term) of our history and utterly reject, as all good post-modernists do, one agreed-upon 'master narrative' that would enslave us all to a single vision. We prove conclusively (in everything from 'dominion' to 'distinct') that language is a matter of treacherous, shifting meanings, always freighted with irony. The key to post-modernism is its 'questioning of any notion of coherent, stable, autonomous identity (be it individual or national)' - and what could be more Canadian than that?¹⁶

William Hatcher, mathematician and philosopher at Université Laval in Quebec City, describes postmodernism as an "ideological onslaught" on "the academic world [which] has become a battleground between purveyors of post-rational nonsense and those who care about intellectual integrity." Hatcher states that "[t]he perniciousness of postmodernist deconstructionism is that it constitutes an ideological attack on rationality itself."¹⁷ It is clear that there is no consensus on the usefulness of notions of postmodernism or, for that matter, its precise meaning.

For the purpose of this subject-specific investigation, I use the

¹⁵ Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 172.

¹⁶ Robert Fulford, "A Post-Modern Dominion: The Changing Nature of Canadian Citizenship," in William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 119.

¹⁷ William Hatcher, "Ideological Onslaught," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 26 February 2000, B5.

term to embrace a complex network of notions that are embodied in certain memory markers. Although the word "postmodern" suggests a chronologic implication - that it comes after modernism - I do not use it in this chronological sense. Traditional war memorials continue to be erected today. I have tried to stay away from using the word modern to avoid confusion with the art-historical use of the term Modernism with a capital M. I will use deconstruction, the demythologizing tool of postmodernism, not to demolish the myths embodied in traditional Canadian war memorials, but instead to underline the limitations of the narratives they present. In so doing, I will be suggesting a theory of the term "postmodern" as it relates to war memorials here in Canada.

TWO

Form: The Attributes of Remembering

In the course of the ages the work of art, created as a memorial to some great historical event, assumes an importance greater than the event itself. Posterity admires and treasures it for its own sake, and not for the cause that has brought it into being.

-P.G. Konody¹

All archives are whitewashing devices. The event is distanced from us once and for all by the very means available to us for remembering it.

-Jean Baudrillard²

What impact, if any, do a monument's formal elements have on its perception as either traditional or postmodern? To phrase the question slightly differently - How can the formal language of traditional memorials be approached so that the formal elements of a memory marker assume what may be called postmodern attributes? The aim of this chapter is to investigate the formal elements, including the use of text, employed in memory marker production in an attempt to address these two interrelated questions. However, it should be understood that form does not exist in isolation. Indeed, the concepts of form, function, and ideology are intimately intertwined in the production of meaning for any memory marker, and in the viewers' reception/perception of meaning from the work. To discuss form, function, and ideology as completely separate entities is an impossibility. So, while this chapter focuses on form, inevitably function and ideology creep into the discussion. The same may be said for Chapter Three, which focuses on

¹ "On War Memorials," in *Art And War: Canadian War Memorials*, (London: Colour Ltd, 1919), 5.

² *Paroxysm: Interviews with Philippe Petit*, Trans. by Chris Turner, (London: Verso, 1998), 30.

function, and Chapter Four, which focuses on ideology. This arrangement of three separate chapters is based on my desire to give structure to the thesis. The decision to start the investigation with form is based on the premise that function and ideology proceed from the material form that the memory marker employs.

Formal Elements

Robert Shipley speculates that, as a result of the repeated use of the same monument forms throughout history, monuments are able to communicate their message to the viewer by their form alone.³ This suggests that a sort of a *a priori* knowledge resides in the monument viewer. In the section that follows I will look at the forms that Steinman's *Cenotaph* present to the viewer, parallel these forms to those found in the monuments that are common to the Canadian urban landscape and relate these forms to their historical use. In so doing, I will simultaneously question the validity of Shipley's speculation about the viewer's *a priori* understanding of monument forms and consider how or if formal choices affect issues of postmodernism.

In writing about *Cenotaph* or any other memory marker site, it is inevitable that the original three-dimensional form be reduced to a one-dimensional representation in text and/or photograph. The following quote, originally written about *Cenotaph* but applicable within a wider context, may in some way evoke a sense of the components that are lost in representation: "Certain elements which made the work 'breathe' in its original form have disappeared: time, movement, scale, texture, hue, play of light, context, ambience, emplacement in space, points of

³ Shipley, 104.

viewing, extraneous sound."⁴ Each reinstallation of *Cenotaph* at a new site imparts a new context and new viewing conditions to the work. Equally, and just as dramatically, many extraneous elements affect the viewing conditions at civic war memorial sites. Therefore, textual descriptions and photographic reproductions of these three-dimensional forms can only be considered a fragment of the whole, a transitory impression.

Having said this, it is nonetheless true that from the many written descriptions of *Cenotaph*, words such as sobering, compelling, forceful and eloquent attest to its immediate readability as a monument. Steinman's use of an historical architectural vocabulary accounts for (in Shipley's formulation of *a priori* knowledge), *Cenotaph's* ability to communicate its sober message. In a National Gallery of Canada curatorial communiqué Diana Nemiroff describes *Cenotaph* in this way:

A pyramidal structure stands in the middle of a darkened room, its plexiglass apex glowing with flames reflected from a recorded video image on the monitor contained within. The three granite slabs with the quote from Arendt rest against the base of the pyramid. Light from three theater spots is bounced off their shiny surface so that their inscriptions are reflected in negative on the floor. Set into two arched openings in the walls of the room are two-way mirrors on which black and white slides are projected from behind. The images, fragments of figures and names carved into stone, faded portraits, a classroom picture, are hard to make out. Grainy details have been blown up and re-photographed, faces are blurred, sometimes printed in negative, grey overall like stony grave markers but evanescent here and tangible.⁵

Nemiroff's description of this contemporary multi-media installation reveals that much of *Cenotaph's* formal vocabulary, as well as the name itself, derives from a long memorial tradition: pyramidal structure,

⁴ Barbara Steinman, "*Cenotaph*," *Lumières, perception-projection: 1 août-2 novembre: les Cent jours d'art contemporain, Montréal 86*, (Montréal: Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1986), 122.

⁵ Diana Nemiroff, communiqué dated 10 December 1986, National Gallery of Canada Curatorial File #29574.

arched openings, glowing flames, granite slabs/stony grave markers, and inscriptions carved into stone.

Steinman's decision to title her installation *Cenotaph* has many implications, the most immediate being the link it provides to more traditional cenotaphs.⁶ The word "cenotaph" comes from Greek roots meaning "empty" and "tomb" and generally refers to a tomb or a monument erected to one or more persons whose remains are elsewhere. In the glossary of his book *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*, Robert Shipley writes that "although a cenotaph is often used in Canada to indicate a simple stone pylon, as opposed to a monument with sculpture, any memorial could be called a cenotaph in that it is a tomb where the bodies of those remembered are not actually placed."⁷ Alex King, author of the 1998 publication *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*, credits Sir Edwin Lutyens' Whitehall Cenotaph (1920) as a new form of monument developed in response to the Great War. This form quickly became incorporated into the canon of monumental types and was exploited by Lutyens' contemporaries and rivals.⁸ However, in claiming the cenotaph as a British invention, King fails to make clear its reliance on forms from the past such as obelisks and menhirs or standing stones. Clearly, the title of Steinman's installation links it firmly to a memorial tradition of the twentieth century and of centuries past.

The link to memorial tradition is also seen in Steinman's formal choices for *Cenotaph*. The installation resonates with the ancient forms of arch and pyramid that are also present in for example, the post-World

⁶ See footnote #8 for Steinman's own view.

⁷ Shipley, 174.

⁸ Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*, (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 128-155.

War I monument erected in Princeton, British Columbia (Figure 2). Described as essentially nothing more than a pile of stones, Shipley relates the Princeton monument form to a number of Biblical references. First, when the Israelites ended forty years in the wilderness and crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, they set up a pile of stones to be "a memorial unto the Children of Israel for ever" (Josh. 4:7). On defeating an enemy and burning the city, the Jews "raised a great heap of stones that remaineth to this day" (Josh. 10:29) and after his dream Jacob "set up a pillar in the place, ... even a pillar of stone" (Gen. 35:14). Shipley contends that this typological association with biblical forms "was to communicate a reverent mood."⁹ Stone cairns have been used throughout the centuries as memorial markers and landmarks. The raw material is readily available in most locales and their construction requires no tools and little imagination. While not strictly speaking a stone cairn, *Cenotaph* nonetheless does communicate a reverent mood and biblical associations may be inferred from other of its formal elements discussed below.

The pyramid and arch shapes are also present in Vernon March's National War Memorial in Ottawa (dedicated 1939) (Figure 3).¹⁰ The massive granite arch of the National War Memorial is clearly reminiscent of the triumphal arch used by Romans to celebrate and illustrate victorious military campaigns, an example being the Arch of Titus (CE 81) in Rome. Not as obvious is the pyramidal shape that the twenty-two

⁹ Shipley, 104-105.

¹⁰ For detail regarding the commission and completion of this monument see: Jonathan F. Vance, "The Great Response: Canada's long struggle to honour the dead of the Great War," *Beaver* 76.5 (Oct.-Nov. 1996), 28-32. Also Denise Thomson, "National Sorrow, National Pride: Commemoration of War in Canada, 1918-45," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30.4 (Winter 1995-96), 13-14; and Alan R. Young, "We Throw the Torch: Canadian memorials of the Great War and the mythology of heroic sacrifice," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24.4 (Winter 1989), 5-28.

figures representing the various branches of the service engaged in the war form as they pass through the arch which is surmounted by the symbolic figures of Peace and Freedom. It seems to me that this pyramid shape passing through the arched portal offers a visually balanced and harmonious composition that communicates a sense of stability and permanence to the viewer, a sense that the viewer is most likely unaware of at a conscious level. Yet stability and longevity are certainly two desirable traits for a fledgling nation like Canada to convey.

Although somewhat stunted, the overall shape of *Cenotaph* may also be seen as similar to the memorial obelisk at Curling, Newfoundland (Figure 4). The obelisk had its stylistic origin in ancient Egypt and it has been widely used as a monument form since. Although traditionally the obelisk itself would most likely have been engraved with the Pharaoh's name and victory boasts, Steinman has chosen to put her engraving on three granite slabs that rest against the base of the cenotaph. These engraved slabs recall contemporary grave markers as well as ancient Greek stele, upright slabs of stone used as monuments or grave markers.

As well, the "eternal flame" atop Steinman's pyramid has a long history with varied associations. The Ancient Greeks had a tradition of taking sacred fires from the temples in their home sites to newly colonized areas. The Jewish tradition of Hanukkah recalls an incident in the time of the Maccabean Revolt (2nd. Cent. BCE) when the temple lamps were miraculously kept burning. In the Book of Deuteronomy (4:24) God is likened to a flaming fire: the ultimate eternal flame. More recently, a stone or bronze representation of an eternal flame in remembrance of fallen soldiers became popular in Canada after the First World War.¹¹ Alex King attributes its popularity in Britain to lines

¹¹ Shipley, 175.

taken from Canadian poet John McCrae's now famous poem "In Flanders Fields" (1915):

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.¹²

It seems likely that these lines inspired Canadian monument builders as well as Vernon March, whose bronze figure of Freedom atop the National War Memorial holds her torch up high.

Whatever the association - Biblical, Egyptian, or Roman - in terms of formal choices Steinman's *Cenotaph* and the other memorials mentioned have the potential to evoke a thoughtful mood in the viewer, a conclusion which would support Shipley's *a priori* knowledge theory. However, over the years, the conventional monument seems to have lost much of its original potential. Although the once yearly ritual of remembrance at most Canadian monuments continues to draw crowds,¹³ on a daily basis the war memorial seems to exist primarily as a geographic landmark. It is as if, as Jean Baudrillard observes in the epigraph that prefaces this chapter, the very means available to the viewer for remembering, the archive (in this instance the monument) whitewashes and distances the event. The archive/monument offers a site where memory is contained. The viewer is released from the responsibility of remembering: the monument does the memory work for them.¹⁴

Unlike traditional monuments whose formal elements co-opt a static and stable architectural vocabulary from the past in order to construct

¹² King, 130-31.

¹³ *The Ottawa Sun's* Kathleen Harris reported that the crowd of 15,000 that turned out for the last Remembrance Day service of the century on Parliament Hill "was the largest in recent memory." 12 November 1999, 3.

