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The Space That Is Left:
Exploring The Monument and Its Ruin

Kate Zankowicz

A Thesis

In

The Department

Of

Communication Studies

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ABSTRACT

The Space That Is Left: Exploring the Monument and Its Ruin

Kate Zankowicz

This thesis will ask the question: “Can monuments ever really be repositories of memory; how is the monumental form being used to represent the difficulties of remembrance?” My study will seek to bring the concept of the monument and the concept of the ruin closer together, and posit that monuments end up functioning as a prosthetic memory device that, in their very mode of remembrance, always include a forgetting. Beginning with a photo essay documenting my own *flânerie* around the monumental ruins of Montreal, this paper will trace out the problematic relationship between memory and forgetting, as a marker that is a displacement of memory. This paper is my attempt to rub together different conceptions of the monument-in-ruin to work out a full range of counter-monumental possibilities. From Earthworks-oriented artists to post-Holocaust memorializing efforts, monument-makers draw attention to the ephemeral and residual nature of the monumental form, and by extension, memory itself. I will look at a diverse sample of counter-monuments in order to comment more generally on how the ideas championed by monument/ruin builders are being grafted onto the landscape itself. Finally, I will suggest that building the monument-in-ruin does not guarantee a remembrance; rather, monuments depend on the people who notice them.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures	vi
Beforehand	1
Introduction	
<u>On Forgetting: From the Telephone to The Tomb</u>	2
Chapter One	
<u>The Monument In Passing: Re-membering Urban Space</u>	27
Chapter Two	
<u>The Ruin: An Ultimate Counter-Monument</u>	49
Chapter Three	
<u>Unearthing the Monument: Landscape in Memoriam</u>	78
Conclusion	
<u>Memory Once Removed: Commemorative Practices And Other Possibilities</u>	98
Afterwards	109
Works Cited	113
Figures	122

List of Figures

fig. 1	The banal and the memorial meet on St. Laurent (author's photo).	122
fig. 2	The heterotopic space of Baron Hirsch Jewish Cemetery (author's photo).	123
fig. 3	Tomb to the many (author's photo).	123
fig. 4	The Georges Etienne Cartier Monument (author's photo).	124
fig. 5	History becomes re-inscribed by the present at the Georges Etienne Cartier monument (author's photo).	124
fig. 6	The monument made flesh (photo: Abbas Akhavan).	125
fig. 7	Marriot Hotel looms over MacDonald monument (author's photo).	126
fig. 8	Beloved Sovereign Edward VIII monument (author's photo).	126
fig. 9	The decay of the communicable (photo: Abbas Akhavan).	127
fig. 10	The Premier's decapitation (author's photo).	128
fig. 11	Decapitation (photo: Abbas Akhavan).	129
fig. 12	Obelisk to the first European settlers (author's photo).	130
fig. 13	Monument to the "centre de négoce" (author's photo).	130
fig. 14	A fragment of the Berlin Wall at Square Victoria (author's photo).	131
fig. 15	Jacques Cartier takes the Metro (author's photo).	131
fig. 16	The Number Five Grain Elevators as monuments to Montreal's past (author's photo).	132
fig. 17	The audience as monument on McGill College (author's photo).	133
fig. 18	An empty plinth in Montreal commemorates the absence of a monument (author's photo).	134
fig. 19	Alfred Hrdlicka's <i>Gegen Denkmal</i> (author's photo).	135

fig. 20 Souvenir kiosk at Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedachtnis-kirsche in Berlin (author's photo).	136
fig. 21 New York's new ruin (author's photo).	137
fig. 22 A reconstructed ruin, at the corner of Vesey and Battery Park (author's photo).	137
fig. 23 Tragic tourism at Ground Zero (author's photo).	137
fig. 24 Michael Arad's <i>Reflecting Absence</i> , at the bedrock (www.renewnyc.com/images_WMS/final/mem_underground.jpg).	138
fig. 25 The Gerz' <i>Monument Against Fascism</i> in Harburg (www.gerz.fr).	138
fig. 26 <i>Monument Against Fascism</i> 's welcome desecration.	138
fig. 27 The <i>Monument Against Fascism</i> 's current incarnation (author's photo).	139
fig. 28 Explicatory plaque (author's photo).	139
fig. 29 Smithsonian's <i>Spiral Jetty</i> (www.mines.utah.edu/~wmgg/Geology/UtahGIFS/SpiralJetty.html).	140
fig. 30 <i>Elevated Wetlands</i> purifies the landscape (author's photo).	140
fig. 31 World Trade Center burial ground, aerial view (http://69.20.65.248:8082/home/plan0/parkland/ffk_hidden/9-11.html).	141
fig. 32 Proposed Earthwork for Fresh Kills landfill site (http://69.20.65.248:8082/home/plan0/parkland/ffk_hidden/9-11_morehtml).	141
fig. 33 Maya Lin's <i>Vietnam Veteran's Memorial</i> (http://vietnam-veteransmemorial.visit-washington-dc-com/).	142
fig. 34 <i>Bibliothek: The Counter-counter Monument</i> (author's photo).	143

Beforehand

This thesis is my attempt to explore various conceptions of the monument-in-ruins, as a way to investigate counter-monument practice: from the re-contextualized, re-appropriated monument, to the counter-monument, and the ruin. My thesis questions how monuments represent the difficulties of remembrance, as media that always, whether intended or not, acknowledge forgetting. My investigation works through the idea of the monument as an erasure or forgetting, and extends to a consideration of how monument-makers are creating monuments that highlight the ephemeral and residual nature of the monumental form, and by extension, of memory itself. The idea that the monument may in fact be a displacement of memory is not a new one; many have commented that where memories accumulate is also where they get sloughed away. This is much evident in Pierre Nora's privileging of memory from the "inside" (Nora, 1989: 13), or in James Young's remark that "once we assign the monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember" (Young, 1992:273). His concern is that "in shouldering the memory-work, monuments may relieve viewers of their memory burden...to the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us, we become that much more forgetful" (273). Monuments that incorporate a critique of the monumental form within themselves work to problematize forgetting as a potentially productive experience. Although it may seem now to be a platitude, it bears repeating that memory is always represented; the media that we use to represent that memory, are a representation of an absence (like all representation). The poet of this heart-wrenching lesson, for me, is Marcel Proust, and it is to him that I now turn to in order to consider the searing together of media and forgetting.

Introduction

On Forgetting: From the Telephone to the Tomb

It was while reading Marcel Proust that the anguishing paradox of communications media first struck me. In the third volume of his epic In Search of Lost Time (*Guermande's Way*, Vintage Press, 1996), Proust is marked by the trauma of speaking to his beloved grandmother on the telephone, and is rent apart by the double pull of the technology, his awareness of his seeming proximity and yet unbearable distance from her. He describes this new technology in deeply sexual and quasi-religious terms. By putting his lips to the "magic orifice" of the instrument, he claims to experience a premonition of his grandmother's death, facilitated by those "danaïds of the unseen...by whose intervention the absent rise up at our side, without our being permitted to set eyes on them" (Proust, 1996: Vol. III, 147). His grandmother's voice, in all its crackling proximity, only heightens her distance from him, and Proust, perhaps one of the first to be suspicious of the informational fantasy of communications technology, is tormented by the trickery of the telephone. He laments: "a real presence, perhaps, that voice that seemed so near—in actual separation! But a premonition also of an eternal separation! Many are the times, as I listened thus without seeing her who spoke to me from so far away, when it has seemed to me that the voice was crying to me from the depths out of which one does not rise again..." (148). The miracle of the telephone fails; the connection is cut off, Proust is left screaming out into the ether but her voice is gone, a "phantom as impalpable as the one that would perhaps come to visit me when my grandmother was dead" (150). In this way, the failed communication on the telephone not only foreshadows the grandmother's death; it is in fact, one.

Arguably, Proust's granny died her first death when she agreed to sit for a photograph in the second volume (Vol. II 423-425). In the Proustian sensibility, technology is an artificially resuscitated substitute that always implies the loss of the actual subject, and exists as a material representation of that loss. The telephone, with the semblance of immediate presence it offers, is in fact, absence, a communication with no original object. Many pages later, at the moment of his grandmother's death, we are confronted with granny's body again, this time, turned to stone. Proust writes: "the work of the sculptor was nearing its end...the veins that traversed [her face] seemed made not of marble but some more rugged stone. Permanently thrust forward by the difficulty she found in breathing...her face resembled some wild guardian of a tomb in a primitive, almost prehistoric sculpture. But the work was not yet completed" (372). In her final moments, she is rendered into stone, literally petrified, and preserved as a beatific girl, an eternally virginal sculpture, bearing no trace of age, or life (397).

What's the connection between the phantasmic floating voice, the captured photograph and the petrified body? The first two episodes undergird the grandmother's final death, in which her body itself becomes stone. The loss of his grandmother, mediated by its occurrence in three different media, spurred on my own thoughts on the relationship between media (here the phantom voice in the ether, the indexical image of the photograph, and the monument tomb) and forgetting, Proust's personal demon. Indeed, Proust's mode of involuntary remembering is closer to forgetting, as Walter Benjamin has remarked (Benjamin, 1993: 202). His project speaks to what lies just beyond the reaches of memory, the un-recallable, the latticed poetry of the unarticulated. My model of memory, which seeks to bring forgetting into focus, is definitely Proustian

in its orientation. The impossibility of memory being housed by an object (or say, as in the linden tea and madeleine episode in the first volume, the impossibility of knowing which objects will provoke memory) is a tenet to which I cling. Memories can be involuntary; they can suddenly seize us, and be strange unconscious flarings when the “then” all of a sudden becomes the “now”. An uneven paving stone reminds him of his own body in Venice, or a drifting scent down the wending path through a hawthorn grove can bring back a feeling with all of its original intensity. Proust recognized the multi-temporality of the everyday, the fleeting quality of memory, as well as the possibility of memories being stored in the body, not necessarily just as images, but recalled in bodily movements through space. Indeed, the current practice of building monuments that are sites of movement and sensation, rather than static material representations, is an acknowledgement of the sensorial, perhaps even synesthetic, quality of recollection.

Remembering/Forgetting: milk, white, mist, fluid, autumn

That memory may be, in its deficient mode, dependent on forgetting is by no means a new idea. Edward Casey points out, in his brilliant phenomenological account of remembering, that “for the early Greeks...forgetting and remembering form an indissociable pair; they are given explicit mythical representation in the coeval figures of Lesmosyne and Mnemosyne who are conceived as equals requiring each other...the pole of remembering incorporates the pole of forgetting” (Casey, 2000: 12).

Friedrich Nietzsche also recognized the usefulness of “active forgetting” because for him it was an alternative to the state-sanctioned enforced remembering that he so loathed.¹ Even in the works of a thinker like Aristotle, forgetting is somewhat implicated

¹ See his second meditation in “The Uses and Abuses of History”[trans. Adrian Collins] from Thoughts Out of Season Part II: New York: Russell and Russell, 1964.

in remembering. For the latter, memory, like imagination, involves an image in the soul, which is a sort of imprint in the body of a former sense image. Aristotle uses the metaphor of wax being “impressed” by signet rings when speaking of the artificial practice of recollection (Aristotle, [350 B.C] 1984: l. 450 a-22). This suggests a mediation in the very act of remembrance: people remember events as images, as copies of the event itself. Of course, Aristotle would concur that Proust was too moist around his organ of sensory perception, thereby causing his melancholic longings. But here we must wonder why Aristotle favors a model of memory that is dependent on an image, and a copy nonetheless? To simplify this, I only wish to point out that in this schema only the mental image, as a copy of something absent, links the present state of one who is remembering to something else. The *eikon*, likeness or copy, as a representation of the event is manifested as a sort of “causal link, namely a sort of physical imprint, that connects one’s present mental image with an earlier act of perception” (Sorabji, 1972: 11). The image’s role here is to preserve, in a copy, a memory. Obviously, the memory is itself never an original; rather, a memory is always necessarily a representation, or a memory of a memory. Mnemonic memory may follow a photographic model, as a sort of resurrected index, a *pharmakon* that implies there is always a level of artificiality implicit within the act of recollection itself.

Aristotle positions the “forgetter” as a negative type, regardless of the fact that his model of memory implies a forgetting, as a mediated copy of a past event. He explains that the forgetfulness associated with doubters, old people, and children, is due to the fact that their souls are in movement, and they are therefore less receptive to the imprint of a memory. Whether their torso length has anything to do with it is beside the point; for

Aristotle the forgetter is a particular type, namely moist, melancholic, decaying or too infantile.

As David Gross points out in Lost Time, forgetting was indeed considered an undesirable quality until modern times, when the advent of streetcars and ambreactions, gave way to a philosophical shift, perhaps even a recognition that forgetting was necessary for “creativity, happiness and wholeness” (Gross, 2000: 55 ff). Proust’s many temporal selves are horribly “noncontemporaneous” to borrow Gross’ term; his flarings of spontaneous memory are the burden of an imbalanced mama’s boy who indulged in too many long walks and biscuits. With the rise of modernity, or perhaps even as a consequence of modernity, forgetting began to have generative properties, harkening back to its etymological meaning (in both German and English) of for-getting, *ver-gessen*—that is, both getting and losing.

Freud radically transformed forgetting, by postulating its impossibility, and pathologizing memory itself. In his schema, we don’t forget, we repress, and it is only by remembering, and working through that we can forget well. In fact, in his Civilization and Its Discontents (1930) he looks at the human psyche as a ruined city that we may reconstruct at will. He writes: “since we overcame the error of supposing that the forgetting we are familiar with signified a destruction of the memory trace, we are inclined to take the opposite view, that in mental life nothing that has been formed can perish- that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances...it can once more be brought to light” (Freud, 1982: 5) Therefore, as Gross says, though Freud may initially be read as an anti-rememberer, his work acknowledged the melancholia

caused by being too attached to the past. He was, upon closer inspection, pioneering “better remembering” (Gross, 2000: 41).