¹⁴ Art writer Lucy Lippard and art historian Rosalind Krauss express a similar view with regard specifically to monuments and these views will be discussed and elaborated in the next chapter on monument function.

and consolidate the memory within its structural form, Steinman's installation employs the same formal elements to provoke a postmodern engagement with memory that requires the viewer to actively question what this monument might be suggesting. *Cenotaph's* use of a conventional monument's architectural vocabulary, coupled with the use of contemporary technology like slide projectors and a video loop, compels the viewer to reconcile old and new. While the viewing subject may immediately recognize *Cenotaph* as a memorial, in almost the same instant the viewer starts to realize this is not a conventional memorial: there is something not quite right about it. Where traditional monuments present a comforting unity of form, function, and ideology that provides the viewer with a sense of closure, *Cenotaph* presents a discomfoting fragmentation between form, function, and ideology that leaves the viewer with an uneasy sense of disclosure. *Cenotaph* provokes a "meditation on the evanescent phenomena of memory."¹⁵

Drawn toward the flickering 'eternal flame' atop the pyramidal structure, the viewer quickly discovers that what should be a source of warmth and comfort is instead a cold, impersonal video image reflected in the mirrored plexiglass top of the pyramid: a celluloid loop of videotape stands in for the eternal flame of hope and remembrance. This is not what our memory tells us a flickering flame should be. There is no cheery crackle to this cold and lifeless flame. As one writer observes, "the soundlessness of the piece produces a reverberation in the viewer's memory, initiating a process of witnessing and

¹⁵ Mark A. Cheetham with Linda Hutcheon, *Remembering Postmodernism: Trends in Recent Canadian Art*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991): 91.

recognition."¹⁶

What would traditionally be a four-sided cenotaph structure, is here three-sided. While the triangle may suggest varied associations and implications that are not monument-related, according to the exhibition catalogue essay in *Luminous Sites* this shape is intended to undermine the "masculine myths of power" represented by the traditional rectangular monument to the war dead, who are seen as heroes.¹⁷

The tranquility of the austere sanctuary is disrupted by sporadic flashes of grey and grainy images which appear and disappear from behind the mirrors set into the arched portals on either side of the room. Steinman's grainy and blurred images transform the rounded arches into gravestones, markers of death.¹⁸ Mark Cheetham suggests that the "fragmentation" of *Cenotaph* "productively duplicates the processes as well as the specific contents of memory: we as viewers are urged to find meaning by piecing together text, images, and our own recollections. The structural systems of memory in our culture are revealed, not masked."¹⁹ *Cenotaph* does not whitewash and distance; it draws the viewer in, requires the viewer to reflect, to look into their memory, to construct their own meaning. It disrupts and fragments the viewer's *a priori* understanding of monument form, thereby setting itself apart from traditional monuments.

¹⁶ Renée Baert, "Luminous Sites: 10 Video Installations," *Canadian Art* (Summer 1986), 89-91.

¹⁷ Daina Augaitis and Karen Henry, "Retrieving Culture," *Luminous Sites: 10 Video Installations*, (Vancouver: Video Inn/Western Front, 1986), 50-51.

¹⁸ This observation is made by two different writers: Salem Alaton, "Forcing hot images from a cold medium," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 August, 1986 writes "On two walls are tombstone-shaped windows in which shadowy slide-projector images of nameless persons appear."; and Sara Diamond, "On Off TV," *C Magazine* (Summer 1986) writes "The images are grainy, transforming the windows into gravestones."

¹⁹ Cheetham and Hutcheon, 92.

Use of Text

Like many other memory markers throughout history, *Cenotaph* is inscribed with text, in this case a quotation from Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (originally published 1951, 2nd edition 1958): "The radicalism of measures to treat people as if they had never existed and to make them disappear is frequently not apparent at first glance."²⁰ Does this particular choice of text contribute to setting *Cenotaph* apart from tradition? Is this text so different from the two most frequently used phrases on Canada's war memorials: "Lest we forget," and "Their name liveth for evermore"? In the section that follows I will examine what these three quotes (the first one from Arendt, and the second two which are closely associated with Rudyard Kipling) contribute to a viewer's perception and/or reception of the monument.

Initially I was convinced that there had to be a significant difference between the impact of these texts, given the historical context of their authors' lives, times and literary production. On the one hand we have Rudyard Kipling, an immensely popular author at the turn of the twentieth century who believed strongly in the "White Man's Burden" to spread Western concepts of law, literacy and moral standards of conduct all over the globe. It has been argued that, as an Imperial War Graves Commissioner, Kipling played an influential role in creating

²⁰ Steinman mentioned that the engraved quote was an afterthought because the work seemed somehow incomplete. She chose the Arendt quote because it seemed appropriate to the circumstances of the original installation in Lyon as explained earlier. Steinman conveyed her great admiration for Arendt's ideas and moral philosophy contained in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963). Interview: Montreal, July 26, 2000.

war propaganda literature.²¹ He was a man caught between a nineteenth-century sense of duty to civilize the world and a growing realization of just how uncivilized men and warfare in the twentieth century had become. On the other hand there is Hannah Arendt, intellectual and philosopher. Not a "popular" author, although well known in academic circles, her most influential text, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) was written in response to events of World War II, in particular the Holocaust. This text is an analysis of the process of producing a "totalitarian" state in which a genocide such as the Holocaust can occur. Arendt was well aware of the human potential for evil. Although the three phrases in question do have socio-political origins which potentially impart significant context and meaning to the monuments on which they are engraved, many of today's viewers are likely unaware of the phrases' origins.

If the historical origins of the phrases in question have little impact on the viewer's perception of the monument, perhaps a difference is located in "fragmentation". As mentioned above, Cheetham argues that the use of fragmentation in *Cenotaph* productively duplicates the processes as well as the specific contents of memory - the viewer must find meaning by piecing together text. It is true that the viewer is forced to circle *Cenotaph* in order to read the entire Arendt quote, and it is true that each fragment of the quote is in itself highly suggestive. "The radicalism of measures to treat people as if..." - as

²¹ Charles Carrington, Kipling's "official" biographer writes that on all questions of moulding public opinion Kipling was consulted since his friends were in office and when Sir Max Aitken formed the Ministry of Information he tried hard to draw Kipling in though Kipling would never submit to any routine writing of sponsored propaganda. *Rudyard Kipling*, 3rd ed., (London: Macmillan, 1978), 512. Alan R. Young disagrees: "Though biographers such as Charles Carrington appear to deny Kipling's role in the Allied propaganda machine, Kipling in fact, as Peter Buitenhuis has convincingly argued, played an influential role in creating propaganda and propaganda fiction." "We Throw the Torch," 12.

if what? Each viewer, whether consciously or unconsciously, completes the thought in their own head, thus incorporating their own subjective position into the memorial process. It could be argued that this observation is equally true of the Kipling phrases. "Lest we forget" - forget what? "Their name liveth for evermore" - whose name? Without an historical context, these sentence fragments are just as suggestive to the viewer.

However, if we return to Shipley's *a priori* theory, I would argue that most Canadian viewers, when confronted with Kipling's sentence fragments on conventional war memorials, think they know precisely what and who is being referred to. The "what" is war, and the "who" refers to those who gave their lives. Engraved phrases are a part of monument tradition. I would suggest that *Cenotaph* sets itself apart from tradition by disrupting the viewers' *a priori* understanding of who and what is being referred to by the text. *Cenotaph's* engraving does not refer to a specific place, time, or group of people.

Maya Lin's use of text on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM), dedicated 1982 in Washington, D.C. (Figure 5), also disrupts memorial convention. Traditionally, names on war memorials have been listed alphabetically in vertical columns, if at all. Defying convention, the VVM lists the names of each American who died in Vietnam chronologically and horizontally, thus creating a narrative of death on the two intersecting walls that function like pages of a book. In a September 1981 *National Review* editorial titled "Stop That Monument," William F. Buckley launched an attack on the monument's aesthetics and perceived ideologies. Buckley observed that "the mode of listing the names makes them individual deaths, not deaths in a cause." He concluded that if the monument had to be built then "stick it off in some tidal flat" and

"let us memorialize with suitable sculpture."²² Yet Buckley criticized the precise elements that make Lin's monument and text so evocative to the viewer. Few people are not moved when confronted with the volume of names (over 58,000), each representing an "individual death" - an individual life.

An even less traditional use of text is illustrated by Jochen and Esther Gerz's *Harburg Monument Against Fascism* (1986-93, Figure 6). Briefly, this monument was unveiled in 1986 in Harburg, a suburb of the German city of Hamburg. Originally 12 meters high and one meter square, the column was plated with a thin layer of soft lead and designed to disappear over time into the ground. A temporary, multi-lingual inscription at its base read:

We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so, we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12 meter tall lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely, and the site of the Harburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the end, it is only we ourselves who can rise up against injustice.²³

At this monument site, the act of engraving involved the viewer. Instead of the expression of a single point of view, a multiplicity of voices is represented. The graffiti or engraving became the material trace of the subject, the viewer. Although the column disappeared over a period of seven years, the material trace of the subject is still visible through a small window which offers a side view of the column.²⁴ James Young observes that this monument "flouts any number of cherished memorial conventions."²⁵ This is certainly true with regard to its

²² "Stop That Monument," *National Review*, 18 September 1981, 1064.

²³ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 30.

²⁴ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, (London: Reaktion, 1998), 184.

²⁵ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 30.

memorial text. This monument not only invites the viewer to actively participate in the creation of their own narrative - their own memory text - but also invites "its own violation and desanctification."²⁶ This monument reduces the value of the object in order to increase the value of the subject, for it is within the viewing subject that memory and remembering reside. It is in the disruption of "cherished memorial convention" that the postmodern monument is able to set itself apart. The immutable engraved inscription of a single voice is here replaced by a mutating multi-vocality: active participation replaces passive viewing.

To wrap up this chapter on a monument's formal attributes including the use of text, I would conclude that it is in the disruption of the viewer's *a priori* understanding of monument form that a memory marker is able to set itself apart from convention and enter into a realm of what may be called postmodernism. However, disruption of monument convention in the area of formal attributes is not the only route to setting a monument apart. Monument function is the next area to explore in this inquiry into what constitutes a postmodern war memorial.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

THREE

Function: The Business of Remembering

How better to remember forever a vanished people than by the perpetually unfinished, ever-vanishing monument?

-James E. Young¹

The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs - hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past.

-Pierre Nora²

In the previous chapter it was established that *Cenotaph* and other monuments that may be considered postmodern set themselves apart from monument tradition by disrupting the viewers' *a priori* understanding of what a monument should look like. Their formal attributes transgress or violate the viewers' normative way of seeing, forcing the viewer into a new critical awareness of the monument. If disruption of traditional forms sets *Cenotaph* apart, is it possible that disruption of conventional monument function can do the same? While the concept of formal attributes seemed clear and therefore required no lengthy explanation, what is meant here by monument function needs some clarification. The business of a monument is to serve as a reminder, to prod memory. To perform this job, monuments may function in a variety of ways: as permanent installations; as ephemeral entities such as temporary, traveling, or disappearing installations; and as sites of performance, both ritual and interventionist.

Once again, *Cenotaph* offers a nucleus from which discussion of

¹ *The Texture of Memory*, 31.

² "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 13.

monument function may radiate outward. If *Cenotaph* sets itself against conventional monument function, then what is meant by traditional monument function - what is considered conventional? Traditionally, the majority of public war memorials in Canada function as permanent installations. When one thinks of permanent installation in regard to public monuments, one tends to conjure up the local war memorial, that ubiquitous fixture of so many Canadian communities. Although more elaborate than those of a city such as Montreal (Figure 7), or Quebec communities like Verdun (Figure 8), St. Lambert (Figure 9) and Montreal West (Figure 10), Ottawa's National War Memorial (Figure 3) offers a good example of a traditional monument that functions as a permanent installation. Here is a land-anchored installation that has, over the years, become even more solidly positioned within the community. Located at the convergence of Sparks, Rideau, Elgin and Wellington streets, this monument is quite literally the hub of activity in downtown Ottawa. Over the years, numerous modifications have been made to the area around the installation to accommodate better traffic flow. The result has been to cut off easy pedestrian access to the monument, effectively turning the site into an island surrounded by a sea of asphalt. For those willing to navigate the daytime traffic and reach the monument site, a quiet moment for reflection and remembering is next to impossible with traffic a constant companion.

Daily life flows around this monument site. Ottawa citizens and workers go about their business barely acknowledging the monument's presence. For them, it is an unseen part of their daily lives - a difficult locale to navigate by foot or in the car. Yet drivers do occasionally slow down to point out the monument to vehicle occupants, presumably visitors to Ottawa. One might well wonder what impact this brief glimpse of the monument has on these viewers, perhaps more

correctly referred to as sight-see-ers. In this same vein, occasional visitors to the monument site seem more intent on snapping souvenir photos than on taking a moment to reflect on the monument's meaning. These seem to be routine ways of "seeing" conventional public monuments. The National War Memorial fits the viewers' expectations, fits their a priori understanding of what a monument should look like and how it should function. It does not disrupt or intrude, instead it reinforces and confirms monument tradition.

Art historian Rosalind Krauss has observed that the modernist period produced monuments unable to refer to anything beyond themselves as pure marker or base.³ In the most literal sense of Krauss's observation, the Ottawa National War Memorial serves as pure marker or base. In a literal sense it continues to be visible as a geographic landmark by which to orient oneself in Ottawa or as an item on a list of sights to see. Yet one could argue that it has become, in a metaphoric sense, invisible to many people on a day-to-day basis as a war memorial.⁴

In this metaphoric sense, Lucy Lippard echoes Rosalind Krauss when she states that monuments are often "sterile pronouncements of the

³ *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985): 280. It is important here to note that Krauss's use of the terms modern and postmodern (in relation to sculptural practice in general), differs somewhat from the way that I am developing their use in relation to war memorials. We are both however relating the terms to similar time frames: 1890 to the 1960s - modern; late 60s onward - postmodern.

⁴ For further discussion of the notion of invisibility see Werner Fenz, "The Monument is Invisible, the Sign Visible," trans. Maria-Regina Kecht, *October* 48 (Spring 1989), 75-78. Fenz's opening sentence is: "Robert Musil's [1957] remark that a monument is immune to public attention, thus 'invisible,' is an old and hackneyed phrase. But as it bears on the issue of art in the public space, the remark gets to the core of the matter, even when taken out of its historical context." As well, Andreas Hussyen writes: "Monuments articulate official memory, and their fate is to be toppled or to become invisible." "Sculpture, Materiality and Memory in an Age of Amnesia," *Displacements*, (Toronto: AGO, 1998), 31.

obligation to honor a truly dead past that occupies only a static place in the ongoing present."⁵ The National War Memorial itself may certainly be seen as a sterile and static island in a swirling sea of the ongoing present. As the city and monument site change and adapt to the demands of urban life in the new millennium, Vernon March's monument remains static, unchanged except for its surroundings since its dedication three generations ago. Ironically, the recent addition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (a three-tiered granite sarcophagus with a bronze relief sculpture as a lid), on the upper plaza of the monument site, has given the site some new life. Viewed against the backdrop of the March monument, the Tomb has become a new focus, a new attraction for visitors on the site. But does the monument site truly intervene in daily public space in the way that Lucy Lippard suggests?

Lippard states: "Monuments to social tragedies should intervene in daily public space, lest responsibility be displaced." To illustrate this point, Lippard offers the following example:

Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is a rare monument that has become a place in itself rather than a reference to another place and time. It overwhelms the conventional bronzes nearby - Frederick Hart's heroic soldiers and Glenna Goodacre's noble nurses - demanded by conservatives who were outraged by the great black wall and its youthful Asian designer. Most literal representations are melodramatic and banal to an extreme, but abstracted monuments can seem to deny experience. Monumental architecture and sculpture rarely hold their own against space and time.⁶

Thus, today March's memorial is not a place in itself; it is a reference to another place and time. Although the recent addition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has renewed public interest in the site, only time will tell if it will become a pilgrimage site in the same way that the VVM has. This seems unlikely because the National War Memorial, Tomb

⁵ Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, (New York: New Press, 1997), 107.

⁶ Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*, 107.

included, is a comfortable monument site, its monumental architecture and sculpture conforming to customary codes and expectations.⁷ It does not deny experience: its literal representations contain experience. There is no need for the viewer to remember because the monument carries the burden of memory.⁸ Thus, on a day-to-day basis, the business of remembering has been overshadowed at this monument site where the object, the literal representation, constructed as an act of remembrance and to perpetuate memory, becomes the actual memory. If this visually imposing monument can become invisible in this metaphoric sense, what of all the less imposing monuments scattered across the country. This is not to say that permanently installed monuments are invisible to all people all the time. There will always be those among us for whom the monument site is a visible reminder: veterans of war, relatives of those who died in the wars, scholars of history and art history, to name a few. However, in general, our war memorials have become invisible.

Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, despite being permanently installed, indeed, land-anchored in the extreme (its horizontal intersecting retaining walls are literally wedged into the earth), is an

⁷ Although many who view the National War Memorial sculpture would disagree with Lippard's observation that literal representation tends to the melodramatic and banal, Christine Boyanoski writes that Frances Loring described March's monument as "cheap melodrama," although this may simply be a case of sour grapes, as Loring's own design for the competition did not win the commission. *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, (Toronto: AGO, 1987), 34. Jonathan Vance also mentions Loring's dismissal of the March design as "cheap melodrama" in his essay "The Great Response."

⁸ This notion of the monument containing the memory - doing the memory work is not uncommon. See for instance: James E. Young, "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young, (New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1994). On page 20 Young writes: "memorials may not concentrate memory so much as displace it altogether, relieving a community of its own, interior memory work."; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989). Along with the epigraph I have used at the beginning of this chapter, Nora writes: "Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (13). In other words, the material trace (the monument), becomes the memory.

active site of remembering. Since its dedication in 1982, it has become a pilgrimage site for those who want to see it and experience it. Year after year, the millions of people who visit this site actively participate in an ongoing public performance of reconciliation and reflection. Far from a static and sterile island of buried memory, the VVM has become an oasis where memory work can and does take place. It is interesting to note that in the visual sense the VVM is, from a distance, literally invisible in its grassy two-acre setting on the Mall, whereas the National Memorial in Ottawa is quite visible from a distance, especially if approached from the south. For those who seek out the "invisible" VVM, it becomes highly "visible" when confronted, its abstracted form placing responsibility for memory work back onto the viewer. It draws the viewer into an active experience of history and memory. There are no literal representations to contain the memory - to allow the viewer to play a passive role. The VVM demands the viewers' attention and respect. Harriet Senie writes: "In January 1991, a demonstration held against the Gulf War terminated at the D.C. monument; a Vietnam vet asked that the protest banners be left outside the mourning space of the memorial. All complied."⁹ The VVM's disruption of conventional monument form and function forces the viewer into a new critical awareness of his or her a priori understanding.¹⁰

⁹ Harriet Senie, "Mourning in Protest: Spontaneous Memorials and the Sacralization of Public Space," in *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999), 24.

¹⁰ Kyo Maclear expresses a similar view in her book *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 25. She writes that the VVM's presence as an elegiac wound on the otherwise suturing memorial landscape of the Mall invites public mourning. The tension between its nonheroic form (polished black granite walls), and its honorific promise (over 58,000 names of U.S. casualties) cannot be synthesized. "Because its testimony is both direct and indirect, because it refuses to employ familiar symbols of patriotism and glory (flags, fallen soldiers, tanks), it returns the burden of memory and meaning to its visitors." As well, Catherine M. Howett, in her 1985 *Landscape* (vol. 28, no. 2) article "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Public

Lin's memorial is a rare example of a successful public memorial site. Public war memorials in Canada, despite strategic sites and, in some instances, innovative design do not stimulate dialogue with the viewer. Like the National War Memorial in Ottawa, the Montreal cenotaph (Figure 7) is strategically located in the heart of the city at Place du Canada at the intersection of René Lévesque Boulevard and Peel Street. Unlike the distinctive monumental sculpture of the National War Memorial which may draw in curious visitors, the Montreal cenotaph design is commonplace and unremarkable. It is doubtful that the average Montrealer is aware that this modest pylon-type monument is the site of annual Remembrance Day services. Even the innovative (for its time), design of Elizabeth Wyn Wood's Welland-Crowland War Memorial (1934) (Figure 11) fails to enjoy the success of the VVM. This work consists of two symbolic figures, - Man the Defender, Woman the Giver - against a background of growing grain and young red pine. Natalie Luckyj writes that the "major innovation in the design lies in Wood's inclusion of the base as a central point of reference for the whole sculpture in order to draw in the viewer as an active participant in the dramatic content of the work."¹¹ Wood's figures, although not literal representations, may still be described using the same adjectives Lippard applies to traditional monumental sculpture: heroic, noble, and melodramatic. Wood's design has not held its own against time: it appears quite conventional today.

Thus, over the years many traditional war memorials, despite significant locations within the community, and despite (in some

Art and Politics," writes: "The jurors liked the fact that it [the VVM proposal] avoided conventional symbolism. One juror remarked that 'in a heterogeneous society symbols don't work; they arrest thought rather than expanding it'" (4-6).

¹¹ Natalie Luckyj, *Visions and Victories: 10 Canadian Women Artists 1914-1945*, (London, Ont.: London Regional Art Gallery, 1983), 12.

instances) innovative and glorious designs, have lost their purpose - to function as memory prods. The public has become comfortable with their presence. The monuments are a part of daily life; they do not intrude on daily life. For many permanently installed monuments the business seems to be forgetting, not remembering.

Cenotaph is in the business of evoking memory. Acquired by the National Gallery of Canada in 1986 for its permanent collection, *Cenotaph* is not permanently on display, and it may be considered an ephemeral installation. Indeed, Steinman suggests that it is the installations's ephemerality that makes it an effective communicator. *Cenotaph's* is not a didactic presence - it is an evocative presence. It does not recall a specific historic event; it leaves viewers free to make their own connections. In this way its meanings/messages transcend time and place.¹² A communiqué written by Diana Nemiroff in the curatorial file on *Cenotaph* suggests that it was acquired because it defied monument tradition. Where traditional cenotaphs honour those who fought and died, Nemiroff writes that Steinman's *Cenotaph* "is a monument to those hundreds of thousands in our century who have been obliterated by their own governments: Jews, Indians [sic], political dissidents, and 'enemies' of the state, and frequently innocents." Where traditional monuments tend to contain history and to do the memory work for us, "*Cenotaph* is about the tragedy of historical erasures; it evokes what is not seen and what can only be obliquely remembered. Yet it insists eloquently on the obligation to do the work of remembering."¹³ To accomplish this, *Cenotaph* functions as both temporary and traveling installation.

¹² Interview: Montreal, July 26, 2000.

¹³ Diana Nemiroff, National Gallery of Canada, Curatorial File #29574.

Of its temporary (1988-89) installation in the National Gallery of Canada, Mark Cheetham observes that *Cenotaph* "questions both how and what we remember as individuals and as a society" and "probes the conventionalization of recollection." He concludes that *Cenotaph* "does not lecture; it instructs by giving us the opportunity to experience - and question - the norms of public commemoration."¹⁴ Unlike the permanently installed public monument which is always present but "seen" by few, the temporary installation exists for only a short while during which it is actively sought out by many. Indeed, as the temporary exhibition draws to an end there is often a heightened urgency to view the installation before it disappears from sight.

In addition, where traditional permanent installations are tied to specific geographical locations, *Cenotaph* has the opportunity to travel: it is portable. *Cenotaph* takes on new meaning with each installation. It has been noted that "*Cenotaph* is strangely and effectively a portable monument, site- and meaning-contingent rather than site- and meaning-specific."¹⁵ In Lyon, France (1985) it was exhibited in the building next to St. Joseph's Prison where Klaus Barbie, former head of the Gestapo in Lyon, awaited trial. Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver, where it was exhibited in 1986, turned out to be the site of a former prison. At the 19th São Paulo *Bienal* in Brazil (1987) it struck a "strong chord in a continent where almost every nation has a roster of victims of political violence."¹⁶ Wherever *Cenotaph* is shown viewers make their own associations: it is a "floating signifier which

¹⁴ *Remembering Postmodernism*, 92.

¹⁵ Bruce Ferguson, "The Art of Memory: Barbara Steinman," *Vanguard* 18.3 (Summer 1989), 11.

¹⁶ Marlise Simons, "'Utopia Versus Reality' in Brazil's Art Biennial," *The New York Times*, 9 December 1987, C24.

always, magnetically, finds new signifieds."¹⁷ This is in contrast to traditional monuments that may be viewed as fixed signifiers which constantly refer back to themselves - more specifically - to a fixed interpretation of another place and time. The monument is the exterior scaffolding, the outward sign, the archive, that, in Pierre Nora's words, "attempt[s] at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past."