Memory, then, always implies a distance, a gap from lived experience. This manifests itself in our pressing need to preserve and re-present the past with material objects. Socially, we are obsessed with the notion that “memory formed in the mind, can be transferred to a solid material, objects which come to stand for memory, and can by virtue of their durability, either prolong or preserve them indefinitely beyond their purely mental existence” (Forty, 2001: 2). We are also obsessed with digitizing archives and making history “accessible” to all². In Pierre Nora’s terms, memory and historical boundaries are blurred, in that it is within the “indiscriminate production of the archives” that one experiences the “acute effect of a new consciousness, the clearest expression of the terrorism of historicized memory” (Nora, 1989: 14). But memory is not history, and is not constructed and narrativized as such. However, when a monument is erected, as an exemplar of the historical and “public” time that it represents, there is a struggle with forgetting, because public memory is selective, and rests on forgetting itself, and this is why monuments are interesting to me. They are, in their very erection, almost already irrelevant; they signal that the memory is already lost. As surrogate representations of a memory, they too are copies, distillations of the past that are necessarily distant from “lived” time.

I must confess that my thinking is heavily informed by the work of Pierre Nora, my favorite nostalgic, and his lament for a “milieux de mémoire”. This began my

² The Diniacopoulos Archive in Montreal is one such example of how the plenitude of the past, and one man’s obsession with the BBC, is being organized and digitized into a usable format. The archive, etymologically related to the arch (arkhe: totality) is one such site that over-arches, so to speak, the materiality of the past into that of the present.

thinking about the nature of memory, and about how monuments can stand as proof of our own distance from memory. The precursor and inspiration for this paper is drawn from Pierre Nora's The Realms of Memory, tomes so meaty and rich that I wouldn't deign a literature review of any of the three volumes. For Nora, *lieux* exist because of the enforced historicism of memory, and the lack of any real environments of memory (*milieux*) (Nora, 1992: 8). For him, memory's opposing term is not forgetting, but history (8). He states: "if we are able to live within memory we would not need to consecrate a *lieux de mémoire* in its name" (8) and further "with the appearance of the trace, the mediation, the distance, we are in the realm not of memory but of history" (8). I am not particularly interested in his opposition between memory and history, as I tend to see this as Marita Sturken does: "...memory and history are entangled rather than oppositional" (Sturken, 1997: 5). I would also argue that monument-makers, particularly the counter-monument-makers that I will explore, have recognized the distancing between the monument and the historical event and their monuments have sprung from this very cleft.

Nora's nostalgic encyclopedia of memory mounts the argument that "we are living in a historical society where memory functions as a mere historical trace that can only be a simulation of the past. There are no more *milieux de mémoire*, settings where memory is a real part of everyday experience...the creation of realms of memory is a result of a modern society's inability to live within real memory" (Nora, 1992: xii). Unlike the Romans and their arch, we no longer enact rituals where present and past exist a-temporally together. According to Nora, we no longer have a rich public life because act and meaning never coalesce. But if history, Nora's own self-appointed demon of forgetting, "did not besiege memory, deforming it and transforming it, penetrating it and

petrifying it, there would be no *lieux de mémoire*. Indeed it is this very push and pull that produces *lieux de mémoire*—moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not quite death” (12). This might be seen as a means of keeping place in time but it is this construction of an unchallenged past that is descried by most theorists as contributing to the phenomenon of social amnesia, directly responsible in Russell Jacoby’s words, for a “repression of remembrance—of society’s own past” (Jacoby, 1975: 5).

Here, I think Nora would agree with my postulation that monuments are always-already-in-ruins, symptomatic of our distance from memory, as a veritable *lieux de mémoire* that attempts to “stop time, block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial—all this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs” (18). This seems to be the *a priori* function of monuments, but Nora also adds that “*lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications” (19). Although what Nora sees as the deadening force of state-sanctioned monuments can never be representative of lived and authentic memory in his schema, his model, however fraught in its privileging of authenticity and experience, does acknowledge that *lieux* are representational and therefore necessarily mediated spaces. He writes: “contrary to historical objects...*lieux de memoire* have no referent in reality; or rather, they are their own referent: pure, exclusively self-referential signs” (23).

However, Nora’s work does not really leave us with many antidotes to our social rupture with memory. If we are to believe his claim that “real memory” is “social and

unviolated, exemplified in but also retained as the secret of so-called primitive and archaic societies” (Nora, 1989: 8) than that does not leave much hope for representing memory, least of all by using a medium that he describes as the “boundary stones from another age, illusions of eternity...[that] mark the rituals of a society without ritual” (Nora, 1992: 12). Nora’s view of monuments is hardly complimentary, but it will be my project to examine them from his starting point, not as the *locus* of collective memory, but rather as media that attempt to communicate (however imperfectly) a moment in time, a communication that is bound up with our desire to remember, and forget.

Modernism and Forgetting

Many scholars lament that we now live in an amnesiac culture, and the late modern “memory boom”, as described by Andreas Huyssen, is seen as being causally linked to the perceived collapse of the present and the past, or the space-time compression brought on by technological innovation and over-mediatization. This “memory boom” may be an extension of the so-called “memory crisis” of the 19th century, anxieties that can be summed up as the sudden realization that “memory was understood as actively produced, as representation” (Radstone, 2000: 7). Andreas Huyssen sees this “boom” however, as unique to our particular temporal juncture, because it “represents the attempt to slow down information processing, to resist the dissolution of time in the synchronicity of the archive, to recover a mode of contemplation outside the simulation of fast speed information networks” (Huyssen, 1995: 7) Whether this is a uniquely “post-modern” moment is debatable, for I am very suspicious of the modern/post-modern dichotomy. To me, the flattening of temporalities or the collapse between the past and the present has links to the Benjaminian conception

of the reification of the object implicit within modern commodity fetishism; this loss of aura associated with a loss of place is, I think, a particularly modernist conundrum.

Therefore, my consideration of monuments and forgetting makes no distinction between the memory crisis of the 19th century and our current “memory boom” because I believe them to be united by a common filament, namely, the realization that the “then” is not “now”, the unsettling beginnings of nostalgia.

Dean MacCannell, in his work on tourism, seems to suggest that modernity’s “final victory, is not the disappearance of the non-modern world but its artificial preservation and reconstruction” (MacCannell, 1976: 8). Clearly then, nostalgia is symptomatic of modernity itself. The concept of nostalgia is dependent on the modern conception of linear time, one that is lamented as impossible to recoup. Keith Tester characterizes the prerequisites of nostalgia as follows: “a notion of history...some sense that the ‘present is deficient’...[and] the material presence of artifacts from the past” (Tester, 1993: 64). From this we can glean that “nostalgia is a feature of modernity; it simultaneously provides fertile ground for certainty and deconstruction. It is one kind of response to the cultural conflict in modernity” (Tester, 1993: 64). Many sociologists position nostalgia as being doubly globalized, claiming that there has been a “global institutionalization of a nostalgic attitude” (Robertson, 1994: 54), which means that nostalgia, ironically it secures the future more than the past. However, most locate the “great tide of synthetic nostalgia” at the turn of the 19th century (54), at a time when public time and accessible means of traveling through space were being formalized (Kern, 1983: 33-35). I do not think it is a coincidence that nostalgia is attributed to this particular juncture in time, when temporal perceptions were being homogenized to suit

the development of a budding modernity. The monument, as a “guarantor of origins, allaying anxieties inspired by the uncertainties of our beginnings” (Choay, 2001: 6), is a nostalgic medium; the longing for a place of origins, a *nostos*, a home, a starting point, is one that undergirds all monumental efforts. Taking a cue from Svetlana Boym’s The Future of Nostalgia, there is a distinction between what she calls restorative and reflective modes of nostalgia. In the past re-presented by restorative nostalgics, the past does not “reveal signs of decay; it has to be freshly painted in its original image, and remain eternally young” (Boym, 2001: 49). One might say that the “great man on horse” monumental tradition fulfills these requirements, except for the fact that copper oxidizes, horse testicles are painted pink as a yearly prank, and these monuments don’t age very well. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, is “more concerned with the individual and individual time, with the irrevocability of the past” (49).

Ceci n’est pas un monument?

But what constitutes a monument and what is its relationship with the ruin? In *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, Françoise Choay traces the etymology of the word “monument” from the Latin *monumentum* derived from *monere*, which literally means both to “warn” and to “recall”. This suggests that the earliest monuments were markers to ward off, or instruct monument viewers. She writes: “in this original meaning one would term a monument any artifact erected by a community of individuals to commemorate or to recall for future generations, individuals, events, sacrifices, practices and beliefs. The specificity of the monument is therefore the way it acts on memory” (Choay, 2001: 6). By 1689, she suggests, the word began to gather up other meanings,

and in the *Dictionnaire* of the French Academy the word was recorded to mean:

“illustrious, superb, magnificent, durable, glorious” (7). Choay writes: “the pleasure provided by the beauty of an edifice has been replaced by the awe or surprise provoked by technical *tour de force* and a modern version of the colossal, which Hegel saw as the beginning of the work of art in the peoples of antiquity” (8). This shift from a memorial function to an aesthetic signifier is evidence of what Choay describes as: “the monument impos[ing] itself on our attention without context or preparation and call[ing] for instantaneous reaction, trading its ancient status as sign for that of signal” (8), in the sense that it no longer stands for what it is, shirking its commemorative function for an aesthetic one. Following her argument, the monument, as a term, did not always carry the weight of its descriptive signification; it was not always caught up with heft, permanence and magnificence.

To further parse the word, I must acknowledge that the traditional division when looking at monuments is to contrast them with memorials. Arthur Danto, for example, states: “We erect monuments so that we shall always remember and build memorials so that we will never forget...monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends...monuments make heroes and triumphs...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 honor ourselves” (qtd. by Young, 1993: 3). Monuments might no longer honor our triumphs, but serve to contest the very possibility of determining and marking heroic acts. For my part, I use the words “monument” and “memorial” interchangeably, as I see them as containing one another. In James Young’s

words: “[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 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” (3).

However, to further problematize what constitutes a monument, at a recent graduate conference where I was sitting on a panel nebulously entitled “Memory in Movement” I was told that I should work on defining the separation between sculpture and monument, when analyzing monuments. At first blush, the difference between the two is that one is invested with a living historical event; one that is presumably shared, or which solicits people to re-member, or, as the case may be, to forget, an event together. But some scholars, like Rosalind Krauss, link the logic of the sculpture as “inseparable from the logic of the monument” (Krauss, 1985: 279), always commemorative, always demarcating a place as a monument does. In her words “it sits in a particular place and speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place”. She argues that sculptures and monuments “function in a relation to the logic of representation and marking, sculptures are normally figurative and vertical, their pedestals an important part of the structure since they mediate between the actual site and the representational sign” (279). In her schema, the two terms are seared together, and perform the same functions within space. This point of view becomes clarified if one considers a work like Constantin Brancusi’s *Endless Column* (1938) a Minimalist sculpture built in Tirgu-Jiu, Romania as part of a memorial to those who had died defending the town from the Germans in World War I. The sculpture, a series of perpetual plinths that hold one another, has often been referred as the inaugural modern monument, as “pure marker,

pure base” (Krauss, 1985: 280), even as it is situated in a larger commemorative context. The column points to how an emerging Minimalist tradition of sculpture can incorporate a memorial message in its very abstraction.

It may be that the monument is more accurately described as an emotive enunciation, or, to take a cue from William Gass: “a monument literally stands for something; it speaks to a community, a city, a state; but monumentality, as a quality which only a few objects...possess, exceeds speech” (Gass, 1982: 133). This is when they are most persuasive; Napoleon III’s design of an architectural promenade through Paris not only served to bind the city, but also ensured that “citizens were presented with visual models to internalize, remember and apply” (Boyer, 1994: 14). We still build cities with public spaces and gardens designed to “civilize” and “reform”, although monuments constructed today are not as straightforward as rhetorical *topoi*; many are Minimalist, metaphorical spaces that work to conceal themselves.

The Useful Monument: Staging the Ruin

In order to justify a division between the historical and the commemorative monument, Choay draws on the theories of Alois Riegl, whose 1903 essay on the “Modern Cult of the Monument” will serve as the prismatic text through which I shall connect the seemingly oppositional monument and ruin. He defined monuments as being “in its oldest and most original sense...a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations” (Riegl, 1982: 21).

Riegl found that historical monuments had a constantly changing role in culture as their value and appreciation shifted in time (Boyer, 1994: 145). In fact, he realized that

the very idea of a monument proved to be historically relative. He outlined a classification scheme for the evolutionary history of monuments, and concluded that different styles of art history had generated different types of monuments valued at different periods of time for different reasons. According to his essay, there are three types of values that concerned historic monuments: commemorative value, art-historical value and age value. By dividing the history of monuments into three classes, that is intentional and unintentional or historical, and those possessing "age-value", he submitted that the earliest class contained intentional monuments designed egotistically by their makers for recalling specific moments in time, commemorating the greatness of a nation's past, or leaving a lasting testimony for succeeding generations. They continued to be memorials as long as the conditions that brought them into existence remained alive, but when these conditions died the monuments were usually destroyed. This generally characterized all the monuments of Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Riegl, 1982: 26). He states: "in contrast to intentional monuments, historical monuments are unintentional, but it is equally clear that all deliberate monuments may also be unintentional ones. Since those who fashioned the works which we have subsequently termed "historical monuments" wanted primarily to satisfy their own practical and ideal needs...it is not the original purpose and significance that turn these works into monuments, but rather our modern perception of them"(23). He therefore acknowledges that the meaning of the monument turns, and is dependent on our reception of them, rather than their form itself.