In terms of ephemeral installation, we can also consider the disappearing monument. The Harburg Monument (Figure 6), previously discussed in terms of its postmodern use of text, functions in another postmodern fashion: it disappeared over a period of seven years (1986-93). In his book *The Texture of Memory*, James Young discusses the Harburg Monument, which its designers, conceptual artists Jochen and Esther Gerz, call a *Gegen-Denkmal* (countermonument) to indicate their scepticism about what they viewed as the traditional function of a memorial: to ameliorate memory and to tell people what to think. Young writes that "their monument against fascism, therefore, would amount to a monument against itself: against the traditionally didactic function of monuments, against their tendency to displace the past they would have us contemplate - and finally, against the authoritarian propensity in all art that reduces viewers to passive spectators."¹⁸

According to Young the Gerzes belong to a new generation of artists in Germany who struggle with the difficulty of separating the monument from its fascist past. Young observes that "German memory-artists are heirs to a double-edged postwar legacy: a deep distrust of monumental forms in light of their systematic exploitation by the Nazis, and a profound desire to distinguish, through memory, their generation

¹⁷ Ferguson, 11.

¹⁸ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 28.

from that of the killers."¹⁹ Defying convention, the Gerzes refused the "sun-dappled park setting" offered to them by the city of Hamburg, choosing instead the commercial center of Harburg, "a somewhat dingy suburb". Their lead-covered column mocked tradition: it called for its own desecration as it slowly sank from view. According to Young, the vanishing monument returns the burden of memory to the visitor.²⁰ Young contends that for this new generation of German artists, "instead of searing memory into public consciousness, conventional memorials seal memory off from awareness altogether; instead of embodying memory, such memorials may only displace memory."²¹ Young suggests that we become forgetful by encouraging monuments to do our memory work for us. For German artists the need to counter traditional monument function has been more urgent than for artists in North America, where the monument form is not immediately associated with Nazi fascism.

Nonetheless, the works of artists like Maya Lin and Barbara Steinman are also meant to question and confront the "traditional monuments' essential stiffness and grandiose pretensions to permanence."²² Are they countermonuments in the sense of what is happening in Germany? No - but they may certainly be regarded as counter-monuments in that they function in an opposite manner to traditional monuments.

Having looked at permanent and ephemeral installations, we now turn to a consideration of the monument as site of performance, both ritual and interventionist. The monument as site of performance has

¹⁹ "Memory and Counter-Memory," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999): 5.

²⁰ *The Texture of Memory*, 30.

²¹ "Memory and Counter-Memory," 8.

²² Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 6.

been mentioned previously, in passing, with regard to public participation/performance at the VVM and the Harburg Monument, two postmodern monuments. Yet, ritual and/or interventionist performance at the site of traditional monuments does not make the monument postmodern.

Each year, on November 11th, the National War Memorial in Ottawa, like other memorials in cities and communities across Canada, is the site of a ritual Remembrance Day service. Robert Shipley writes that "few ritual observances have consistently involved as broad a spectrum of the society as Remembrance Day ceremonies."²³ The ceremony at the National War Memorial, although more elaborate than those in most communities, nonetheless follows a ritualized format that centers on a period of silence. Shipley describes the ritual:

At a critical point in the service the bugle sounds, "The Last Post." That is the traditional end to the soldier's day. The Last Post symbolizes death and is followed by two minutes of silence. The silence is usually timed to coincide with the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. That was the moment the First Great War ended in 1918. During the silence we reflect on the dead and mourn their passing.²⁴

During this period of silence and reflection the monument locale becomes a site of active participation in the memory process. Of this "Great Silence" Alex King writes: "The dead were now recognized as heroic principally through the wordless memory of them, rather than by rhetorically enumerating their qualities. What they had actually been like, as soldiers or as ordinary people, was left, in this sacred moment, to individual memory or imagination."²⁵

Pierre Nora writes that "the observance of a commemorative minute of silence [is] an extreme example of a strictly symbolic action, [and]

²³ *To Mark Our Place*, 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

²⁵ *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 229.

serves as a concentrated appeal to memory by literally breaking a temporal continuity."²⁶ So it is the symbolic action, the ritual moment of silence, and not the nearby National War Memorial that appeals to memory. The monument is simply a convenient but not altogether necessary backdrop for the ritual. This is highlighted by the fact that the Remembrance Day service of 1999 took place on Parliament Hill around a very plain pylon-type makeshift cenotaph (Figure 15) owned by Public Works Canada. Because of construction around the National War Memorial, the makeshift model was set up on the broad walkway leading up to the Peace Tower. The ceremony took place as usual. According to Canadian War Museum Special Events Coordinator Morgan Wright, this makeshift cenotaph is used on various occasions and at diverse locations.²⁷ By noon the next day the cenotaph had vanished. As a site of ritual performance, the monument serves as the locus of activity but not as the focus of activity. It is the ritual that activates memory, not the monument.

The same may be said of interventionist performance at a monument site. Intervention at a war memorial site may be as simple as an anti-war demonstration by people with placards, or as elaborate as Krzysztof Wodiczko's *South African War Memorial Projection* (Toronto, 1983) (Figure 12). Wodiczko's memorial intervention is contemporary to and intersects with elements of Steinman's *Cenotaph*.²⁸ For his 1983 intervention,

²⁶ "Between Memory and History," 19.

²⁷ Interview, May 23, 2000 at Vimy House, Ottawa. Morgan Wright could not confirm what the stand-in cenotaph was constructed of. However, when I arrived at the site the next morning in time to see it being loaded into a Public Works truck, it appeared to be numerous wood blocks painted to simulate granite.

²⁸ The 1980s seem to have marked a turning point in the questioning of traditional monument form, function and ideology. The VVM (1982), *Cenotaph* (1985) and the Harburg Monument (1986-93) are three examples of monuments that question, as are Wodiczko's numerous public projections (1980s) of

Wodiczko projected an image of a hand gripping a knife and stabbing downwards onto the column in downtown Toronto that commemorates the British victory in South Africa. Like all of his projections, the Toronto victory column projection occurred at night and lasted only a brief time, although the event lives on in photographs. Both Steinman and Wodiczko employ the slide projector, a tool used in teaching art history, to create new subjects for art history. As well, one hears echoes of Steinman's own concerns in the following statement that Wodiczko makes concerning his numerous memorial projections:

The aim of the memorial projection is not to "bring life" to or "enliven" the memorial nor to support the happy, uncritical, bureaucratic "socialization" of its site, but to reveal and expose to the public the contemporary deadly life of the memorial. The strategy of the memorial projection is to attack the memorial by surprise, using slide warfare, or to take part in and infiltrate the official cultural programs taking place on its site.²⁹

Steinman's *Cenotaph* also critiques the ideological construction of collective public memory in war memorials. Like Wodiczko's slides, Steinman's blurred images are not meant to "bring life" to or "enliven" the monument. Rather the grainy images transform the rounded arches where they are projected into gravestones. At the same time as *Cenotaph* questions the construction of official history, it observes how in fact official history buries the past. This view is echoed in Wodiczko's memorial projections, which are intended to reveal "the obscene necro-ideology of memorial icons, the naked, cold bodies of monumentally frozen goddesses, gods, and heroes of our glorious massacres of humanity."³⁰

varied images onto monuments and public buildings in cities such as Venice and New York in order to disrupt/critique official meaning at the site. For a comprehensive discussion of his projections see: *October* 38 (Fall 1986), 3-51.

²⁹ Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Public Projections," *October* 38 (Fall 1986): 10.

³⁰ Wodiczko, 4-6.

Both Steinman's and Wodiczko's works reveal the structural systems of memory in our culture, and both force the viewer to question the monument as a mode of memory construction.³¹ Cheetham writes that "[t]his sense of inviting viewers to participate - to recognize their inevitable complicity in the discourses of their society, perhaps, but thereby also to offer alternatives - is a typically postmodern mode of political commentary."³² But whereas *Cenotaph*, the object, achieves this postmodernity, it is Wodiczko's action of intervention - not the monument/object - that achieves postmodern status. With intervention, as with ritual, people are drawn to the event, not the object *per se*.

In an attempt to sum up this section on monument function, a number of observations can be made. Generally speaking, traditional monuments are permanent installations where meaning is as fixed as their place in the landscape: static sites of buried memory that tend toward invisibility in a metaphoric sense. When a monument, such as the VVM, can transcend this fixity despite being a permanent installation, it enters into the realm of postmodernism, where meaning is fluid and memory work is activated. The late-twentieth century has been marked by a disruption of conventional monument function and has seen the rise of ephemeral installations such as *Cenotaph* and the Harburg Monument. This new type of memory marker encourages the viewer to question the conventional monument's construction of history and collective memory.

³¹ It is important to note here that since the early 1980s many more Canadian artists' are addressing similar issues. For example, Cyril Reade's 1995 installation *Minyan* and his 1999 installation *Office Life* both use the language of traditional monuments to question official constructions of history that traditional monuments represent. Like Wodiczko, Christian Boltanski, who was born in and continues to live and work in Paris, France, uses photographs and projections extensively in his work. Many of his exhibitions are Holocaust-related and address issues of memory and death. His 1985 installation *Monument: The Children of Dijon* has many parallels with Steinman's *Cenotaph*.

³² *Remembering Postmodernism*, 92.

When a monument functions as a site of ritual and/or interventionist performance, it is the event or action that engages the public, not the monument. This type of performance momentarily disrupts a traditional monument's historic immutability by engaging it with the present; it does not make the monument postmodern.

FOUR

Ideology: The Politics of Remembering

Both a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities of the moment.

-James E. Young¹

A marble monument might be erected for the answers; but who would think of building one for the question.

-Edmond Jabès²

The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.

-Ernest Renan³

It now seems fairly clear that *Cenotaph* is what may be considered a postmodern monument. Although it relies on traditional forms so that it may be recognized by the viewer as a memorial/monument, it disrupts and fragments these forms, forcing the viewer to rethink his or her a *priori* expectations. This in turn allows the memory marker to fulfil its dialogic function, drawing the viewer in, stimulating new awareness, asking questions, not presenting answers. Rather than reinforcing traditional methods of representation and modes of reception, convention is defamiliarized by memory works like *Cenotaph*. The postmodern monument forces viewers into a new critical awareness of the work and of their own position *vis-à-vis* the work and the place and time in which they exist.

¹ James E. Young, "Memory and Counter Memory," 6.

² Edmond Jabès, "Intimations the Desert," *The Book of Resemblances*, Vol 11. This quote is found on the back page of *Uncertain Monuments* (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1992). Barbara Steinman helped to design this exhibition catalogue and she chose this quotation because she felt it got to the heart of what a monument is supposed to be about - questions, not answers. Interview: Montreal, July 26, 2000.

³ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 11.

James Young observes that "a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities of the moment." In other words, a monument is constructed out of a particular reality and the monument in turn becomes a material sign of that reality: ideology made visible. This chapter will look at the ideologically intertwined constructions of nationalism, race and gender in selected traditional and postmodern monuments.

Traditional monuments try to construct fixed ideologies. American art history professor Kirk Savage has observed that traditionally, U.S. public monuments have celebrated and cemented a progressive narrative of national history. He writes: "Commemoration was a process of condensing the moral lessons of history and fixing them in place for all time; this required that the object of commemoration be understood as a completed stage of history, safely nestled in a sealed-off past." Along similar lines of fixed ideology Savage also contends that "[m]emorials to heroes and events were not meant to revive old struggles and debates but to put them to rest - to show how great men and their deeds had made the nation better and stronger."⁴ Although these observations are about an American context, they seem to hold true for many western nations, including Canada.⁵

It is a generally acknowledged and accepted part of "national mythology" that Canada, especially English Canada, grew to nationhood

⁴ Kirk Savage, "The Past in the Present: The Life of Memorials," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999): 14.

⁵ Anne McClintock also writes about the notion of linear national progress in her essay "No Longer in a Future Heaven," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 89-112. McClintock offers insights into the gendering and racialization of nationalism, bringing into the discussion theorists such as Tom Nairn, Homi Bhabha, Benedict Anderson and Frantz Fanon.

through its participation in and experience of World War I: that the Great War was a kind of Canadian rite of passage.⁶ Daniel Francis offers a typical version of this myth:

The master narrative presents both world wars as heroic struggles to preserve a way of life from enemies who would overwhelm it. According to the master narrative, the sacrifice of all those young lives was valorous and meaningful. War is horrible, but its horror is redeemed by noble sacrifice. This is the official memory of the war. It is unambiguous and idealistic. It invokes the war to promote unity and patriotism. The belief that Canada "came of age" at Vimy Ridge, for example, sanctions the slaughter, makes it purposeful, repays in part the debt we owe to the men who died there.⁷

The more factual reality of Canada's emergence as a nation post-World War I is even obscured in historian and director of the Canadian War Museum Jack Granatstein's account in his book *Who Killed Canadian History?*. In a chapter devoted to war and remembrance in Canada, and full of castigations for the mistreatment of the wars' history within academia, Granatstein at one point writes: "Still, the world wars and Canada's role in them are important, too important to be forgotten or to go untaught in the schools. In the Great War, Canada was a colony that had neither a role nor a voice in the decision to begin hostilities." After a discussion of the conscription crisis caused by "French-speaking

⁶ Alan R. Young writes: "In Canada, moreover, the continuity has been strengthened by the existence of a national mythology that sees the Great War as a kind of Canadian rite de passage." "We Throw the Torch," 20. In a similar vein Denise Thomson writes that "Canadian commemoration...came to celebrate Canada's achievement of independent nationhood," and that the successes of Canadian troops at battles such as Vimy Ridge (1917) "helped crystallize national identity." "National Sorrow, National Pride," 7. Douglas How writes that "victory on Vimy Ridge crystallized a feeling among the soldiers that they were more than Albertans or Nova Scotians - that they were Canadians. And thus, it is said, modern Canada was born." "A Literature of Stone," *MacLeans* (Nov. 9/98), 92. This ideology is also present in postwar literature which Peter Buitenhuis claims develops Lord Beaverbrook's (Max Aitken) idea "that the trenches of Flanders were the baptismal font of the new nation." *The Great War of Words*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1987), 155.

⁷ Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 126.

Canadians, farmers, and recent immigrants", Granatstein ends this brief segment with the following:

...the Great War made Canadians conscious that they were a nation. Half the men who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War were British-born. But the Canadian Corps established such a reputation for ferocity in attack that the immigrant colonials found themselves transformed into Canadians. Many veterans recalled attacking at Vimy Ridge in April 1917 as soldiers of the empire, but waking up the day after their great victory as Canadians, full of pride at their maple leaf badges. The war mattered to Canadians, and it gave them a sense of nationhood that has helped to define this country ever since.⁸

Yes, Canada entered the Great War as a colony of the British Empire and emerged from the experience a nation. But it was not because victorious soldiers woke up one morning and thought of themselves as Canadians. Canada became a nation as a result of its extraordinary response to the war in terms of material goods and manpower and its unprecedented loss of lives during the entire war (Canada experienced the highest per capita loss of soldiers). Because of this, Canada was given its own seat as an independent country at the negotiating table at the end of the war. No matter how one looks at it, the Great War was an important turning point in the conception of Canada as a nation. It stands to reason that monuments commemorating this event would in some way reflect this newfound sense of Canadianness.⁹

Denise Thomson asserts that new commemorative forms and practices emerged in response to the unprecedented scale of slaughter in the Great War. According to Thomson, Canadian commemoration of war dead had previously involved memorials to heroes such as Sir Isaac Brock and after the South African War of 1902, memorials which "universally expressed the idea that fighting for the British Empire was a glorious

⁸ Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?*, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998), 131-32.

⁹ It should be acknowledged here that the discussion in this chapter does not approach the very complex issue of the English - French dichotomy in Canada.

and noble cause." The new forms and practices differed from past tradition in three significant respects: "they were based on the principle of absolute equality of all war dead; they were much more universal and more highly organized; and they were expressly designed to endure over a long period of time, in order to communicate with successive generations of future citizens."¹⁰ The principle of absolute equality, though sounding quite democratic, privileges a collective identity at the expense of individual identity, the effect of which is, in Kirk Savage's words, to drastically shrivel history. Savage writes: "Women, nonwhites, laborers, and others who did not advance the master narrative of progress defined by a white male elite had little place in the commemorative scheme, except perhaps as the occasional foil by which heroism could be better depicted."¹¹ Although Savage is commenting on American monuments in general and not just war memorials, his observations are nonetheless quite useful in addressing Canadian war memorial sculpture.¹²

Exactly who was this hero capable of representing the newfound sense of Canadianness for future generations? Carl Berger offers some insights. In a 1966 essay, "The True North Strong and Free," Berger outlines how post-confederation Canada came to define itself through the "northern myth," which capitalized on the climate and geography of the country. Berger writes: "A whole series of desirable national

¹⁰ "National Sorrow, National Pride," 6-7.

¹¹ "The Past in the Present," 16.

¹² There are of course exceptions, the most notable perhaps being Florence Wyle's bronze plaque in Toronto commemorating nurse Edith Cavell, and the bronze statuettes created by Wyle and Frances Loring depicting women at work during World War I.

characteristics were derived from Canada's northern location."¹³ Northern races were defined in opposition to southern races. Northern races had moral, mental and physical advantages over southern races, making men of the north natural leaders. Northernness connoted strength and self-reliance, vigour and purity: a hardy manliness described by Frank Underhill, in the "Foreword" to the book in which Berger's essay is found, as "the strong silent he-man of the North," a national hero "striding about the southern fringes of the Pre-Cambrian Shield."¹⁴ Historian and political commentator Frank Underhill first wrote critically about the "cult of the north" in an article for *Saturday Night* in 1936. In it he criticizes art critics of the day for using the Group of Seven's paintings to create a myth of Canadians as "Men of the North, stark and violent like the nature that surrounds and nourishes [them]." The most popular pose of the day, Underhill claims, is the "strong, virile he-men of the North."¹⁵

Despite a recognition of the inherent racism and crude environmentalism in the "northern myth," Berger suggests that vestiges of the myth persist. Indeed, Underhill's stark and violent he-man of the North sounds a lot like Jack Granatstein's ferocious men of the Canadian Corps. The myth is also evident in the "strong silent he-man" iconography of the preferred form of Canadian memorial following the Great War: the solitary figure of a soldier.¹⁶

¹³ Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 10.

¹⁴ Frank Underhill, "Foreword," *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), xvi.

¹⁵ Frank Underhill, *Saturday Night* 51.48 (October 3, 1936), 1+.

¹⁶ Victoria Baker, *Emmanuel Hahn and Elizabeth Wyn Wood: Tradition and Innovation in Canadian Sculpture*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1997), 31.

Sculptor Emanuel Hahn designed an assortment of monuments based on the solitary soldier type of which his action figure on the theme of "Going over the Top" was most successful. St. Lambert, a small community on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River opposite the island of Montreal, chose this design for its memorial (Figure 9). Another of Hahn's solitary soldiers is the meditating figure "Tommy in his Greatcoat" which first appeared on the Lindsay, Ontario memorial (1922-23).¹⁷ Sculptor George Hill's bronze figures of soldiers were equally popular, finding their place in communities across Canada. Although the figures were sometimes grouped together, they often appeared as solitary soldiers such as the one chosen by the community of Montreal West (Figure 10). Coeur de Lion MacCarthy's memorial for Verdun, Quebec, employs a solitary soldier raising his rifle in jubilation (Figure 8). Whether pensive and mournful or active and alert, the figure of the soldier was an opportunity to show to advantage the moral, mental, and physical attributes of Canadianness.

As well, iconography of post-war memorials such as Elizabeth Wyn Wood's Welland-Crowland Memorial and Vernon March's National War Memorial helped to construct mythical ideologies of Canadianness for men and women. As mentioned earlier Wood's Welland-Crowland Memorial (Figure 11) had been considered innovative for its incorporation of the base as an integral part of the entire sculptural composition. The granite figures were also considered unusual for their time. Wood, Victoria Baker writes, aimed "to produce a monument that was at once socially relevant and meaningful, yet timeless in its message and form." She describes these:

¹⁷ For illustration of this work and further details about Hahn's war monuments see Victoria Baker, *Emanuel Hahn and Elizabeth Wyn Wood: Tradition and Innovation in Canadian Sculpture*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1997).

In contrast to war memorials constructed right after the war, references to death and mourning or to combat were downplayed. The only overt military references are the man's uniform and the trench mortar sandwiched between the two figures, its frightful significance tempered by its peaceful surroundings of red pine branches and standing grain, said to typify the Canadian scene. In an original move, to the conventional composition featuring a single male figure is here added the equally strong figure of a woman, symbolizing "Man the Defender" and "Woman the Giver." Their pairing conveys the notion that through united effort victory is achieved. While paying tribute to the wartime generation, the monument also speaks to a modern audience in extolling the virtues of sacrifice, service, and united action as a basis for a democratic society.¹⁸

This is one way of reading the composition and its ideology. Equally one may read the memorial as the material reality of Wood's internalized ideology/mythology of Canadianness, a mythology so naturalized, so fixed in the consciousness of the artist and viewer, that it is no longer visible. Kirk Savage observes that "the inner memories of a culture profoundly shape how its monuments are experienced and lived,"¹⁹ and, I may add, how they are constructed. Wood's Welland-Crowland Memorial helps to construct, perpetuate and fix an ideology of Canadianness defined by a white male elite: the true north strong and free - "Man the Defender," "Woman the Giver." In Kirk Savage's formulation, man the hero, woman the foil.

The figure of the man is indeed heroic. His upright, yet somewhat relaxed posture connotes an air of assured confidence. He is alert and attentive, his head turned as if wary, his gaze directed outward - he is on guard, an active participant in the world around him. His hands do not hang at his sides; they purposefully reach back to protect - he is a man ready and willing to defend what is his. His attribute is a

¹⁸ Baker, 73.

¹⁹ Savage, 19.

military uniform, sign of power and authority.²⁰ The collar of the uniform is open - he is not aggressive and war-like. He is a heroic figure who can rely on his mental and physical superiority to gain his rightful place in public national life. In short, he is Frank Underhill's strong, silent he-man of the North. As icon of Canadianness, the male figure represents the subject of the nation.

The figure of the woman acts as the backdrop against which his heroism is displayed to advantage. Her stooped posture connotes a docile subservience. Her gaze is directed downward, limiting her sphere of engagement - she is a woman intent on and devoted to her domestic work. Her attribute is a sheaf of wheat, symbol of her relationship to the hearth and home, symbol of mother earth's and her own fertility. She is a metaphor for the nation, whereas he is the author and subject of the nation. Elleke Boehmer observes that "the idea of nationhood bears a masculine identity though national ideals may wear a feminine face."²¹ As symbol of the nation, the figure of woman is object, foil to the figure of man, the subject of the nation.

In her description of the figural composition, Baker writes that "their pairing conveys the notion that through united effort victory is achieved." Again, this is one way of reading the monument. Similarly, one might suggest that through "united effort" the company owner and the employees achieve increased sales. "United" is a slippery word. It gives a false impression of a partnership which somehow implies a degree

²⁰ Although the degree of authority depends on the soldier's rank, there is nonetheless a distinction between those in civilian-type dress and those in military-type uniform.

²¹ Elleke Boehmer, "Stories of Women and Mothers: Gender and Nationalism in the Early Fiction of Flora Nwapa," in *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*, ed. Susheila Nasta, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992): 6. My gendered reading of the nationalism in Wyn Wood's figures was inspired by this essay.

of equality. But clearly, the "united effort" of our pair is not a relationship of equals. Boehmer describes the woman's role in the nation: "She is the strength or virtue of the nation incarnate, its fecund first matriarch, but it is a role which excludes her from the sphere of public national life. Figures of mothers of the nation are everywhere emblazoned but the presence of women in the nation is officially marginalized and generally ignored."²² Regarded as innovative in its time, Wood's Welland-Crowland Memorial offers a very traditional representation of Canadian nationalism, a myth that is so internalized, so fixed in our collective subconscious, it seems natural.

Vernon March's National War Memorial (Figure 3) constructs a similar ideology of Canadianness. As the winning entry in the government competition to provide Canadians with a national memorial to events of World War 1, its figures could be considered icons of 1930s Canadianness. Unlike Wood's design, which condensed notions of Canadianness into two figures, a male and a female, March's design offers a variety of male and female figures. Despite the variety, the bronze figures represent a collective or universalized concept of the ideal Canadian man and woman along the same lines as the Welland-Crowland Memorial. All of the male figures are in uniform, representing various branches of military service: among others, a cavalryman, an artilleryman, a sailor, and a pilot all follow in the wake of the infantrymen who lead the procession through the arch and who had led the way into action.²³ Bringing up the rear are the two female figures,

²² Boehmer, 6.

²³ The iconography of the procession through the arch is clearly reminiscent of Roman triumphal arches. The Ottawa arch like its Roman counterpart sits astride a strategic axis at the center of the city and the triumphant troops, fresh from victory in Europe, parade proudly through it. It seems to me that perhaps they are headed in the wrong direction. They should be headed towards the parliament buildings to make this typological association more powerful. Nonetheless the association

both nurses in uniform. Here again, the procession represents a "united effort," but as before, there exist clear hierarchic and metaphoric connotations. Woman's place is behind the scenes. Her role is caregiver. Jack Granatstein points out that attitudes and culture of 1917 Canada simply did not permit female combatants at the front lines and, of the many women who served as nurses, forty-seven died, "victims of enemy attack and disease contracted from patients."²⁴ The Ottawa Memorial is a monument to those who died in the war, and men died in overwhelmingly larger numbers than women so understandably few women are represented. That there are two is remarkable. However, this does not excuse the uneven treatment of the figures. Whereas the male figures are all heavily burdened with the instruments typical to their branch of service, such as rifles and machine guns, one nurse carries a small handbag and the other one appears to be holding her gloves. As well, the glove-carrying figure has one hand pressed into the side of her abdomen as if she might be experiencing a stitch in her side as a result of the brisk pace set by the male figures ahead. While the two nurses have no attributes of their service, the near-by stretcher bearer, in addition to the stretcher he carries, has a medical kit bag over his shoulder clearly marked with a Red Cross emblem.