Furthermore, commemorative value, in his schema, is subjective, either intentional and defined by its makers or unintentional and defined by us. He argues that

the Italian Renaissance however, was the first time that historical value came into play, as people began to revalue artifacts from the past and to preserve their forms because they believed to be images reflecting a golden age of history and thus revealed “universally valid norms”. He writes: “for the first time people began to recognize earlier stages of their own artistic, cultural and political activities in the works and events that lay a thousand years in the past” (26). Originally built for other purposes, then abandoned or ravaged by time; they received their monumental status artificially when an epoch bestowed upon them the value of history (Boyer, 1994: 144). It is no coincidence that in the thick of this past-glorification, formal measures were taken to preserve these monuments, as evidenced by the “bull issued by Paul III on November 28th 1534, the first of its kind” (Riegl, 1982: 26).

Riegl’s work is of prime importance to my current investigation, because his study acknowledges the necessity of the timeworn itself. Also, his key concept of age value, defined as that which is “rooted purely in its value as memory...[which] springs from our appreciation of the time that has elapsed since [the work] was made and which has burdened it with the traces of age” (23-24), incorporates within it the idea of the time lapse, of a memory that is based purely on a viewer’s realization that s/he forgot how much time had passed. According to him, “these monuments are nothing more than indispensable catalysts which trigger in the beholder a sense of the life cycle, of the emergence of the particular from the general and its gradual but inevitable dissolution back into the general. This immediate emotional effect depends neither on scholarly knowledge nor historical education” (24). So, although the monument may contain nothing of value for an art historian, it might be valued as a ruin or fragment because it

moved a spectator. As Boyer puts it: "Age value contained universal appeal reaching beyond the province of historians and conservationists. Riegl believed they were the most democratic and altruistic monuments of all" (Boyer, 1994: 144-45). Therefore Riegl offers the theoretical justification that buttresses my own consideration of monuments and ruins, as concepts embedded within one another. For Riegl, a monument-in-ruins is the ultimate monumental expression.

Moreover, any monument can therefore fall into his category of age value as it "embraces every artifact without regard to its original significance and purpose, as long as it reveals the passage of a considerable period of time" (145). As my walk through Montreal demonstrates, any relic of the past can be fetishized in this way; even the grain elevators in the Old Port can become monuments. In this sense, monuments are always transmitting, and can be construed as semiologically promiscuous.

Georg Simmel, in his paper "Die Ruine" (1911), acknowledged the usefulness of the ruin, as a means of gathering the past "with its destinies and transformations...into this instant of an aesthetically perceptible present" (Simmel, 1959: 266). For him, the ruin represents a psychic whole; the tension between "purpose and accident, nature and spirit, past and present" is preserved, which "lead[s] to a unity of external image and internal effect" (266). Ruins furnish an anachronistic presence that is an opening up of an absence; they inhabit the threshold between the visible and the invisible in much the same way that all monuments do.

The monument-in-ruins is an ideal counter-monument; these two terms are dovetailed; the monument-ruin, as a broad category of my own devising, has for its apotheosis the counter-monument. My point here is to underscore how the monument and

the counter-monument inevitably collapse into each other. In Young's schema, he chooses to acknowledge a more specific category of counter-monuments, the particular German variety, that are: brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being". (Young, 2000: 7) He sees the resistance to monumentality as being bound up with the fact that most post-war artists recognize the "necessity of memory" but are in effect, recalling "events they never experienced directly". (7) This problematic position of operating within a "post-memory", that is, working from a space that is doubly mediated, not only as a memory but also as someone else's, is what makes this monumentalization possible. In her work on post-memory, Marianne Hirsch, explains that the second generation was "cognizant that our memory consists not of events, but of representations...[this] traumatic repetition connects the second generation to the first". (Hirsch, 2001: 221). This post-memory, dependent as it is on mediation, is a "powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection, but through representation, projection and creation...[it is] often based on silence rather than speech, on the invisible rather than the visible"(220). In this way, one might see the act of memorializing a trauma never directly experienced, as a necessary repetition of that loss; this loss is reproduced as the loss of the vanishing monument itself. Furthermore, because post-memory is necessarily artificial, as a memory that has no relation to an actual experience of an event, these counter-monuments work to acknowledge this "gap" between the monument and the past, and this produces the possibility for contesting the monumental form and the erection of a "public memory", as problematic as this term may be.

Young characterizes the counter-monument as one whose “aim was not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by people walking by, but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town’s feet” (Young, 2000: 7-8). Young’s definition, however, suggests that the counter-monumentality lies in both in a distinct material and experiential difference. My own definition of counter-monumentality is more fluid than just those monuments that are state-sanctioned in their desecration or invite state-sanctioned desecration.

I need to point out here that monuments may in their counter-monumental moment become more than the symbols that they were previously meant to represent; they drift into the realm of index, as literal relics of time passing, significant only because they are decaying. Rosalind Krauss’ definition of index is that they are different from symbols because they “relate to their referents along an axis of physical relationships. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and the cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the categories of index we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms...” (Krauss, 1987:4). Arguably, all monuments can function as indexes; Choay claims that the monument’s loss of memorial function was caused not only by the aestheticizing values of the Quattrocentro but by the “development, perfection and diffusion of artificial memories...the memorial hegemony of the monument was not, however, threatened until printing gave to writing an unprecedented power in the matter” (8). The endless reproduction of these monumental sites or the “semanticization of the monument-signal” (10), as Choay calls it, is related to

the incessant duplication of the monument in postcards and photographs, mediations of the monument that contribute to its loss of aura, and the degradation of its value as an actual site of memory.

Recollecting the Collective

The loss of collective frameworks of memory spurs on nostalgia (Boym, 55), and it is this anxiety that monumentalizing speaks to. In Riegl's taxonomy, all monuments that fall into the commemorative category are dependent on the customs of social reception that keep the memory alive for their success; the monument does not usurp the burden to remember. Maurice Halbwachs, echoed this viewpoint in the 1920s when he asked: "how can currents of collective thought whose impetus lies in the past be recreated, when we can grasp only the present?" His conclusion is that it is only through participation in commemorative activities that involve all generations (Halbwachs, 1992: 80) that a collective memory is made possible. Rebutting Henri Bergson's conception of subjective time and memory by positing a sociologically-based study of memory, he stressed the importance of group formation in order for memory to be sustained. He claims that it is "the individual as group member who remembers". According to Halbwachs, personal memories, are, at bottom, socially produced and furthermore, all collective memory unfolds in a spatial framework. He writes: "the collective memory finds its support in spatial images" (200). To put it tautologically, collective memory requires a collective that engages in activities that are, in turn, collective.

But for Halbwachs too, there is a double mediation entailed in his concept of memory; memories are always necessarily memories of memories. In fact, he compares

one's memory with the worn stones of a Roman ruin: "we preserve memories of each epoch of our lives, and these are continually reproduced...but precisely because these memories are repetitions...they have lost the form and appearance they once had. Their antiquity cannot be established by their form or appearance but by the traces of old features" (89). Preservation of memory spurs on a worn reproduction of them, necessarily implicating a space for forgetting within the province of remembering.

There is clearly a problematic imbedded in the very concept of an expressed, signified and communicated public memory, as wholesome as Halbwachs' vision is.

In this current social environment, wherein there exists a sort of phobia of speaking of the "collective", the language of the monument may seem to be inescapably clichéd (here lies so-and-so or on this day...). As an obvious embodiment of state-sanctioned heritage, as an example of "memory imposed from above", as Nora put it (1992: 23), the monument may be seen as an incredibly limited form of communication, inexorably tied to the dramatic utterance, the singularity of historical announcement.

The idea of a "public" is of course a universalizing construction that purports to address (and therefore create) a unified homogenous citizenry. The recent tendency to pluralize the word as "public(s)", points to the fact that "we can never have the closure in public space that collective memory speaks to" (Boyer, 1994: 3). Monument-makers are caught in the bind of trying to appeal to the premise of collective memory, while still allowing for individual recollection within the monumental form, by making monuments that can spur on a multitude of recollections. Svetlana Boym aptly points out that collective and national memory is not necessarily the same. She writes: "collective memory... is not the same as national memory, even when they share images and

quotations. National memory tends to make a single teleological plot out of shared everyday recollections. The gaps and discontinuities are mended through a coherent and inspiring tale of recovered identity. Instead, shared everyday frameworks of collective or cultural memory offer us mere signposts for individual reminiscences that could suggest multiple narratives (53). In this project I am therefore more interested in investigating the tension between individual and collective memory, brought into sharper relief by nostalgia, Boym's intermediary (54).

The Nietzschean call for a productive forgetting might more aptly be replaced with a call for "productive remembering" (Huyssen, 2000: 37). Huyssen and others fret that "memory cannot be secured by monuments—for it is virtual, imagined, transitory, in short, human and social" (38). As John Durham Peters has noted in his impressive but somewhat skewed work on the history of the idea of communication (1999), the study of communications seems poised on the paradox of the fantasy of immediacy and presence, or the appreciation of distance. Communicative media can never guarantee full presence, though they are usually thought of as a means by which we overcome absence and distance. Monuments, like all media, operate in a paradoxical way. They purport to bring closer what is far, as a mark of the past that one can spatially and plastically access. However, monuments can be seen as a medium of forgetting, like writing in Socrates' famed anti-*graphe* speech in the *Phaedrus*. As Socrates himself was recorded saying (quoting Thamon to Theuth) "those who acquire it [writing] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of by their own internal resources" (Plato [trans. Walter Hamilton], 1973: 96). Technologies of memory have been seen as a means of

distancing ourselves from our memories, as technologies of forgetting, since the time of the Ancients. Therefore, this study springs from an acknowledgement of the ephemeral, imperfect, and unpredictable nature of all communication, but also in a stubborn belief that this very fissure, as Andreas Huyssen calls it, “that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable” and as such, shouldn’t be lamented but rather “understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity” (Huyssen, 1995: 2-3).

The aim of this thesis then, is to re-think the nature of the monument and the often diametrically opposed counter-monument. By investigating how monuments speak to the forgetting inherent in remembering, I hope to explore the counter-monumental critique of the monumental form, as well as formulate a critique of the counter-monument. The trajectory of this paper will acknowledge the aesthetic and philosophical ties the counter-monument shares with earthworks, erected landscapes that use a figurative forgetting, ephemerality, as their primary mode of expression. I would like to stress that I am in no way singing a dirge to the monument; instead I am trying to point to the counter-monumentality that is part of monumentality. For clearly, it doesn’t take much to scratch the surface of the monument, bring it into question, ruin it. The paradox of the monument, and its negation, is that it relies on the “interior memorial” of those who directly experienced the monument in the present tense; it is, like memory, fleeting, elusive, decaying to the point of disappearance. Having made a pilgrimage to counter-monumental sites I have directly experienced the kind of “tourism of absence” that these empty spaces necessarily inspire (and the ensuing disappointment of going to see a monument that no longer exists). Therefore, I hope to suggest a more fruitful way of

bringing the monumental form into question. Rather than rely on the monument's negation (and the necessary explicatory plaque that serves to demarcate it from other empty spaces) I hope to suggest a more fruitful kind of monumentality; a transmonumentality, if you will, that reaches beyond negation, that is actively produced, built, and experienced.

In the first chapter, I will focus on urban monumentalization using monuments in Montreal as a case study. I will investigate monumentalization from a phenomenological viewpoint, vis-à-vis my own sensorial experience of bodily engagement in urban space. Here I locate my own photo essay as being a collection of *pharmakons* that necessarily resurrect these monuments, but also permit me to be both inside and outside the places I have chosen to remark upon. I will use the monument-ruins of Montreal to inaugurate a discussion of counter-monumentality in a broader sense, as the counter-monumentality that emerges from neglect and from the re-appropriation of monuments in the urban landscape.

In the second chapter, I will bring the monument and the ruin closer together by arguing that the monument and the counter-monument, as a specific subset of the ruin, necessarily contain one another by looking at counter-monumental memory sites in post-Holocaust Germany, and post-9/11 New York.

In the third, I will locate monuments within a larger category of landscape, as a sort of ultimate counter-monumentality that extends to the space around itself, as a logical continuation of the counter-monumental that invests the site itself with commemorative potency. In conclusion, I hope to introduce a conception of modern

pilgrimage that may open up more generative possibilities for monumentality and counter-monumentality.

Chapter One

The Monument in Passing: Re-membering Urban Space

They write their boasts upon tombstones; they incorporate their deeds in obelisks; they place their hopes of remembrance in solid stones joined to other solid stones, dedicated to their subjects or their heirs forever, forgetful of the fact that stones that are deserted by the living are even more helpless than life that remains unprotected and unpreserved by stones- Lewis Mumford from The Culture of Cities

Ever since M. Patté's prize-winning plan for Louis XV's Paris, the monument has been a key factor in the design of cities. To this day, the *place royale* concept, characterized by the radial fanning out of boulevards from nodes (squares), is a feature of urban design. This is when they are most persuasive; Napoleon III's design of an architectural promenade through Paris not only served to bind the city, but also ensured that "citizens were presented with visual models to internalize, remember and apply" (Boyer, 1994: 14). We still build cities with public spaces and gardens designed to "civilize" and "reform", and monuments are still seen as embodying this particular kind of exclusionary or didactic space. Park Avenue is hardly a Parisian-style boulevard, but the first half of this chapter will examine the theoretical underpinnings of monumentalism in urban space in Montreal. The second will focus on particular sites in the city of Montreal, as a case study to inaugurate a discussion of how features in the urban landscape become monumentalized, used and forgotten.