Anne McClintock has observed that "[w]omen are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation but are denied any direct relation to national agency."²⁵ It seems that by portraying the nurses without the instruments of their profession, such as a medical kit bag, unlike their male counterparts, they are denied the agency to

remains and is suggestive of parallels between Canada's newfound sense of nationalist pride and power in the world and Rome's rise to power in the first centuries CE.

²⁴ Granatstein, 121.

²⁵ McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven," 90.

provide a meaningful contribution to the war effort. As McClintock suggests, these women are symbolic bearers of the nation. As such, the figures of the nurses may be seen to represent metaphorically that which the fighting men have left behind: the safety and security of their homeland, their nation. As well, the two allegorical figures surmounting the arch are represented as female figures. As symbols of the nation's virtues, Peace holds a laurel wreath, and Freedom raises her torch upward. In short, the National War Memorial depicts Canadian men as active agents of the nation, and women as symbols of the nation.

Although this type of iconography and ideology of Canadian nationalism is common to post-World War I war memorials which employed figures in their sculptural composition, there are rare exceptions. Robert Shipley writes that the monument in St. Boniface, Manitoba (A. Granier, 1938) (Figure 13 - detail) is almost unique in Canada in portraying a dead soldier.²⁶ The monument was designed and erected for the Belgian community in St. Boniface by local artist A. Granier. It consists of two soldiers, a standing figure who symbolizes those who survived the wars, and the dead figure symbolizing those who gave their lives.²⁷ The composition offers an unsettling concept of Canadianness and of identity in general. Face down, featureless, who is this man? Is he Canadian, is he Belgian, is he Belgian-Canadian? While he is meant to symbolize those who did not return, he may also be seen to represent a loss of identity that may be experienced by immigrants to a new country.²⁸ The monument is the focus of the annual Belgian

²⁶ Shipley, 165.

²⁷ *We Will Remember: War Monuments in Canada* World Wide WebSite. <<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/monuments/>> (15 August 2000).

²⁸ Alienation is the theme of Janet Wolff's book *Resident Alien: Feminist Cultural Criticism*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995). Wolff suggests that for an "outsider" or "resident alien", "dislocation makes a

Independence Day Parade and ceremony on July 21. Despite this notable exception, conventional war memorials which employ human representations convey a rather uniform ideology of Canadianness.

This notion of a collective national identity no longer addresses all memorial viewers, as is witnessed by a growing number of Canadians who feel that their experience of the war has not been acknowledged or represented. Anne McClintock states that "all nationalisms are gendered; all are invented, and all are dangerous . . . in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence."²⁹ The Welland-Crowland Memorial and the National War Memorial clearly represent the uneven relation that women as national citizens have to political power. Equally, they represent the uneven relation to power of other marginalized groups who want their voices and their realities to be a part of the national narrative. For example, Vancouver-area Japanese Canadians who were relocated inland and had their homes, businesses, and possessions seized in 1942, recently sought and received an apology from the Canadian government for the racist treatment they experienced.³⁰ Not so for a group of Ukrainian Canadians who sought redress for the World War I internment of thousands of innocent civilians, mainly Ukrainian immigrants. The federal government refuses to acknowledge its role and the Ukrainian community in Canada has themselves erected plaques to mark the internment camps in such

different understanding possible" (2). This could account for the very different representation this Belgium community chose for its memorial. As well, Homi Bhabha speaks of alienation and dislocation in his essay "DissemiNation" in the section "The foreignness of languages."

²⁹ McClintock, 89.

³⁰ Ann Finlayson, "Memories of Shame," *Maclean's* (Oct. 3/88): 12.

places as Spirit Lake (La Ferme), Quebec.³¹ As well, Canada's First Nations veterans have been actively seeking to have their experiences of the wars marked by their own memorial. The design proposed by aboriginal artist Lloyd Pinay incorporates figures and symbols, such as spirit guides and the thunderbird (creator and spirit of the aboriginal people), that have meaning and relevance to First Nations people.³² The ideology of Canadianness that conventional monuments display denies the realities and experiences of significant numbers of Canadians who do not see themselves represented. These voices from the margins remind us that "there is no single or unified experience of a commemorative image, and conflict often centers on whose experience the image tacitly recognizes and legitimates."³³

It seems clear that traditional war memorials attempt to narrate "the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force." These memorials are part of a nationalist discourse that attempts "to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress."³⁴ However, recent writing by cultural theorists like Homi Bhabha³⁵ and Anne McClintock³⁶ reveal the actual, ambivalent cultural

³¹ David Gamble, "Plaque to mark Ukrainian internment camp," *The Montreal Gazette* July 30, 1999, A8.

³² Maureen Simpkins, "The Sniper in the Shadows," *The Beaver* 78.4 (August-September 1998): 17-21.

³³ Savage, 18. Author's emphasis.

³⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 1.

³⁵ "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 291-322. Also: "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 71-87.

³⁶ Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Gender, Race and Nationalism," *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, 89-112. Also *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in*

construction of unified nationalist narratives. Bhabha's theory of ambivalence is expressed in his notion that the people of the nation are at the same time both object and subject of the nation. He writes: "In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical [the people as historic objects], and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative [the people as subjects]. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*" [Bhabha's emphasis].³⁷ The ambivalent split between the pedagogical and the performative might be thought about in terms of a person's longing for the comfort and security of belonging to a group with which she or he has much in common, but at the same time desiring to exert his or her own individuality. The pedagogical is that group with its own established history and traditions: the performative represents those who view the group with nostalgia but who remain on the margins or periphery attempting to interrogate or shift the group off centre. Bhabha himself seems to use the term "minority" or "marginal" discourse interchangeably with the word "performative." If one views the performative as minority discourse, then one may think of the pedagogical as dominant discourse or in Bhabha's terminology the "powerful master-discourse."³⁸

McClintock offers a similar theory expressed as a "curious paradox." She contends that nations are symbolically figured as domestic genealogies, despite the fact that in the West, the family itself has been figured as the antithesis to history. She writes: "The

the Colonial Contest, (New York: Routledge, 1995).

³⁷ Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 297.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 306.

family as a *metaphor* offered a single genesis narrative for national history while, at the same time, the family as an *institution* became void of history and excluded from national power. The family became, at one and the same time, both the *organizing figure* for national history and its *antithesis* [McClintock's emphasis].³⁹ Just as Bhabha's people are both subject and object of the nation, so too McClintock's family is both subject and not subject of the nation.

These cultural theorists reveal the invented nature of nationalism by exposing the underlying ambivalences or paradoxes of its construction. In the same way, recent postmodern memory markers such as *Cenotaph* reveal the gaps, the omissions, the elisions in the ideological constructs of traditional war memorials. Postmodern monuments do not so much construct their own ideology as question established master narratives that are inscribed on traditional monuments. Yet postmodern monuments can be construed as political in that they interrupt and reveal the unequal relationship of power within the polis on an inter-personal and inter-national plane.⁴⁰ *Cenotaph* makes no overt statement about nationalist ideology of its own. Its ideology is fluid; it is not didactic, but dialogic. As previously mentioned *Cenotaph* is a floating signifier. It has different meanings to different people in different locations. It does not employ realistic representations that fix and limit its ability to communicate. It speaks a more universal language. The grainy images in the slide projections are human beings who are not marked by specifics such as ethnic, national, class, or gender identity. The inscription refers to the treatment of "people," all people who are victims: no traditional heroes are invoked. It is the context of the

³⁹ McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven," 91.

⁴⁰ Cheetham, 93.

viewing subject which gives meaning to the work, not the context of the object which dictates meaning to the viewer.

Equally, Wodiczko's Toronto victory column projection disrupts the ideology of its architecture, which has completely absorbed the institutional power the column implies. Mark Cheetham asks: "How often do we pass by the many victory columns that commemorate past military triumphs in our civic spaces and think nothing of the horrors of war that these memorials in fact suppress?"⁴¹ The projection of a fist grasping a knife and stabbing downward is a graphic reminder of the human violence that lurks beneath this benign expression of civic pride. Wodiczko's projection recalls for the viewer the hidden history that national narratives obscure.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial does not spin a national narrative that obscures history. Instead it narrates a chronological history of the conflict in Vietnam, death by painful death. Here history is condensed into a sequence of verifiable deaths beginning and ending at the same point, a closed circle or cycle of history that is left to the viewer to make sense of. Unlike the traditional monument which, as Kirk Savage has suggested, instills a sense of historical closure, this postmodern monument hints at the repetitive nature of history. As well, the VVM does not attempt to democratize or universalize the "American soldier" in some unifying image or inscription. Each American who died is listed individually.

The Harburg monument is another monument that does not construct a nationalist narrative in the traditional sense. The Harburg column may be seen as a reflector of social viewpoints in that members of the public were invited to inscribe their own narratives onto it. Each person, as a member of a nation, whether German or not, contributes to

⁴¹ Cheetham, 89.

the construction of a type of national or cultural narrative. This observation leads me to propose that one may think of these postmodern memory markers in the terminology of Homi Bhabha's speculations on the "cultural construction of nationness."⁴²

I suggest that postmodern memory markers may be considered as "performative," traditional monuments as "pedagogical" and that "the site of writing the nation" or in this case the site of "illustrating" the nation, is the liminal space between. In this formulation, traditional monuments are the 'objects' of nationalist pedagogy, "giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pregiven or constituted historical origin or event." Postmodern memory markers are the 'subjects' "of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as the continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process."⁴³ Bhabha writes: "The present of the people's history, then, is a practice [the performative or postmodern memory markers] that destroys the constant principles of the national culture [the pedagogical] that attempt to hark back to a 'true' national past, which is often represented in the reified forms of realism and stereotype [traditional monuments]."⁴⁴ However it is not merely a matter of the performative confronting the pedagogical with a contradictory or negating referent, it is a "renegotiation of those times, terms, and traditions through which we turn our uncertain, passing, contemporaneity

⁴² Bhabha, "DessemiNation," 292.

⁴³ Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 297.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

into the signs of history."⁴⁵ Postmodern memory markers do not simply confront traditional monuments; they are the "supplementary question" that adds to but does not necessarily add up to a national narrative. They disturb the calculation: they disturb the national narrative.

About this notion of minority discourse Bhabha writes:

Its strategy of intervention is similar to what parliamentary procedure recognizes as a supplementary question. It is a question that is supplementary to what is put down on the order paper, but by being 'after' the original, or in 'addition to' it, gives it the advantage of introducing a sense of 'secondariness' or belatedness into the structure of the original.⁴⁶

Additionally, Bhabha speaks of "the moment of anteriority of the nation's sign that entirely changes our understanding of the pastness of the past, and the unified present of the will to nationhood."⁴⁷ It seems to me that this "moment of anteriority" might be thought of as the moment of recognition by the viewer of a monument's alterity, of a memory marker's difference, of its postmodernity. It is the moment of remembering.

The notion of nationness is, as the writings of cultural theorists such as Bhabha and Renan (see epigraph) remind us, formed in a complex relationship of the will to remember and a willingness to forget. This complex relationship is evident in the ideology of postmodern memory markers, which urge the public to remember, and traditional war memorials, which allow people to forget.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

CHAPTER FIVE

Monuments, Memory and the New Millennium

Where should memory be located, physically? In standard constructions which represent belated official recognition? Or in the names of villages one passes on English back roads which remind you of tribes long disappeared who have not left a single stone behind in this place which bears a verbal sign, the strongest sort, of their tenancy?

-Robert Harbison¹

The faster we are pushed into a future that does not inspire confidence, the more seductively a past world beckons in which life was simpler, slower, better.

-Andreas Huyssen²

At the end of his essay "DissemiNation" Homi Bhabha writes: "In the narrative graftings of my essay I have attempted no general theory, only a certain productive tension of the perplexity of language in various locations of living."³ In this essay, I have attempted a general theory of what it means for a war memorial to be postmodern. In so doing I may have in some small way revealed the complexity and perplexity of representations and meanings of war memorials in various localities of remembrance. This complexity, so skillfully narrated by Homi Bhabha, is belied by Sergiusz Michalski in his book *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*. Michalski writes:

Figural monuments of the old type now constitute a byway...mainstream evolution of public monuments is less easily described. Many proposals or realized projects often opt for a semi-conceptual open form achieved by various means (including mirroring or inscriptions set out in open space) to involve spectators and make them accept and act upon specific messages. The many iconoclastic waves having successfully destroyed the myth of monumental eternalization, a work-in-progress or unfinished appearance seems more and more desirable....We are witnessing an

¹ Robert Harbison, "Half-Truths and Misquotations: A Skeptical Look at Monuments," *Harvard Design Magazine*, (Fall 1999), 22.

² Andreas Huyssen, "Sculpture, Materiality and Memory in an Age of Amnesia," *Displacements* (Toronto: AGO, 1998), 34.

³ Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 320.

important caesura: the traditional involvement with a message and the semantics of the isolated monument is being replaced by a growing regard for its contextualization, both visual and symbolic.⁴

Michalski's passage clearly promotes the idea of an evolution in monument form from figural to semi-conceptual. This march of progress is invoked again by his notion that "we are witnessing an important caesura," in the linear history of public monuments. Perhaps my own choice of terminology suggests a similar linearity by implying a movement out of modernity and into postmodernity. This has not been my intention. I have attempted to add a Canadian perspective to the growing discourse (mainly constructed from an American and European viewpoint) on memory and memory markers which are variously called: countermonuments,⁵ anti-monuments,⁶ democratic monuments,⁷ or in my terminology postmodern monuments. By linking postmodern memory markers to Bhabha's notion of the performative and traditional monuments to his notion of the pedagogical, I hope that I have illustrated the ambivalence that attends these two typologies. This ambivalence is particularly evident in the cultural construction of nationness in Canada and a brief discussion of two recent additions to the monument scene in our nation's capital will attempt to accomplish three things at once: to bring this point of ambivalence home; to end on a Canadian note; and to offer some perspective on the question posed in Chapter One: Can our traditional twentieth-century war memorials be meaningful

⁴ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, (London: Reaktion, 1998), 202.

⁵ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 27-48.

⁶ Maya Lin as quoted by Hèlene Lipstadt in "Learning from Lutyens," *Harvard Design Magazine*, (Fall 1999), 65.

⁷ Richard M. Sommer, "Time Incorporated: The Romantic Life of the Modern Monument," *Harvard Design Magazine*, (Fall 1999), 38-44.

memory markers for the twenty-first century?

There is no definitive answer to this question. If we accept Andreas Huyssen's observation that "monuments articulate official memory, and their fate is to be toppled or to become invisible,"⁸ then the answer to the question would seem to be "no." Yet, if a nation's narrative is articulated through the ambivalent interplay between pedagogy and performance as Homi Bhabha suggests, then the traditional monument, as pedagogy, plays a significant role in narrating the nation. Equally the postmodern monument type such as *Cenotaph* will continue to play a performative role in the unfolding narrative. Where there is pedagogy or master narrative, there will be performative, or minority discourse.

But, because the Canadian context of monument production is unlike the German context, it is unlikely that countermonuments, such as those in Germany, will become a large part of the Canadian narrative. Canada emerged from the world wars strong and proud and the iconography of the memorials that mark the wars is one thing that is consistent from coast to coast. Equally, Canadians seem united in observing the two-minute silence at Remembrance Day services held at memorial sites. Despite their seeming invisibility on a day-to-day basis, some traditional memorials in Canada remain effective sites of remembrance.

Andreas Huyssen offers some interesting perspectives on the material traces of memory in his 1998 essay "Sculpture, Materiality and Memory in an Age of Amnesia."⁹ He suggests that our "postmodern culture is at the same time obsessed with issues of memory and produces ever

⁸ Andreas Huyssen, "Sculpture, Materiality and Memory in an Age of Amnesia," 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37. Although his essay and ideas address a body of work which he claims is clearly distinct from the monument or memorial, I feel his observations are nonetheless valid within the context of my discussion.

more of it."¹⁰ It would seem this *fin-de-siècle* obsession or anxiety is caused by an uncertain future. Huyssen writes:

Our discontents, rather, flow from informational and perceptual overload combined with a cultural acceleration neither our psyche nor our senses are that well equipped to handle. The faster we are pushed into a future that does not inspire confidence, the more seductively a past world beckons in which life was simpler, slower, better.¹¹

Huyssen claims we are in the throes of "a mnemonic fever caused by the virus of amnesia that at times threatens to consume memory itself," resulting in chaotic, fragmentary and free-floating "mnemonic convulsions." He seems to be suggesting that millennial anxiety over issues of what to remember and what to forget, as well as fear of the future and nostalgia for the past, have resulted in a frenzied proliferation of memory works. Huyssen writes that these "express our society's need for temporal anchoring when in the wake of the information revolution and an ever increasing time-space compression, the relationship between past, present and future is being transformed beyond recognition."¹²

Aspects of this anxiety and ambivalence may be seen in a relatively new site of memory in the nation's capital - Jack Harmon's *Reconciliation* (Figure 15). Dedicated in 1992, this monument to Canadian peacekeepers could be said to embody Bhabha's notion of the ambivalence of writing the nation at the same time as it expresses a millennial anxiety as described by Huyssen. It seems to struggle with the desire to enter a new phase of narrating the nation as international peacekeeper and a desire to find a new monument language through which to express the ideology. Like *Cenotaph*, its forms derive from an

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹² *Ibid.*, 38.

unsettling mix of old and new, but unlike *Cenotaph*, it settles back into tradition. The architectural structure of two intersecting walls is somewhat reminiscent of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as is the attempt to make the setting park-like with its grove of trees. The engraved listing of numerous Canadian peacekeeping missions also mimics the VVM, yet it makes little impression. Had it not been for the engraving, the VVM association might not have been made. Equally, one could suggest that the integration of the architectural base into the compositional whole recalls the Welland-Crowland Memorial. Through the effort of urban designer Richard K. Henriquez and landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, the site and architectural base of *Reconciliation* attempt to engage the viewer through a conceptual language which leaves meaning fluid for the viewer. However any postmodern potential the monument setting might have had is countered by the addition of a didactic wall inscription which interprets the concept for the viewer:

Members of Canada's Armed Forces, represented by three figures, stand at the meeting place of two walls of destruction. Vigilant, impartial, they oversee the reconciliation of those in conflict. Behind them lies the debris of war. Ahead lies the promise of peace: a grove, symbol of life.

Even without the inscription, Harmon's three bronze figures return the monument to the realm of tradition. The tension between postmodern architectural elements and traditional bronze figural representations is part of what declares this monument's ambivalence and anxiety. Equally contradictory is the presence of military figures on a monument to peace. It is as though the master discourse was about to open out and embrace the cultural present, when it became seduced by a nostalgic glance backward: hence the three bronze figures which are clearly reminiscent of the figures on so many Canadian war memorials. How seductive and comforting the myth of Canadianness. How fearsome the future of Canadian nationalism.

Kirk Savage suggests that "inner memories of a culture profoundly shape how its monuments are experienced and lived."¹³ Needless to say these same inner memories profoundly shape the monument itself. While the figures definitely recall the early-twentieth-century myth of the "he-man of the north," they simultaneously seem to express an anxiety. Unlike their counterparts on the National War Memorial who band together in a common cause, these figures seem strangely isolated while appearing to guard against or defend themselves from attack. Whereas the figures on the National War Memorial are the objects which narrate the nation, metaphorically the nation is here contained in the empty space behind the three figures, roughly a circle whose perimeter they patrol. But a gap exists. The walkway that forms an integral part of the monument's structural whole, is the path that leads from the past toward the future. It is the trajectory on which minority discourse intersects with dominant discourse, where performative interrogates pedagogical and where the nation is narrated. The ambivalence and anxiety of *Reconciliation* may be seen to represent the struggle between old and new, past and present, remembering and forgetting that is, as Huyssen suggests, so much a part of late twentieth-century society.

On Sunday, May 28, 2000, Canada's Unknown Soldier was laid to rest in the newly completed tomb at the base of the National War Memorial in Ottawa during a highly ritualized ceremony attended by thousands and witnessed by thousands more on national television. This latest addition to the national capital's wealth of monuments is perhaps another attempt at "reconciliation," another attempt at reconciling past ideas and present realities, and once again it illustrates the ambivalence in writing the nation. In a ceremony filled with protocol, ritual and nostalgia, the unidentified remains were placed in a very

¹³ Savage, 19.

traditional sarcophagus located on the upper terrace of the National War Memorial. Whereas the National War Memorial attempts to narrate a specific face of Canadianness, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier represents a more democratic notion of Canadianness. Although still male, the Unknown Soldier nonetheless puts Canadian identity into a more fluid space which acknowledges the diversity of Canadian men who have died in the wars. The Tomb has the potential to attract those who have previously felt left out by the narrative created by the National War Memorial. Yet the Tomb has to compete daily with the ideology of the monument that looms over it, threatening to draw it into the master discourse. Will the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier prove to be an effective memory marker for the twenty-first century? Will new monuments be constructed that address postmodern notions of memory and remembrance? There are no definitive answers.

Ultimately the success or failure of any monument that remembers war depends on how the war comes to be remembered and reinterpreted by future generations. In the cultural present, which seems to be infected with millennial memory madness, we are perhaps starting to look differently at our heritage of and history contained within Canadian war monuments and memorials. The performative continues to interrogate the pedagogical.

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Figure 1. Barbara Steinman. *Cenotaph* (1983-86).

ELEMENTS:

painter wood sculpture based on 1.67m triangle
plexiglass tetrahedron: 2.84m high
3 granite tablets: 60.9x91.4cm
2 two-way mirrors: 91.4x152.4cm
false walls to create hidden corridors
2 slide projectors
inside sculpture: 27" video monitor operated by remote control
¼"-video playback deck
slides, video tape

Installation Area:
PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY - 9.1x8.2m
Inner space 6.1x7.3m deep with 1.5m side corridors

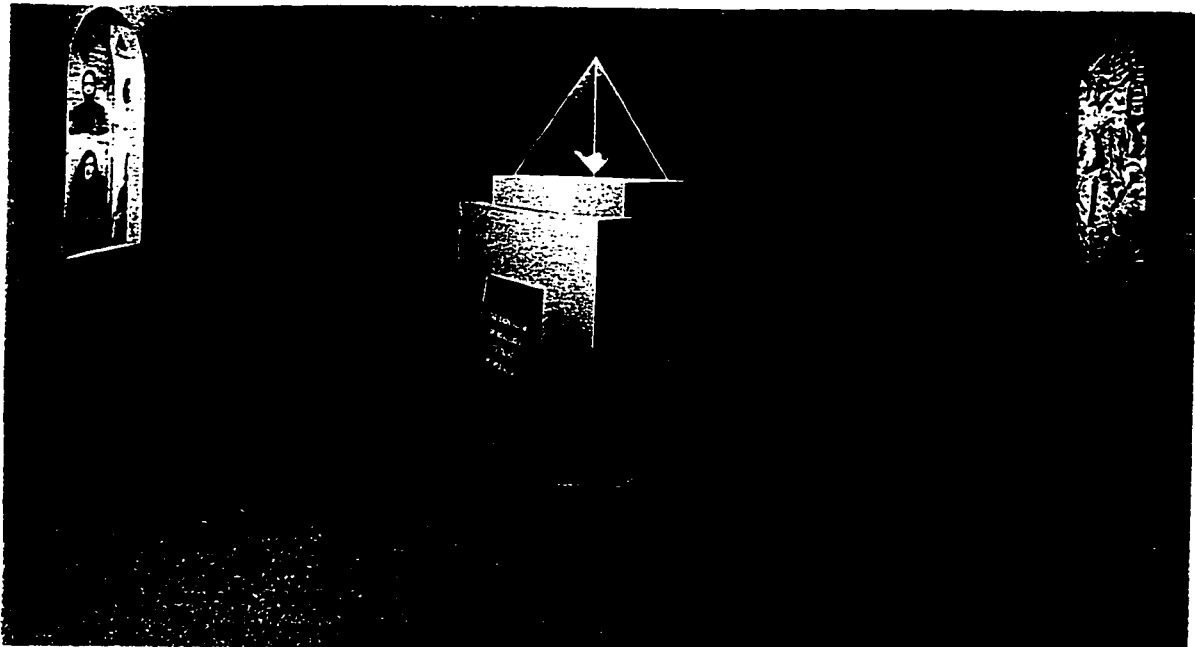


Figure 2. Monument at Princeton, British Columbia (post-World War I).