The organization of cities around monumentalized fixtures can be seen as a symptom of modernity. In Foucault's terms, "the idea of accumulating everything...of creating a sort of universal archive, the desire to enclose all times, all eras, all forms and styles within a single place, the concept of making all times into one place, and yet a place which is outside time, inaccessible to the wear and tear of years, according to a plan

of almost perpetual and unlimited accumulation within an irremovable place, all belongs to our entirely modern outlook.” (Foucault, 1997: 16). Therefore, the monumentalization of history is concatenated with the rise of urban space, and fulfills the psychic and social needs of the new urbanite. This may be related to the design that the arterial tapestry of the cityscape provides. The grid of boulevards and avenues furnish a compartmentalized spatial order that may have been transposed onto a longing to practice “time-keeping” and temporal organization in much the same way. This is the fundamental urban fantasy that governs the city, which we may be able to navigate through the shocks and paroxysms that mar our hectic existences, like the cut of a roadway through impenetrable space. It can be no coincidence that when re-constructing the transparent Paris of the Second Empire, Haussmann took care to put monuments at the end of his rectilinear streets (Benjamin, 1999: 132), punctuating each boulevard. The monument and the museum, both manifestations of monumentalism, traditionally serve to buttress that delicate balance between control and anarchy, a stage upon which the “pageantry of life” is played out.

In Francis Yates’ impressive study The Art of Memory, she traces the development of mnemotechnics from Classical Greece to the Renaissance, as a representational mnemonic practice that was concerned primarily with the organization of space as a means of recalling oral (and artificial) memory. In her words “the first step was to imprint on the memory a series of *loci* or places” (Yates, 1966: 18); this was often conceptualized as a memory palace with many adjoining rooms. Though it is clear that we are tethered to memory spaces as spatial landmarks, my point here is to underline that not only was memory conceived as a physical space; to remember became the act of

traversing the space. One would walk through the rooms as a means of retrieving the information stored there, thereby aligning ideas of walking, remembering, and reading. While Proust privileged the memory of the body, *in* the body, that resurfaces suddenly from oblivion, he was fundamentally convinced that the eyes were not memory's messengers; ancient mnemotechnics, on the other hand, focused on memory as memory images (Weinrich, 2004: 148). In the Rhetorica Ad Herennium, for example, Cicero speaks of how artificial memory, strengthened by training and discipline, relies on backgrounds, and images, that is, "a figure, a mark, a portrait of the object we wish to remember". In his words, "the backgrounds are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script and the delivery is like the reading" (Cicero, 1954: III, XVII 209).

Following de Certeau, walking the city is the only way to read it and remember it because it is a language made to speak by the movement of one's legs. So too, our detours are "turns of phrase", or "stylistic figures" (De Certeau, 1989: 100), a text that can only be read by being in it. Monuments are silent if you drive by them in a car. It is pedestrians who, moving through spaces that are in motion, knit together memories, make meaning of the city.

Cities, as landscapes of systemized memory, are organized by a particular mode of visibility. Within this design schema, monuments can be thought of as evidence of what Guy Debord calls "the spectacle of unlived experience" (Debord, 1983: 185). He claims that monumentalization and museums facilitate a state-sanctioned extrication of art from its particular conditions of communication; the monument, for him, is merely art subsumed (read: destroyed) under a concept of universal history (176). He is surely not

the only one to have attacked the monumentalized city; Henri Lefebvre, in his investigation of the production of space states: “monumental imperishability bears the stamp of the will to power” (Lefebvre, 1991: 221). Walking around Montreal has made me think rather differently about urban monumentalization. The fact is monuments are perishable, on a physical and/or signifying level. Once inserted into the urban landscape they create unforeseen effects, rubbing against their surroundings, creating surreal temporal disjunctions and collages that are delightfully unexpected.

In Defense of the Monument

For me, monuments are interesting precisely because they offer a different spatial temporality within a cityscape. They can speak from a position of totalities, their plaques are often times evidence of panegyric we-speak; they are manifestations of a memory already in ruins. They can also mark the beginning of a much-loathed “merchandising of history”. However, even the most *status quo* monument is constantly undergoing a semantic shift, even if it is barely visible to us.

To be sure, monuments built today have implicitly incorporated a counter-institutional stance into the monumental form (or un-monumental as the case may be), which is why Andreas Huyssen speaks of the futility of criticizing them on that level. In his words, we can no longer denounce “the museum as a bastion of elitist knowledge and power, nor is the older modernist critique exactly persuasive when monument makers have included that very critique into their practices” (Huyssen, 1994: 12).

Sergiusz Michalski, however, ascribes to the view that monuments are “art in political bondage”; countless other scholars are “anti-monument” and declare that “monuments...[are] the image of social order, [that] guarantee or even impose that order”

(Lewis, 1991: 6). But if monuments are hopelessly inappropriate, forever disconnected from the spaces in which they are placed, then why should we pay them any mind? Perhaps the biggest proof of this ideological stance comes in the form of monumental critique: enter Claes Oldenburg's giant rotating scissors to replace obelisks, or his gargantuan anti-war monument "obstacle", a 5,000,000 pound block proposed to literally block the Canal and Broadway St. intersection (Haskell, 1971: 17). Paradoxically, these criticisms seem only to highlight the continuing relevance of the monumental form. From the standpoint that monuments act as memory preservers, it is clear that monuments say more about what was considered an acceptable version of the past, rather than the past itself. So then, by studying yesterday's monuments we can position them as "place markers for historians mapping the many ways in which the past was once imagined" (Hutton, 1993: 10). They are manifestations of distance in more than one sense; they are not only re-presentations of past events, but also representations upon which an entire construction of past-ness is dependent.

Pierre Nora contends that "our relationship to the past is now formed between a subtle play of between its intractability and its disappearance, a question of representation--in the original sense of the word[as a re-presentation]—radically different from the old ideal of resurrecting the past...in practice such resurrection implied a hierarchy of memory...since no one knows what the past will be made of next, anxiety turns everything into a trace, a possible indication, a hint of history that contaminates the innocence of all things"(Nora, 1989: 17). In this way, I felt compelled to photograph cenotaphs, as well as derelict traces of the past within the cityscape, as monuments-in-reverse, sites that become monuments by dying. Riegl's comments on the unintentional

monument that fits under the rubric of “age value” is important in my later meditations on the ruin and nostalgia because his theory allows for a space of remembrance that recognizes the death of the material marker. His theory allows a space for the decay of memory and glorifies in the monumental effect of disintegration (Riegl, 1982: 30-31). These fragmentary displays (either built ruined or restored only partially) point to our own nostalgic needs for mnemonic spaces that are self-reflective, self-referential, and not too slickly commemorative.

Therefore, monuments may be re-inscribed by the historical process, imbued with new indelible values that are transposed, written upon the stone, like a message that rubs off onto blotting paper. Nora sees this as a contamination, but I can only see it as a phenomenon that may perhaps work to counter the neutralizing discourse of history that “musealization” promotes. Theorists such as Tony Bennett, however, see the externalization of memory as a necessary component in the development of a civic public sphere². My interrogation will attempt to approach monuments as a doubly-angled phenomenon, in that, they construct a visible layer of history, while at the same time, create fissures within urban space, because they are always, in some sense, holes, wounds, gaps, or the invisible being “seen”. So too are they manifestations of monumentality that are continuously drifting towards counter-monumentality, whether by the stains of bird offal, by spray paint in the hands of a cynic, or by everyday re-appropriations. As my walk through Montreal seeks to demonstrate, monuments seem to undergo a counter-monumental moment.

² I have deliberately chosen not to unpack Jürgen Habermas’ term here. The problematic of the bourgeois public sphere, as a concept of “public” that has exclusion built into it, is not one I wish to wrestle with, and is, in my view, a very limited idea of what constitutes a “public”.

The Outdoor Museum

Tony Bennett's work on the birth of the museum delineates the rise of "musealization". The museum, as a public space that democratizes access to historical knowledge, is intimately connected to monumentalization. Both are means of legitimizing the reification of the past into moments (or artifacts) that stand above the flow of history, by way of pedestal or glass display case. However, Bennett's argument may need to be retailored to fit a consideration of monuments. His postulation that the opening of the Uffizi gallery was in response to the "need to legitimize the Medici dynasty" (Bennett, 1995: 27) can be carried over to the paradigm of monumental display; they too may serve to legitimize empire, and fashion the public representativeness of rulers. I would submit, however, that this is not always the case; some monuments point to the futility of pomp and glory.

Francois Lyotard also sees the reification associated with the monument as operating within the larger sphere of the museum's project. He writes: "the museum monumentalizes. It sets up and hangs its remainders. It turns them into traces, which are remainders snatched from inattention...it mounts a memory" (Lyotard: 1997, 167-8). He does not, however, feel that the museum should be criticized for mounting memories and he comments that "it seems well founded in complaining that the monumentalized trace is not faithful to the event that passed by...but was it ever in the mind of the museum, in its *mens*, to present what was formerly present 'in vivo'? The event that is then actual, if it ever was, is doomed, to oblivion among inert remainders. It must be lost to be rememorialized (rememore) and *commented on as a trace in itself* [italics mine]". He sees

“the infidelity of monumentalization or museumization, the mummifying practices and works for which we reproach hangings and glass casings” as “respectful of the evanescence of all that exists. What would be demented would be to claim an integral reinstitution of the now that was back then as if it were the now of the now...being forgotten is part of what it is”. So, following Lyotard’s logic, forgetting this forgetting is what threatens it the most (168), and furthermore, monumentalization, as part of museumification, should work to reveal this forgetting.

It bears mentioning too that the monument viewer also indulges in a different codified behavior than the museum-goer, in that the monument is a part of our exterior public landscape and involves a peripatetic, less class-based mode of experiencing city spaces. However, regardless of the tolerance of vagrants in public squares, monumental space can be a performative space in which the “civilizing” practice of reverence or mourning is initiated. Thus, one might look at the monument in urban public space as the uncovering of the same previously exclusionary historical territory, creating what one might term an “open-air museum” (Osborne, 1998: 434). Like the museum, the monument can be seen as binding together urban public space with a conception of a “public history” and common identity. In the words of James Young: “in suggesting themselves as indigenous, even geological outcrops in the national landscape, monuments tend to naturalize the values, ideals and laws of the land itself” (Young, 1992: 270). In effect, the monument can serve to “naturalize” history, by its very naturalization within the landscape of the city itself.

The Other City

Montreal is the only metropolis I know of where one can find, in an astonishing juxtaposition of the banal and the memorial, an ice-cream shop next to a tombstone carver (fig. 1). It seems as if the erasure of time is less leveling in Montreal; vestiges of the *has-been* hang around, like so many involuntary memories. Buildings stay vacant and “à louer”, as a testament to times that have passed, in a landscape that has since shifted to the more insidious urban tradition of lofization and condominiumizing. Monuments inhabit this particular urban moment in a very pertinent way. They stand at the threshold of the visible and the invisible, in that they communicate history that most casual *flâneurs* are at a loss to access, but they are structures of remembrance that mean to open up previously private historical narratives. They unveil the latter within the sphere of the public “interior” created by the streets of cities.

I decided to begin my wandering in Montreal with a cemetery in the city’s north end: the Baron Hirsch Cemetery, situated on the orange subway line, at de la Savanne. Cemeteries may be looked at as mirror reflections of city spaces; they constitute the “other cities”, the inverse of the living city, a *polis* constructed around the ordering of the artifacts or immortalizations of death. One could perhaps trace the development of cemeteries as arising in tandem with the concept of “musealization”, a compartmentalization of temporalities that arose with the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery, museum and archive (Foucault, 1997: 22). In Michel Foucault’s analysis of heterotopias, from the 19th century on, he writes about how the “cemetery began to be shifted to the outskirts of the city” because in parallel with the “individualization of death” came an “obsession with death as sickness”. In an effort to sequester the dead

from the living, parallel spaces for the dead were created, heterotopic spaces, in the sense that they “presuppose[d] a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time” (22). The role of heterotopic space vis-à-vis the rest of space is such that it is a “function that takes place between two opposite poles. On the one hand, they perform a task of creating a space of illusion that reveals how all of real space is illusory...on the other, they have the function of forming another real space, as perfect, meticulous and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived and in a sketchy state” (24). Foucault’s work on heterotopias is nebulous but offers an idea of the “other” within the structure and arrangement of society, as a space of otherness that oscillates between freedom and containment. His division between what he calls heterotopias of compensation (perfect and meticulous) and heterotopias of crisis, characterized by a sort of sacred “otherness” can be applied both to the monument, and its inevitable slip into counter-monumentality.

As I was wandering through the Adath Israel plot, I was astonished by how this space, as a heteropia, was both a space of enclosure and disclosure (fig. 2). In this field, in an industrial part of town, the markers of death were laid as if with rulers, an “other” space of ordering, and the obverse reflection of a city: a city of corpses. There were no pathways amongst the bodies, only rungs of epitaphs, testifying to the human comfort found in making the flesh stone. There was no whiff of rot, just sealed containment. The plot was made up of Jews who paid to be buried there after the World War II; the cenotaphs in some of the plots recall the typical shape of the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, an abstract block of stone that stands in for the many who perished in the war, a

minimalist marker that is not bound to representing the flesh so much as re-presenting it in a sanitized slab of granite (fig. 3).

Borrowing from Foucault then, one might say that a monument, like a heterotopic space, opens up a space of loss and, at the same time, of quasi-eternity (Foucault, 1997: 22). Clearly, the tomb is a literal stand-in for the flesh in stone. In William Gass' essay "Monument/Mentality" he speaks of how tombstones "may have been meant initially as a reminder, not of one's ancestors so much as where they lay, in order that they still might be spoken to or fed...that the ground itself was occupied and not to be disturbed...any immense stone standing on the spot [was] immense merely to ensure its removal would be laborious and long and requiring slaves" (Gass, 1982: 131). Thus the whole idea of monuments used to denote sacred places rather than structures that were memorious within themselves means that monumental meaning underwent a transferal, from the place to the sign of the place itself. This sign was made large by virtue of necessity, and later, as Choay has remarked, came to be considered the defining adjective. In furthering his discussion on tombstones, Gass submits that the monument both "announces the passing of its referent" as well as insists that "its subject has meaning...and that this meaning is worthy of our remembrance" (132-133). So it would seem that our monuments, hitherto meant to demarcate space, have grown to be more than mere memory markers: they are symbols of the struggle against the inevitability of oblivion. The tomb "similar to the imprint that is created and left when a body is moved" can be seen as "nostalgically record[ing] the plenitude of the body that has since passed on" (Azara, 1999: 34). In this sense, funerary art speaks to this anxiety, and serves to resurrect the lost one, in stone.

Ascent to the Mountain

Monoliths for remembering/forgetting are continuously being re-codified in the present moment, altered by the moment in which the monument “lives”. Ask any bongo drummer, for instance who George Etienne Cartier is, and s/he probably would not be able to tell you, despite the fact that s/he and others congregate in front of his statue in Mont Royal Park every summer Sunday (fig.4). The monument sits at the base of Montreal’s “mountain”, as part of a park designed by Frederick Law Olmstead in 1873 and 1881 in response to “bourgeois residents in the Golden Square Mile to the south who fretted about the vanishing greenery in their neighborhood” (Gray: 2001, 70). The park, as a space of containment and organization, is an interesting monumental site to present in counter point to the cemetery.

The monument was erected as a part of an “elevating” project, and it may be one to which the public may not have “access” for it depends on a repository of historical and political knowledge to fully communicate its intended significance. By 1914, according to one scholar, it was generally considered that “bronze and marble were distinctly out of fashion. The elaborate visual language of symbolism and allegory became incomprehensible in the twentieth century as the classical myths now were for most people” (Osborne, 1998: 434). The Cartier monument a “strange mix of British imperialism and Canadian nationalism” (Gordon, 2001: 89), was unveiled at a crucial time in Canadian history, when “20, 000 French Canadians refused to report” for duty during the First World War, so Villeneuve’s monument “became the first step towards that rebuilding” (88). Alan Gordon writes: “in a gesture that symbolically and electrically united the empire, his Majesty the King pressed a button at Balmoral castle in Scotland

that triggered the release of the Union Jack covering the statue” (88). Iconographically, the monument smacks of British imperialism, featuring “four British lions as well as figures representing education, law and liberty summarize the imperialists’ vision of French Canadian allegiance to the empire” (89). Though the Cartier monument has had a history, in that Cartier was considered to be a turncoat by many French Canadians, the monument was a symbol of bi-national Canada’s tie to the English Empire, and was once a well-known fixture in the World War I vernacular memory (Osborne, 1998: 438).

Though the monument itself may no longer mean anything, as many people do not know the history behind the confederation of Canada, the monument is a well-used landmark. People make their pilgrimages to the park every weekend, drums, pots and pans, and even the occasional sitar, in tow. In this way, the space is a place for the choreographed performance of public ritual. Therefore, it’s hardly surprising that the monument has been covered in graffiti, “trees of gestures” (de Certeau, 1989: 102) that re-articulate what the monument means with new signatures (fig.5). Recently, the provincial maidens have been embellished with red spray paint, on their breasts and eyes; the effect is haunting and surreal, bringing the stone closer to the flesh. Although he was referring to the art of artificial memory, I could not help but be reminded of Cicero’s tip for making sure that images adhere to memory: “if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood, or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that the form is more striking...[it] will ensure our remembering them more readily” (Cicero, 1954: III, xxiii-37, 221) (fig. 6). Clearly, the re-appropriated monument is able to avoid the paradox of the state-sanctioned counter-monument; it becomes re-monumentalized in its desecration. A mere scratch on the surface of a monument is enough to unsettle its

monumentality; it becomes a monument that announces a dissonance, a discord that brings it closer to being a counter-monument. It may even be that the closer the monument moves to its counter-monumentality, the more semiotically active it becomes.

As I have shown, there are many ways in which counter-monumentality may be present within the monument. One of the shortcomings of Young's definition is that it doesn't take into account that monuments may be "used" in a counter-monumental way, rather than in monuments that were designed, and indeed, state-sanctioned to be defaced. Here I mean to suggest that counter-monumentality may be a potential present in all monumental forms, for it doesn't take much to scrape the ideological surface of the monument, and subvert its originally intended meaning. Monumentalized space is always on the brink of de-sacralization, and is always en route to oblivion. Monuments may fall from the historically fetishized social place that they may have once occupied in the past. The town square may begin as a central feature of a city space and may end up its obverse reflection, shaped into a residual zone, neglected as the city space underneath overpasses, and no more important than a pedestrian's shortcut. Once inserted into the urban landscape, monument can shift; it can intertwine with the structures around it, provide a syncopated pattern of once-great men, or be no more than a body brushing against the past, once, briefly (fig. 7).

Monumental ramps and pediment may become a place for a picnic, or for the skateboarder to ollie; the monument's edges become worn away by the wheels of these unlikely pilgrims, a variation on Mary's worn foot in the *Pietas*, a different devotion (fig. 8). Although the monument's original purpose is occluded by this shift, the monument has been de-sanctified; it has slipped into the realm of the quotidian. The

monument then, by its very need to secure a “place” as a “place” needs to be empty enough to be filled by a multitude of purposes; as media with multi-edged social functions in public space, they need to “reflect the current and past lives of communities...[as well as] the state’s memory of itself...inculcate a sense of shared destiny...[as well as] attract tourists” (Young, 1994: 19). The monument, in order to fulfill all or at least some of these functions, must be flexible enough to be continuously recycled and re-contextualized.

Though there are socially coded ways of “seeing” monuments, often they grace piazzas, sometimes as shades of their former glory, mere dying objects, forgotten and covered with bird offal (fig. 9). Monumentalization then, may not be the “safeguard” of history, as with the museum, but may “wear” it out. In this way, the modern monument may not, as Bennett argues the museum does, encourage a certain teleological way of looking at how the history of man unfolded in all of its glory (43-44). The example that springs to mind here is René Lévesque’s floating head; it is a decidedly un-monumental bronze although it does sit raised on a plinth. In this bizarrely shrunken monument, he looks spent, recalling the sculpted representation of Ozymandias’ frown and wrinkled lip (fig.10).

Many artists are re-invigorating the pre-existing monumental form. Canada-based artist Abbas Akhavan uses the monument as a means of critiquing the monumental project. His work points to the monumentalization facilitated by the construction of “public memory” by symbolically decapitating sculptures, using a black sack reminiscent of the guillotine beheadings. The absurd violence of a sheathed bronze head points to, not only the violence commemorated in “public memory”, but to the imperialist mandate

implicit within monumentalization. This intervention is also a method of bringing previously ignored monuments back into people's sphere of attention; it is, in itself, a form of re-monumentalization. The concealment of the sculpture's head becomes a means to reveal the monument once more (fig. 11). It is as Robert Musil wrote: "what strikes one most about monuments is that one doesn't notice them. There is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments. There is no doubt they are erected in order to be seen, indeed to arouse attention, but at the same time they are somehow impregnated against attention: it runs down them like a drop of water down an oilcloth, without stopping for an instant" (Musil, 1986: 320). In Akhavan's subversion, the monument is re-noticed.

Montreal's Old Port features monuments that are un-critical as well as those that dare interrogate. The monument dedicated to the colonialists by the Pointe-A-Callière museum is an example of the epic eulogizing form that is linked to nation formation, and territory ownership (fig. 12). This priapic obelisk commemorates the first Europeans who "built" Canada. In contrast, the more conceptual monument, commemorating the "centre de négoce" Colonialist interaction, seems to offer up quite a different, more critical, narrative, in that it bravely opens up the possibility of a negative past between European settlers and native groups (fig. 13). As a marker of an "other" memory, it stays close to the ground, as a horizontal and less triumphant version of the obelisks, pillars and steles that project vertically from the landscape.

Nora contends that "memory has been wholly absorbed by its meticulous reconstruction. Its new vocation is to record: delegating to the *lieu de mémoire* the responsibility of remembering, it sheds its signs upon depositing them there, as a snake sheds its skin" (Nora, 1989: 13). These staged fragments gain an auratic potency as

reified pieces of the past. A most telling example is that of a wealthy businessman who purchased a piece of the Berlin Wall, which now stands at the threshold of the Square Victoria Arcade. In an ironic inversion of what was previously a symbol of exclusionary capitalism, the fragment of the wall has been re-appropriated to adorn a shopping mall. So too, monuments may have a way of “turning” into ornament (fig. 14). Theodor Adorno has written about how Proust was the first to appreciate the wear and tear of history as the “physiognomy of decomposing things is that of their second life, the one mediated by memory” (Adorno, 1967: 181-2). Things endowed with a *past-ness* can therefore live again. If the death of an object can bring it to life, then the Berlin wall is being resurrected anew in the miniature city of a Montreal arcade. This is a strange commemoration indeed. Only slightly stranger is the fact that the Berlin Wall is being reconstructed for the tourists in Berlin as I write these words.

And only slightly more bizarre than de-contextualized reconstructions is the fact that this is not the only example of recycled monuments finding new homes in Montreal’s subway stations. At Métro St. Henri, a typical bronze Jacques Cartier with his index finger raised towards an imagined shoreline has become a genuinely playful monument, hanging as it does, from the ceiling of the Métro station. Rather than pay the conservation fees to clean the copper and restore the statue’s original luster, the city decided to simply move it to an indoor location (fig. 15). This nomadic monument’s meaning has indeed shifted, as it is no longer tethered to a founding site in Montreal (wherever that may be). This monumentalization of Canada’s founding myth might become a part of every commuter’s daily routine and is perhaps one of the only “great man” monuments that has been relegated to the status of subway stalactite.

When attempting to delineate the monument in Montreal one is caught up in the recycled vestiges, the ruins. Near derelict features of a cityscape are continuously becoming “marked out”, re-noticed, and hence monumentalized. In Montreal, the grain elevators in the Old Port, have served as testament to the city’s mercantile past (fig. 16). The elevators are no longer in use, but stand as an impressive vestige of Le Corbusier’s famed dictum of “form following function”; it is a completely utilitarian structure that has become a carcass of the city’s past, and its tragic emptiness has served to enshroud it. Recently, a group of sound artists from Wood Gallery have patched in phone lines in Silo #5. Original curators Emmanuel Madan and Tom McIntosh re-appropriated the site, saving it from the wrecking ball of loft developers, so that people could call in and hear their own and other voices reverberating in the acoustic chambers of the hollowed obelisks. One can say that this is a fitting example of the forgotten brought to life.

Monuments are a pliable medium then, they inhabit urban space, are gazed upon, defaced, left to decay, and are “adapted” to the habitat. The monumental site, then, is always potentially counter-monumental, for I may take the re-appropriated sign, and carve my own meaning from it, as I walk the open landscape of the city streets. The meaning of a sign may “turn”, and the monument viewer may take hold of it, thereby becoming an active reader of the urban text. Some monument makers have played upon the importance of the spectator, as a necessary part of the process of monumentalization. One artist has even gone so far as to “sculpt” the masses, as a wry comment on the spectator/monument relationship (fig. 17).

This inversion of spectators as monuments, points to how the social function that monuments fulfill has changed. Andreas Huyssen states that “the boundaries between

museum, memorial and monument have indeed become more fluid in the past decade in ways that make the old interpretation of the museum as the fortress for the few and the monument as a medium of reification and forgetting strangely obsolete” (Huysen, 1994: 12). Furthermore, he theorizes that one of the reasons why the museum and monument have undergone a kind of resurrection vis-à-vis the public sphere is precisely because of the particular kind of communicative experience they offer. In today’s heavily mediatized environment, one that is overwrought with flickering, simulated and polished images, we may be touched by the second life of history, that is, its decaying, decomposing beauty. Huyssen postulates that the material object quality of the monument is what makes it so appealing. He states: “the material reality of the monument in the reclaimed public sphere, in pedestrian zones, in restored urban centres, or in pre-existing memorial space attracts a public dissatisfied with simulation and T.V. channel switching” (12). In his schema, monuments provide an alternative, as solid matter, to the multiple discourses of memory provided to us by electronic media (12).

Huysen’s theory about monuments is circumscribed by a technologically dystopic discourse, which is very much symptomatic of our present moment. Huyssen is confident that monuments are not media of forgetting because they offer a material antidote to the intangible simulations that characterize much of the memory work today. I would suggest that they offer a decaying materiality, a tension-ridden representation of both materiality and its impermanence, which opens up the possibility of a perpetually “unfinished” medium.