Figure 3. Vernon March. National War Memorial, Ottawa (Dedicated 1939).
The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is visible in the foreground.

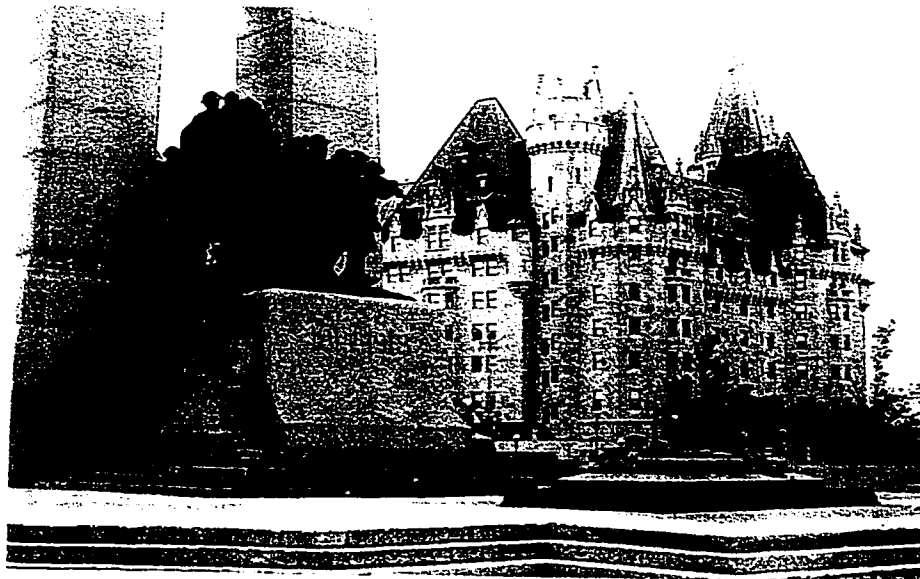


Figure 4. Obelisk at Curling, Newfoundland (post-World War I).

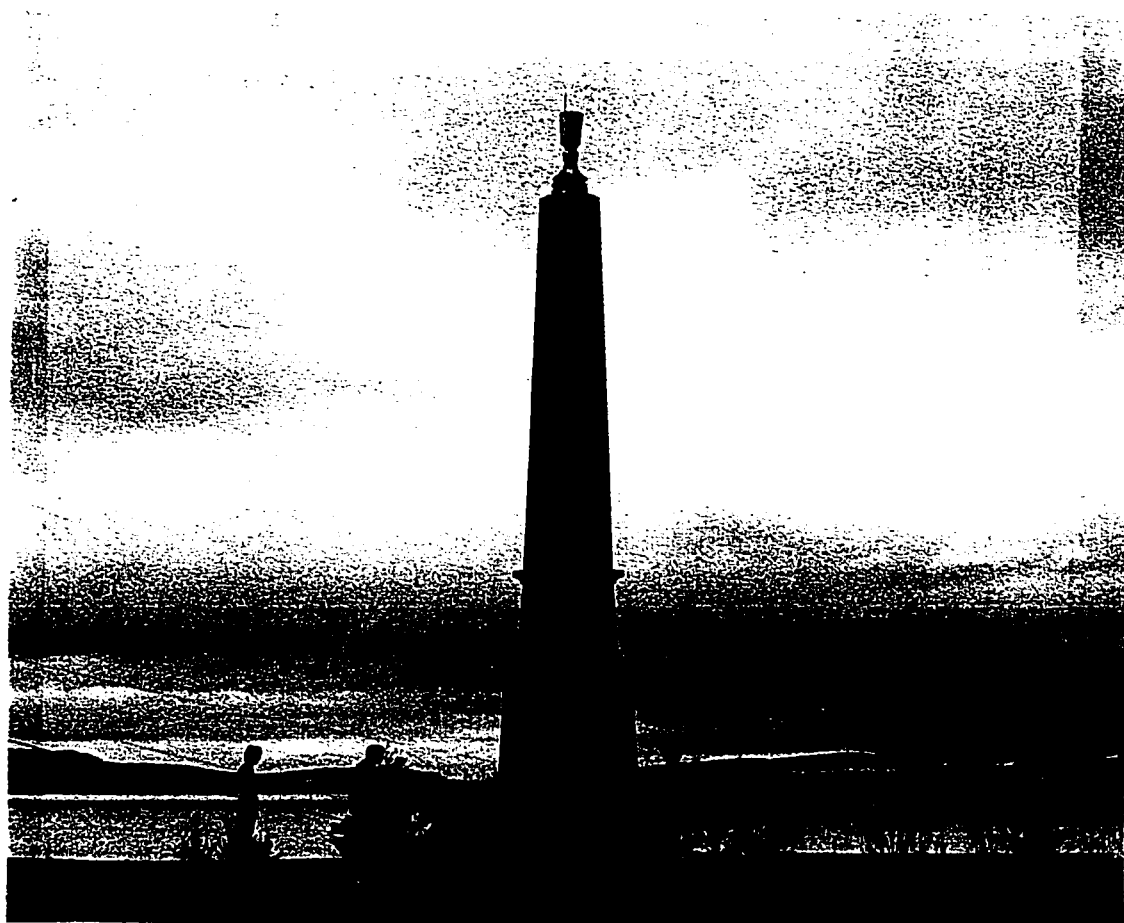


Figure 5. Maya Lin. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.
(Dedicated 1982).



Figure 6. Jochen and Esther Gerz. Harburg Monument Against Fascism, Harburg, Germany (1986-1993). Midway through sinking.



Figure 7. Cenotaph, Montreal, Quebec (post-World War I).

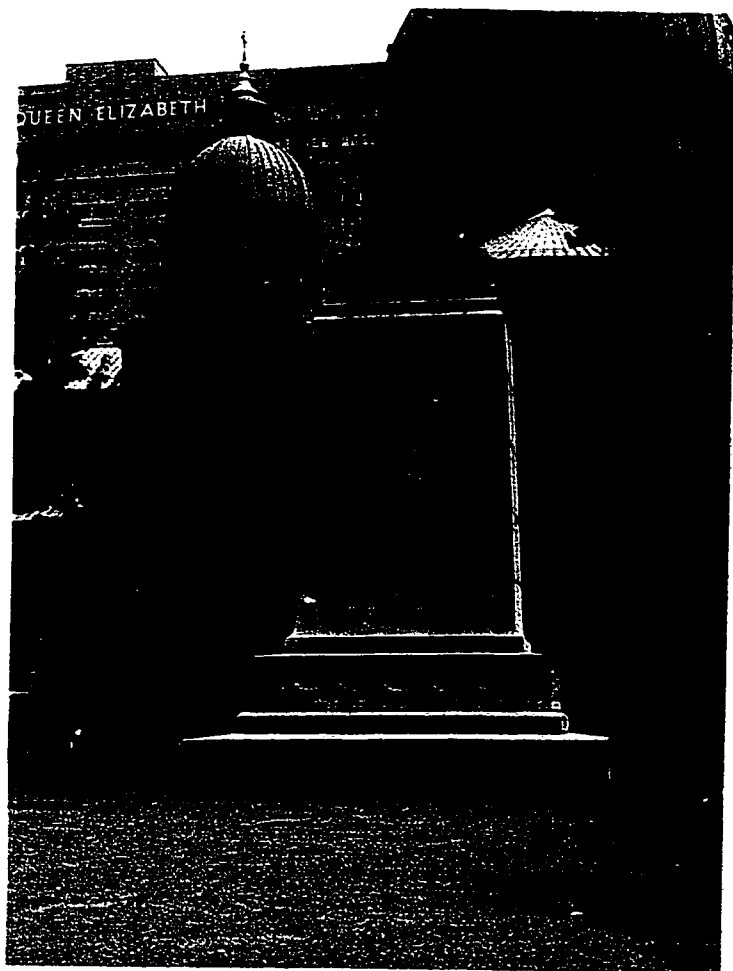


Figure 8. Coeur de Lion MacCarthy. War Memorial, Verdun, Quebec (Post-world War I).



Figure 9. Emanuel Hahn. War Memorial, St. Lambert, Quebec (post-World War I).



Figure 10. George Hill. War Memorial, Montreal West, Quebec (post-World War I).



Figure 11. Elizabeth Wyn Wood. Welland-Crowland War Memorial (1934-39).

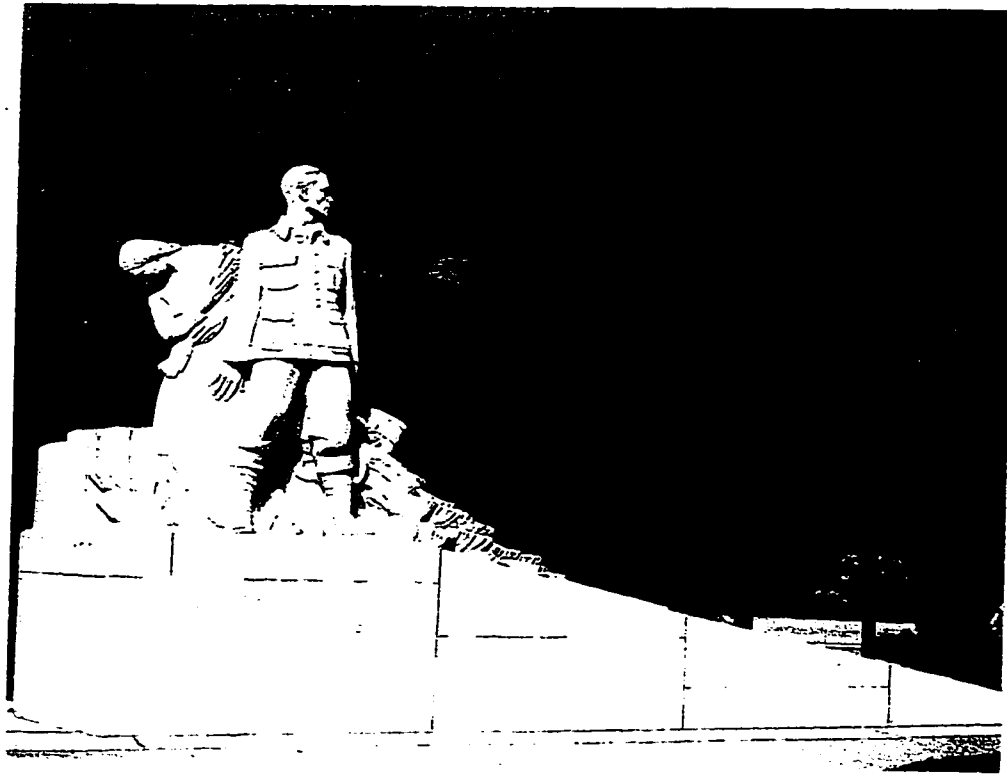


Figure 12. Krzysztof Wodiczko. South African War Memorial Projection, Toronto (1983).



Figure 13. A. Granier. War Memorial, St. Boniface, Manitoba (1938) - Detail.



Figure 14. Jack Harmon. *Reconciliation*. (Dedicated 1992).

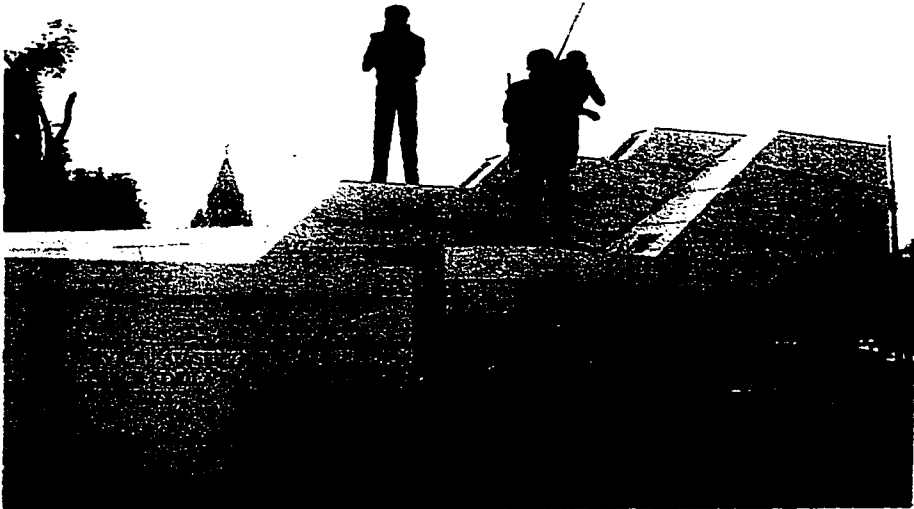


Figure 15. Temporary Cenotaph on Parliament Hill.