But there are other ways in which Montreal’s urban spaces are becoming monumentalized. Dolores Hayden, in her project The Power of Place, seems to critique

the monumental form as unabashedly elitist, and investigates urban memory in its vernacular forms. In her view “restoring significant shared meanings for neglected citizens first involves claiming the entire urban cultural landscape as an important part of American history, not just our architectural monuments” (Hayden, 1995: 11). Therefore, in order to “nurture a citizen’s public memory” (9), one should save neighborhoods, not monuments. This is the spirit behind the Murmur Project (<http://murmure.ca>), a cell-phone based art project that seeks to preserve urban vernacular memory, and has, in effect, made the entire city, not just its monuments, the object of memory. Now available in three cities, its Montreal contingent is set up along St. Laurent, but, sadly, does not go beyond Prince Arthur. The anecdotes, all in French, range from the nonsensical to the nostalgic, and feature stories detailing wild parties during the 90s, Montreal’s most famous squat, the site of the city’s first brothel and what used to be Cabaret Dreamland, where the city’s first murder took place. For the most part these are personal stories that deal with recent and/or forgotten history, and those who access these oral testimonies with their cell phones are invited to leave their own tales. The project makes no identity claims, and the spots that get “murmured” are often a reflection of the whims of those who put the project together. Ideally, however, anyone with a phone can add his/her own memories of an un-noticed place, thereby creating an art project that is built by the people who promenade on the Main. The project sprung from “a need to mythologize the city” according to Shawn McCullough, and it in effect, inserts personal memory, a whispered secret that forever marks out that neglected building (on the corner of Sherbrooke and St. Laurent for example) in one’s own memory.

The Murmur Project can even be seen as a counter-historic walking tour. In Catherine Cock's illuminating book on the rise of urban tourism in America, she looks at the advent of urban monument-going, and the "heritage-making" trend that led to the "vicarious ownership" of the city by well-to-do tourists. In her words: "sacralizing history and its relics widened the imaginative gulf between genteel Americans and the past that they claimed...displac[ing] the question of ownership of the city onto the past and into the realm of culture" (Cocks, 2001: 185). As Michael Kammen also points out, this distancing facilitated by the "noble spectacle" of monumental display was an essential element of cultural nationalism (Kammen, 1991: I). Designing urban spaces with ancient monuments in mind also served as a means of "constructing a genealogy that was linked to the ruins of Greece and Rome and monuments of medieval and Renaissance Europe" (Cocks, 2001: 177). In this walking tour, however, no one points out the bronze plaques; the project has intentionally focused on the history that will never be memorialized. But, like the walking tours of old, one's perceptions of that particular region of the city shifts, as hidden and overwhelmingly personal landmarks are revealed.

Monuments, as communicative media, reflect a need to communicate the incommunicable, a shared memory. The theorists whose work I dip into, from Riegl to Young, seem united by the acknowledgement that the monument is an insufficient medium for this task, because our mnemonic needs are continuously changing. However, none seem to offer a theorization of how we could combat this sort of built-in obsolescence. Pierre Nora's anti-historicism vitriol is, in part, a lament against the homogenization of time. Dolores Hayden's vernacular memory plea is spurred by the threat of a homogenization of space. I would submit that the urban monumentalization of

everyday spaces offered up by the collaborative efforts of the Murmur Project is a fruitful way to counter such laments. It is a monumentalization that moves beyond the monument and into the quotidian, into the realm of tender anecdotal detail, like stumbling upon a letter that is not addressed to you.

By investigating the monuments and ruins in Montreal, I have traced out my main theoretical concerns for this project, namely, that the monument, as a site or marker that always hovers between monumentality and counter-monumentality, can be either or both. Indeed, one might think of the two not as opposites, but as co-constitutive, indebted to each other as memory is to forgetting.

Michel Foucault has written in his Archeology of Knowledge, that it is no longer the task of “history to ‘memorize’ monuments of the past and thus to transform them into ‘documents’ of reality and a consciousness of which they are but the traces” (Foucault, 1974: 7). In summary, monuments contribute to and exemplify the palimpsestic meaning of our cityscapes; they may serve as navigational beacons, as urban texts, as mnemonic devices, as instruments of property ownership, and as a means of legitimizing nations and conquests. They can be taken as a monumentalizing of a plurality of memories, meanings and ideas. The monument viewer must peel back these competing layers of myth, and read the monument not as a solid monolith, but as traces whose meaning can be negotiated, or that may mean nothing at all.

Chapter Two

The Ruin: An Ultimate Counter-monument

The ruin is history's souvenir of itself—William Gass

Due to the devouring of time, the decay of age and of negligence, the building had collapsed into the damp earth, leaving here and there a shaft without capital, or a headless trunk of some immense column of stone- Hypnertomachia Poliphili

As we have seen from my peripatetic wandering in Montreal, all places become monuments by dying. I had the uncanny experience of photographing monuments in Montreal a year ago that no longer exist. Roland Barthes' haunting observation that the photograph has replaced the monument, becoming the "natural witness of 'what has been'" (Barthes, 1981: 93) now has imprinted itself in my mind. Oddly enough, the destruction of monuments can sometimes spark a strange prolonging of memory, as both the "construction and deconstruction can be understood...as equally valid forms of immortalization" (Lewis, 1991: 11). In this way, monuments become re-reified in their absent state (fig. 18).

It has been said that "poets and painters like ruins, monuments are for dictators" (Woodward, 2001: 30), but one cannot deny that they inform one another and, in the final instance, are one and the same. By looking askance (for indeed that is sometimes how we see most clearly) at the monument-in-ruins from artificial ruins to the "counter-monuments", I am contesting the idea that monumental objects can stand in for memory. However, if the decay of the monumental is always already happening, and is folded within the monument's very moment of erection, then the phenomenon of temporal decay, and this passage from rhetorical *topoi* to a more polysemous *topoi* is part of monumentality itself. Susan Buck-Morss submits: "the crumbling of the monuments that

were built to signify the immortality of civilization becomes proof, rather, of its transiency" (Buck-Morss, 1989: 170).

The history of making ruins is embedded within my consideration of the counter-monument. In Rebecca Comay's work on Rachel Whiteread's counter-monumental art, she points to the fact that the counter-monument often suggests a re-reification of the monumental form, even if it is only in the form of a disappearance. Indeed she suggests, that "even setting aside the suspicion that the very act of disappearance would inevitably re-instate the prestige and the aura of the vanished original, one might question the longing for purity inherent in the work's own self-negation—the secret promise of the *tabula rasa*" (Comay, 2003: 266). In my own experience of the counter-monumental, it would seem that counter-monuments collapse into monumentifications despite themselves. Therefore, though it may be that the counter-monument serves to re-fetishize a lost object, like Jochen Gerz's sinking stele for instance, the monument-as-ruin is part of monumentality itself.

The history of the term counter-monument or the *gegen Denkmal* seems to have begun with Alfred Hrdlicka's *Gegen Denkmal* (1982), a shard of blackened wall adorned with ruins, debris, and a leaning bleeding corpse situated on the Dammtor in Hamburg (fig. 19). This monument, built in response to the more monolithic *Denkmahl des Kriegs* across the way, is an artificial ruin that inaugurated a series of works entitled *Gegen Denkmahl* for the artist. Although it is much quoted and disseminated in Young's work, the origin of the term is never quite laid bare, only put in quotations. I will now turn to the practice of making ruins, as a way to flesh out the genealogy of the monument that is against the monument.

The Necessity of Ruins

As I have said, Alois Riegl's taxonomy of monuments recognizes that the monument and the ruin are embedded within one another. He considers the degraded and worn monument the most democratic and accessible form of the monument. He submits that for the modern monument-viewer, in his case someone living in the 1900s, "the traces of age strike us as a testimony to natural laws inevitably governing all artifacts. ...if we used the ruin earlier to illustrate age value this was only because it was an obvious example of age value—too obvious, however, to gratify modern man [sic]'s expectations" (Riegl, 1982: 31). The ruin, according to him, is too obvious to perform the functions of age value, for we only use them to set up comparisons, as residues of the golden bygone whatever. From this, we can deduce that Riegl understood the auratic power of conveying the ineluctable passage of time, but he did not seek to unpack the visually emotive power of the "fragment", what could be categorized as the index *par excellence*, as a relic that is valuable precisely because it is never whole.

For Georg Simmel, the evidence of human-made destruction ruins the ruin's significance (260). He writes: "it is the fascination of the ruin that here the work of man appears to us entirely as a product of nature. The same forces which give a mountain its shape through weathering, erosion, faulting, and the growth of vegetation, here do their work on old walls" (261). The "corroding, crumbling power of nature", in Simmel's terms, is actually a fruitful force, because it combines with the "upward force of human will" and "reduces this once conspicuous contrast with the peaceful unity of belonging" (264). For him too, the ruin points to the inevitable dissolution of materiality. In his words, "the aesthetic value of the ruin combines the disharmony, the eternal becoming of

the soul struggling against itself, with the satisfaction of form, the firm limitedness, of the work of art" (265). It is worth noting that for the Romantic poets the ruins were "ruinous perfection", as Byron wrote. They symbolized our eventual return to Nature (capital N). In this case, "the poet walking amongst the ruins does not feel the terror of the sublime but instead is swept along by nature's capacity to integrate different stages of human development into a balanced whole" (Roth, 1997: 5). At the most basic level, they were meant to literally represent the perishability of human endeavors in the face of time.

However, the whole practice of "making ruins" is not a new one. The earliest surviving artificial ruin is in Rome, which is surprising because of the profusion of actual ruins there. It is the bridge by Bernini at the Palazzo Barberini, two bridges that are made to look decayed, two arches, one collapsed and one made to look like the keystone is slipping (Woodward, 2001: 139).

Many cultures valued impermanent memory markers, not the least of which was Leninist Russia. Lenin recognized the importance of monumental propaganda, but insisted that his sculptors obey his imperative: "Let everything be temporary" (Lewis, 1991: 9). Monuments such as Nikolai Kolli's work *The Red Wedge Cleaving the White Block* (1918), which is literally the construction of a destroyed plinth, point to the fact that counter-monumental critique is hardly a post-modern phenomenon. In fact, it may be that the material critique of the monument has a longer history than once thought.

Depending on the time period, frolicking amongst the ruins would have meant different things. Indeed, the delightful *frisson* inspired by ruins was so popular, that there are many examples of imported and re-erected mock ruins, as well as countless new structures built in ruin-style. Ruins became kitsch-ified, and the trend of importing

private ruins was “inseparably connected to the rise of landscape architecture and gardening” (Zucker, 1968: 196).

The folly gardens, filled with *fabriqués* (mock ruins) or imported ruins were popular with French and British aristocrats in the 18th century. Usually the remnants of a Greek temple or a Gothic church, the fake ruin’s purpose was to convey “a sense of awe towards the monuments of humankind, which were ‘quoted’ so to speak, in order to provide a condensed panorama of civilization” (Olalquiaga, 1998: 142). In this sense, both monuments and their ruin, even if represented as artificial quotations, can be seen as symptomatic of typically modern anxiety—the threatened discontinuity of temporal perception. Imported ruins served to promote a mastery over time itself. Like the Roman city of Leptis Magna given piecemeal to King George IV in 1827, and now at rest in Virginia Water in Surrey, England³, human-made ruins served to erect a noble lineage for those who commissioned them, as well as a teleological sense of time. Though we may be inclined to view them now as parodies of the monumental form, they were evoking a privately-staged and highly nostalgic past. These ruins can only mitigate this false decay by, in effect, decaying themselves.

Frank Salmon, in his impressive book, Building on Ruins, examines how these plagiarized arches based on casts “looked directly to Rome”, but notes that “it wasn’t until the 1820s that the arch as a public monument was realized in Britain” (Salmon, 2000: 150). Clearly however, “the national images of both England and Great Britain were built on Roman ruins as a way to present the distance between fallen Rome and a newly developed identity of the English empire” (Janowitz, 1990: 20). The rhetorical

³ see Chris Woodward’s delightful account, *In Ruins*, 136-139.

space of the ruin, then, was used as a means to legitimize a teleological sense of time, and, by extension a nationalist narrative.

The decision to preserve the fragments of once-grand structures was always politically motivated. The communards of the French Revolution felled statues and left ruins intact (!) as a means of symbolizing the fall of the Ancien Regime⁴. Salmon also points out that the “success of Napoleon and his ministers in developing a symbolism, first of Augustan then Trajanic Imperialism, was due in large part to the receptiveness of the French people, their acceptance of thinking of themselves as heirs to the Romans” (Salmon, 2000: 149), which is no doubt due to the appropriation of the ruins-cum-monuments of the Roman empire.

Therefore, we can see how ruins were used as more than just metonymical representations of time passing; they were meant to fulfill the monumental drive. It can be no coincidence that Albert Speer designed the great monumental buildings of the Third Reich with what he called his theory of “ruin value” in mind. As he recalls: “to illustrate my ideas I had a romantic drawing prepared. It showed what the reviewing stand on the Zeppelin field would look like after generations of neglect, overgrown with ivy, its columns fallen, the walls crumbling here and there, but the outlines still clearly recognizable...[Hitler] gave orders that in the future the important buildings of his Reich were to be erected in keeping with the principles of this ‘law of ruins’” (Speer, 1970: 56). The monuments of the Third Reich were built with a state of decay in mind, in the hopes of establishing a Roman-like legitimacy to the fallen Reich.

The trend of leaving the debris itself as a mnemonic historical device was popularized after World War II as a means of preserving the war damage itself as a

⁴ see Roth’s consideration of the Tuileries in ruins, “Irresistible Decay”, 15.

memorial, such as the bombed-out church tower of Wilhelm Kaiser Gedächtnis-Kirche in Berlin, now a major tourist attraction, and flanked with souvenir kiosks, selling everything from Soviet kitsch to mini-ruin key-chains (fig. 20). The trend to preserve destruction, rather than re-build, was a conscious decision to always remember what the absence signified. Here the phenomenon of destruction is made present quite literally, as indexes of the destruction and loss of war.

The emphasis on process and impermanence in the monument-ruin ensures that the monument is not simply a mimetic representation. Counter-monuments, as a subset group, are also ruins that divulge the monument's propensity to ruin. However, they do not emulate or parody the monumental form the way that earlier artificial ruins do, although they too are fabricated ruins. In its ideal form, the counter-monument unwinds the ideological skein of the ruin to its limit by incorporating an active, participatory and dialogical remembrance that is never offered by the melancholic kitsch of the *fabriqués*. I will now turn to current examples of making ruins, as these fabricated ruins are evidence, in essence, of a desire for historical teleology and reconstruction that has little to do with the counter-monumental project.

Avoiding the Void in German National Memory

It is no coincidence that Germany has been the reticent home of the counter-monument. James E. Young speaks of this at length in his extensive work on post-Holocaust monuments. In his words: "perhaps no single emblem better represents the conflicting self-abnegating motives for memory in Germany today than in the vanishing monument." (Young, 2003: 59). He expands: "Germany's ongoing *Denkmal-Arbeitet*

[Monument Work] simultaneously displaces and constitutes the object of memory”
(Young, 1992: 269).

The term “counter-monument” does not delineate a formal movement and is liberally tagged as any anti-monumental work, ranging from Hans Haack to Claes Oldenburg. One could look to the fundamental tenets of Conceptual and Earthworks artists, which echo the principles of dissolution, invisibility and the implication of the spectator in the process of art itself. However, I tend to see the precursor of the counter-monument as lying implicitly within Foucault’s work on the “counter-site”, a concept that he first introduced in 1967, around the same time that Claes Oldenburg dug a hole behind the Met, and called it a monument. His idea of heterotopic space of crisis, a space of otherness, a contained space with a plurality of temporalities, a space of loss and quasi-eternity (Foucault, 1997: 22) may have facilitated a staging for the possibility of a counter-monument, or at the very least, articulated a beginning point for thinking about a counter-monumental space.

The particular effect of trauma on memory and the rupture of identity facilitated by the Holocaust have necessitated deep cogitation on the relationship between memory and trauma, alongside of the shocking marketing of genocide. Charles S. Maier examines Germany’s “un-mastered past” and brings it to bear on the larger issues of German memory and identity. Speaking of the “historian’s controversy”, or *Historikerstreit*, namely the debate around whether Auschwitz is “dreadful only as one specimen of genocide”, he writes: “if the Final Solution remains incomparable, the past may never be ‘worked through’, the future never normalized, and German nationhood may be forever tainted, like some well forever poisoned” (Maier, 1998: 1). Within the historian’s debate

there is a polarized historical consciousness between those who relativize the Holocaust and those who refuse to do so. Jürgen Habermas and others have claimed that the move to “relativize the Final Solution is part of a new nationalist and conservative search for a usable past” (2). The comparability of the Holocaust is central to “mastering the past, coming to terms with the searing experiences of World War II and collaboration in Nazi crimes” (7) and surely this has not been confined to the German experience, as Maier points out. As James Young submits, however, Germany’s situation is unique, as the German memorials are “necessarily those of the persecutor remembering its victims” (Young, 1992: 271).

Indeed, in a moment akin to Pierre Nora’s privileging of memory over history, Maier describes the conflict as one of “historiography over *Erlebnis*, or experience” Maier suggests that, in fact, “post war history has been a history of forgetting” and sees the narrativization and revision of historiography as “an effective strategy of evasion, ‘revision’, or normalization” (161). Here the pull is twofold—the move to trivialize, relativize, memorialize and therefore forget Auschwitz, or the possibility of reifying it, spectacularizing it, marketing it. Maier states: “let the historian insist that Auschwitz was not the end of history; it is not the entelechy of the 20th century...it is possible to make a fetish of Auschwitz. Granted the distinction between mourning, honoring, analyzing and fetishizing is a hard one. Not the method, but the use of history establishes it” (161). Clearly issues of memorialization are particularly sharpened within the German psyche, as the issue of how to represent and learn from a painful history is deeply contested.

Many post-Holocaust memory scholars seem to, as Nora does, privilege a memory from the “inside”. However, John Frow disparages Nora’s binary opposition

between spontaneous, gestural and true memory, and memory transformed by its passage through history...experienced as a duty...individual and subjective but never social, collective or all encompassing (Frow, 1997: 13). Frow sees the privileging of memory experienced “from the inside” as being problematic, precisely because it is so auratic, and embedded in experience. He states: “this whole manner of thinking of collective memory and of its relation to autobiographical memory is surely no longer tenable. It is not useful for conceptualizing the social organization of memory; it provides no mechanism for identifying its ‘technological’ underpinnings; and it cannot account for the materiality of signs and of the representational forms by which memory is structured.” (223-4) Instead, Frow proposes a model of memory that more closely aligned to a *techne*, as a mediation, a writing (224). Memory, like the “external marks” of writing is always necessarily external. Indeed, this is necessarily the case when the memory of a traumatic past is usually a “post-memory”, in Hirsch’s terms, or that, following LaCapra (or Freud), we can never really possess a traumatic experience, the force of it is such that the “severely traumatized cannot fully transcend trauma but must to some extent act it out or relive it” (LaCapra, 1998: 110). Privileging a memory “from the inside” becomes a spurious enterprise when these memories usually come “after the fact” and are re-presentations of themselves.

The idea that the Holocaust is un-representable or unknowable is most commonly encapsulated by Theodor Adorno’s well-worn statement that there can be no poetry after Auschwitz (Adorno, 2001: 18). Post-Holocaust art is always, in itself, a critique of the limits of representation; the void, the spatial equivalent of silence, is seen as the most appropriate response, and the aesthetics of absence, as the only means of presence,

emerges. There is a fear of a naïve belief in the monument's message, an uncritical approach to the monument, where "constructed and reified memory is accepted as normative history- and then acted upon as if it were pure, unmediated meaning" (Young, 1993: 182). There is also a fear of aesthetisizing the past, making it too clean in a way that "vanquishes the past rather than recalls it" (183).

This incommunicability is deemed necessary in a historical atmosphere where, as Dominick LaCapra puts it, "one particular dubious phenomenon is the nostalgic, sentimental turn to a partly fictionalized past that is conveyed in congenially ingratiating, safely conventionalized narrative form. Indeed the immersion in memory and its sites may at times have the quality of junk-Proustian Schwärmerei[ecstasy]" (8). The German counter-monument makers have tried to resist the narrativized, accessible and therefore "usable" monument. The problematic of communicating a traumatic past is etched within the dilemma of how to memorialize the Holocaust; post-Holocaust monuments reflect this crisis of representation, this incommunicability. However, it is worth noting that for all its representational angst the counter-monument, in its final incarnation, tends to rely on a handy interpretive center, an explicatory plaque, and a didacticism to rescue the site from being mere empty space.

New York's Ruin

These issues of presence through absence and the incommunicability of a traumatic have been raised at the famed hole in New York's financial district, newly hallowed, the most valuable piece of commercial real estate in the city, and quite a contested ruin (fig. 21). Daniel Libeskind's winning design has already been debunked by the building's leaser Larry Silverstein, who wants more retail and commercial space, at

least comparable to the first World Trade Center designs (Haupt, 2003: R1). Libeskind has not been successful with his lawsuit; his fragmented cluster of five buildings lining a memorial space that is 30 feet below grade level will never be built. His design featuring many transparent surfaces, interlocking spaces, water, glass, penetrations and opacity will remain unrealized. The rubble of the collapsed towers has already entered the cultural artifact market, and has been reified (appropriately or not) and put on display in Normandy's new War Museum and Las Vegas' Nuclear History Museum.

New York seems to be obsessed with ruins. Not far from Ground Zero, a little piece of Ireland is being built to commemorate Irish immigration to the city, in the style of the *fabriqués*; a pastoral ruin that is slung above Vesey Street, and dripping with day lilies and wildflowers (fig. 22). A few blocks from this ruin park, I saw the tourists congregating at quite a different ruin. I watched them on the viewing platforms at the hole; their waists' bulging with fanny packs, and smelled the reek of tourist attraction already (fig. 23). There is a solitary steel beam that is said to have remained standing after the buildings crumbled, and it suits Christian Americans as a spot of pilgrimage because it looks remarkably like a crucifix. Along the block, grief can be expressed by purchasing one of the many snow globes or place mats featuring images of the towers in their former glory. Nevertheless, memory congeals in the traces. The scratches in the pews of St. Paul's chapel, left there as a testament to the men and women who laid their bodies there to rest during the rescue effort, have marked themselves in my mind with their strange beauty. I was more struck by the gnarled stuffed animals, and religious graffiti on the makeshift temporary altars, made spontaneously around the perimeter fence, than the photo montage offered on the platform. Many people ripped open the

fabric around the fences, needing to see the hole for themselves, to come to terms with the wound.

But Alois Riegl lives on in the most unexpected of places. The program elements of the design competition for the 4.5-hectare space that has been allocated as the memorial site echo some of his sentiments. According to the competition web site the monument should (in order of importance) “recognize each individual who was a victim of the attacks (the September 11th attacks, the Pentagon attacks and the 1993 terrorist bombing)” and secondly “provide a space for contemplation” (<http://renewnyc.com/Memorial/memmission.shtml>). Stimulating contemplation is still one of the criteria by which a monument’s success is judged, and seems to be considered its prime mode of operation.⁵

Some of the other criteria, along with providing a space for loved ones and a visiting area, and to “create a unique and powerful setting”, are the emphasis on keeping the original footprints of the World Trade Center buildings “visible”. By keeping the remnants of the buildings visible, the invisibility of the towers is underlined—the absence that defines the holes becomes their own presence.

The competition guideline also stressed the need to “convey historic authenticity” that is, incorporating surviving original elements and artifacts, possibly referring to the ruptured but still structurally intact sculpture, *Peace Through World Trade* by Fritz Koenig. According to the guidelines laid out by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the memorial should also “preserve the existing conditions of the World Trade Center site” as well as “evolve over time with our understanding of the events”.

⁵ For my take on Riegl’s idea of contemplative and necessary ruins in this context, see my memorial design at www.wtcsitememorial.org/ent/ent1=706440.html.

There is much at work here: the shift towards a more flexible and impermanent memorial is poised against the need to fetishize the towers by immortalizing them. Clearly, even the articulation of these guidelines recognizes that a memorial is many-folded. Memorials are built to close the gap between the space the memorial occupies, the ideal the memorial communicates, and the event that actually happened. This guideline actually seems to suggest that the latter is still an open question, which is uncommon. The competitors were also urged to take into consideration the “public ceremonies and celebrations by which and into which the site will be inaugurated”, addressing the need for a bodily located memory.

I last saw Daniel Libeskind speak at the Royal Ontario Museum, where he gave a very rambling lecture entitled “Architecture and Meaning”. He waxed somewhat poetic about architecture being the prime public art, based on principles of democracy and participation, though he only managed to answer a fraction of the audience’s questions, which were written on cue cards and selected by censors. When I asked him how he felt about Frank Gehry’s comment that “laying grass over a space merely trivializes a memorial”, he was emphatically in agreement. He spoke about how he was the only architect in the competition who was taken “down below”. He submits that he designed the memorial site 30 feet below grade level in order to preserve the feeling of ascending from purgatory, from the bedrock to the full height of New York. Although, “the pit”, as it was disparagingly known, no longer is featured in the new design, his decision to keep the slurry wall, that is the surviving foundation of the site, which breaks against the Hudson River, was an attempt to leave the traces of the attack, to lay scars bare. He comments that “ten million people have visited the site to try and grasp what it means...I

saw that the foundations had withstood that act and was moved...so I decided to bring it forward [the remains of the foundation] because it was meant to be hidden and I wanted to expose it because that has never been done. The site becomes exposed in its foundings which means that it continues to found” (Libeskind, 2003: ROM lecture). For Libeskind, who is surprisingly patriotic towards his adopted country, this is further symbolic of the persistence of the democratic spirit of America. He stated that “the great slurry walls are the most dramatic elements which survived the attack...[they] stand as eloquent as the constitution itself asserting the durability of Democracy and the value of individual life” (<http://architecture.about.com/library/bl-libeskind-statement.htm>).

Clearly these ruins seem to be particularly redemptory in nature. As Richard Brilliant stated at a Columbia University Seminar on Art and Society, which took place a year after the attacks, the memorial should “both address the specifics of the historical moment and attempt to harness them through a grand invocation of the experience of redemption” (Brilliant, 2002: 6). Many of the panelists of the “Monument and Memory” lecture seminar seem to agree that “a big hole in the ground is the only fitting way to honor the site” (7). Leon Wieseltier, for instance, insisted on “a void and a flag” (Wieseltier, 2002: 34), so that the attack on Americanism is remembered at the site. He comments: “I can think of no more precise a representation of the sense of finality, no more appropriate place of assembly for the disconsolate than a void. Emptiness is the spatial equivalent of silence, and it is time for silence. ...a void is an un-architectural monument, even an anti-architectural one. Among the many illusions that crashed to the ground with the towers, I would have thought, was the worship of architecture” (2002: 35). He is concerned with how Ground Zero is being interpreted as “a lucky break for art,

or used for the advancement of a particular aesthetic cause. Many of the proposals were clever; but cleverness is an inadequate response to suffering” (33).

For other mourners, 30 feet below grade level is not low enough. Some want to be able to go 70 feet below to where the remains were found; they expressed the need to have “access to the bedrock”. For this reason, many families are opposed to the idea of building a garage for tour buses under the memorial area. Indeed, if this area is imbued with spiritual and sacred significance for the people of New York (and anywhere), how does one balance the requirements with that of the tourism industry, where they expect to have 8,000-50,000 visitors a day

(www.wtcsitememorial.org/pdf/LMDC_Guidelines_englishpdf: 9)?

Finally, finding support for a void in Manhattan proved increasingly difficult. In the words of the chairperson of the Community Board I’s Battery Park City Committee Anthony Notaro, “I’ve had my eyes looking down for two years. I want the chance to look up” (Rogers, June 10-13 2003: 6). David Stanke, founder of Battery Park Community United points to the flaws in Libeskind’s plan in his article “Libeskind’s WTC Design Needs to be Fixed”. He writes: “this pit is a costly and damaging void in the middle of our residential and commercial communities. It provides no value. It destroys the prospects of everything surrounding it, from the retail on Church St. to any use of West St. It will also steal hope from any visitor for years.”(2003: 15) Libeskind, at the time, maintained: “I believe in the memorial not being on street level, so that it’s separated from the traffic, so that it has a spiritual and civic duty to it, so that people can come and reflect, and it will be developed in composition as a memorial park, as a

beautiful place to be” (6). This is essentially the debate of the counter-monument; the decision to bury or reveal.

On January 14th 2004, it was announced that *Reflecting Absence*, a memorial design by architects Michael Arad and Peter Walker had won the World Trade Center memorial competition. The design preserves the voids left by the twin towers as two massive void/fountains and has been alternately attacked as “smug cultural superiority” (Kimmelman, 2004: 35) and hailed as reminiscent of Michael Heizer’s “negative sculpture” at Dia, *North East South West* (35). The starkness of Arad’s void/fountains (possibly inoperable during New York winters) was tempered by Walker’s addition of an orchestrated grove of sycamore, linden and locust trees, lest anyone crossing the square be reminded of “a polar bear grotto and spider holes” (35). These voids, where water flows from the plaza into reflecting pools, and then deeper still into voids within voids, are a new incarnation of the aesthetics of absence. The public can witness the supposedly redemptive wall of water by descending between the two layers. Visitors literally approach the memorial from the inside, and are given access to the bedrock. The area between the water and the bedrock will presumably contain a museum of artifacts (fig. 24). This variation on the extreme un-visibility and the constant making and unmaking of meaning usually associated with the counter-monument is an odd one: the void now has a pedagogical purpose, and is purportedly softened by the flow of water. Some may find “spirituality and rebirth in the voids and flowing water” (35). It remains to be seen whether modifying the void design with moving water and trees will endear it to a public when “decorative lights, waterfalls and electronic gadgets are not what they had in mind” (Kimmelman, 2003: 47). It may be that the void itself has reached its ruin, an obvious

end point, a much too literal interpretation of absence and loss. In contrast to the absence experienced at most counter-monument sites, this void is not a sealed, unknowable place, it is a heavily didactic space, with its own built-in mausoleum of artifacts. This void is really only a trope on the form of absence (the empty footprints themselves): the space of absence is already filled with interpretation, in this case, quite literally an interpretation centre.

The Monument's Remains

Although I am wary of this tourism of absence surrounding the counter-monument (these are places that are designed to resist pilgrimage after all), I felt it necessary to see these traces, even though it felt paradoxical, journeying across an ocean to witness a concept, not an object.

The Harburg Monument Against Fascism by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, a 12m stele lowered eight times, between 1986-93 is perhaps the paramount example of a monument embracing its disappearance and by extension, its own ruin (fig.25, 26). The pillar was sunk at exactly the speed in which the soft outer-casing of lead was written upon by the townspeople, to protest fascism and injustice. The plaque at the site still addresses the citizenry and visitors to Harburg, calling on them to add "their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to being vigilant...one day it [the monument] will have disappeared completely, and the site...will be empty. In the end, it is only we ourselves who can rise up against injustice". Even the language used in the plaque points to the fact that this monument exists for its own dissolution, that it proclaims its meaning only as a residue, as an empty space. Therefore, the monument is a commentary on what the artist declares as the "fascist tendencies inherent in

monumentalization” (Gerz, 1997: 67) and also acknowledges the shortcomings of monumentality itself as a means of recall. The erosion of the monumental form is here directly contingent upon the townspeople leaving marks upon the surface, for “as soon as the reachable part of the stele was covered with writing, it was...sunk 140 cm” (52). The anti-monumental paradox of marking something in order to forget it also served to create a monument that stretched the boundaries of public involvement in their own public space. In fact, the Gerz’ opened up a more “dialogical memorial space”, one in which the wounds of the past were expressed in the present tense, by the scarification of signatures. Apparently, “people inscribed their names in the lead; some wrote over the names and statements of those before them; there were markings that were simply graphic [some Neo-Nazi in nature]; someone even fired bullets against it” (Hapkemeyer, 1999: 23).

Like the Greek idea of the wax tablet, this monument also recalls Freud’s idea of the “mystic writing pad”, significant here because his notes on the subject deal with the possibility that writing can be both an enduring memory and ephemeral memory, and it is the “enduring trace”, the marks left on the wax tablet after the paper has been erased that Freud sees as “analogous to the Unconscious” (Weinrich, 2004: 133). The monument may be seen as an expression of Harburg’s collective Unconscious, external marks that are the internal marks of prejudices, shame, sorrows. And the townspeople are no longer conscious of the moment their hearts were laid bare. Freud’s idea that nothing in mental life ever gets forgotten, but in fact, just repressed was considered a “landmark in the cultural history of forgetting” (134) and is played out in the monument’s literal repression into the earth, perhaps interpretable as avoidance, a safe assimilation, a disavowal that

finds meaning in the sore and then bandages it eternally. The monument's traumatic repetition of loss, displayed by the loss of the monument itself, heralds itself as substitute.

The idea of using the signature as a means of monumentifying becomes particularly haunting when one considers that these signatures are destined to, ultimately, be invisible. If we agree with Lyotard's postulation that the signature is meant to monumentalize the body, by making the absent body present, then a burial of these traces points to the futility of monumentalization itself. In his words "mummified by a singular twitching of the hand that makes it recognizable, the gesture of signing anticipates the disappearance of that hand and replaces its presence by the name...the signature presentifies the body's absence and absentifies its presence" (Lyotard, 1997: 169-70). These signatures have a built-in expiry date, and are, like corpses, buried. But the signatures are also an example of a state-sanctioned desanctification of the monumental form, parodying forgetting itself in the form of a forgotten monument. When one assesses the monument through the literature surrounding it, however, it is declared to be the counter-monument in its ideal form; an ephemeral, perishable object that buries itself, that highlights the forgetting implicit within the act of remembrance. The monument's "physical manifestation is temporary but accompanied by the progressive revelation of an immaterial dimension, which essentially comes to expression through language" (Hapkemeyer, 1999: 23).

Today, if one takes the S-Line to the Harburg Rathaus stop, one finds that most people are at a loss to explain the barren semi-circular outlook above the strip mall that overlooks a McDonald's. The platform is astonishingly empty, the seven-ton column is completely submerged in an underground shaft 14 m deep without an observation

window and only a plaque to mark that there ever was a monument against fascism here. The monument is, in its final incarnation, a literal blank space, now completely subterranean and, when I visited, littered with soggy breadcrumbs and guarded by a few disgruntled pigeons. In keeping with Gerz' need to document his artistic process, there is a plaque, written in seven languages that describes the chronology of the erection, the inscription and the sinking of the stele" (Gerz, 1997: 52). In this way, the final preservation of the monument lies only in the minds of those who experienced the monument directly. I suppose that this is what the ideal counter-monument does; it scatters memory away from itself and into the hearts and minds of ideal spectators (and I was far from ideal). Paradoxically, the counter-monument, in the final instance, is what it purports not to be, a forgotten plague proclaiming the passing of a moment in time. I can only hope that this is the Gerz' playing with the codes of monument to comment on its inutility.

However, counter-monuments are, in the beginning, ruins that move beyond their dissolution, as a dialogical remembrance act that commands more than slick commemorations and vacant contemplation. Unlike most monuments, the *Monument against Fascism* does not seek to make the past metonymically visible and present; it does not even feign to represent the present, opting instead for emptiness and silence in the final instance. Like all ruins, the monument is the process of dissolution made visible; and points to the dissolution of monumentality itself. It speaks to how the concept of a teleological past can dissolve when individuals choose to write their own stories, imprint their own selves, their own present moments. It speaks to the unarticulated and ephemeral nature of a so-called collective memory. Bound up with the concept of the Gerz'

Monument Against Fascism then, its own self-reflexive memorial, a commemoration made possible by its own death.

My concern here is that the traces of the monument don't *announce* themselves as traces; they cease to be self-reflexive, and end up as...well...traces. Because the monument, as a site, is only meaningful in the present tense, it resists being a space of pilgrimage, or of reification, being, as it is, a space of forgetting that has been forgotten. The prescribed participation of signing and witnessing the loss of the monument as a substitution for the experience of loss itself, becomes the experience of the memory, that too, is destined to be forgotten. This work leads me to ponder whether countering monumentality is necessarily an effective strategy of monumental critique. While the monument critiques the monumental form by using the discourse of monumentality against itself (ruin instead of reverence, disappearance instead of erection, emptiness instead of commemoration), it is not difficult to scratch the ideological surface of the monument and create counter-monuments within the monumental form, in less prescribed defacements.

In order to further investigate the ruins of monumentality, it behooves us to look at the ruin itself. For clearly, a ruin exists as an index of time passing and also of having a past—it is not merely symbol but completely metonymical, that is, physical evidence of time passing. Georg Simmel, in his paper “Die Ruine”, writes that the ruin is a means of gathering the past “with its destinies and transformations...into this instant of an aesthetically perceptible present” (Simmel, 1959: 266). Clearly too, the practice of making ruins has to do with how we deal with our anxiety over the present moment, and our need to secure a concept of the “future”. Counter-monuments, as I see them, have

become traces of the procedure of time passing, the decay of the memorial site laid bare. This emphasis on process in the monument-ruin ensures that the monument is not simply a mimetic representation, but an interactive and ephemeral work that attempts to wrest the burden of memory from the monument itself.

Clearly then, the division between the ruin and the monument is one that is constantly being elided. The monument in decay, that is, one that paradoxically preserves its decay, is the most effective monumental form. To reiterate: “only works for which we have no use can be enjoyed exclusively from the standpoint of age value, while those which are still useful impede such pure contemplation” (Riegl, 1982: 42). So, the most powerful monumental forms are those that had fallen out of use or are in an obvious state of ruin. Of course, Riegl believed that those monuments were the most potent of monumental forms, because they offered an aesthetic visual cue that was in essence, easily communicable to all members of society. In an almost blush-inducing moment of democratic fantasy, he states: “these monuments are nothing more than indispensable catalysts which trigger in the beholder a sense of the life cycle, of the emergence of the particular from the general and its gradual but inevitable dissolution back into the general. This immediate emotional effect depends neither on scholarly knowledge nor historical education” (24). For Riegl, writing in 1903, a monument-in-ruins is the ultimate monumental and democratic expression.

The Monument Against Itself: The Counter-Monumental Critique

Counter-monuments distinguish themselves from the monument-ruin as a human made erosion of the monumental form; they may be seen as an active strategy of critique

against the monument. Although speaking of modernist painting and flat pictorial representation, Clement Greenberg has written of this turn of internal critique as being distinctly modernist. He submits that the tendency of an art object to confront its own limits is a thoroughly modernist impulse. Furthermore, Greenberg theorizes that the “essence of modernism lies...in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself—not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly into its area of competence”(Greenberg, 1966: 101). This “criticism from the inside, through the procedures themselves of that which is being criticized” is how the counter-monument operates, using the visual codes of monumentalization in order to refute the monument. In this sense, self-professed non-monumental monument-makers are engaged in an interrogation of reification, or the idea that a material object can stand in, hypostatize, for an abstract idea, or memory.

The counter-monument, particularly the German example, can go beyond this negation becoming what Krauss would term “pure negation”, meaning that it is so lacking in positive space, it can only be defined by that which it is not (Krauss, 1985: 280). The counter-monument-ruin as I have remarked works by internally critiquing itself, usually by forgoing a mimetic representation of an aestheticized reality and instead calling attention to its process of becoming. However, one should question whether these spaces of pure negation are indeed the most desirable counter-monuments.

There are many who despise the counter-monument. In his introduction of Commemorations, John R. Gillis questions the effectiveness of what he sees as a uniquely post-modern counter-monument movement. He states: “the anti-monument movement represents a radical turn... its advocates reject the notion of memory sites and

to de-ritualize and dematerialize remembering so that it becomes more a part of every day life, closing the gap between past and present, memory and history...whether these aims are achieved is an open question. It would appear that most people find it difficult to remember without having access to mementoes, images and physical sites to objectify their memory” (Gillis, 1994: 17). Described in these terms, Gillis sounds as if he is lamenting the rise of conceptual art—that is the dematerialization of the art object, and the self-referential wrestling against the limitations of the concrete form. He seems to have missed the point that all artists, conceptual or otherwise, have been making, namely that the “concrete object can no longer say all that is required of it” (Godfrey, 1998: 140). The crisis of the monument then, can be more broadly located in the crisis of the art object, the recognition of the problematic of representation, and a nostalgic yearning for a means of representing that loss.

Though it may be possible that counter-monuments alienate people from their memories, perhaps contributing to the creation of unrecognizable or inaccessible space, this brings one closer to recognizing that monuments themselves are not vessels that hold memory, but rather, are dependent on the participatory social acts (in the present tense) that entrench them within a community. In this way, displaying the monument in ruin is not necessarily the monument’s ruin, but a more honest way to engage the forgetting implicit within the act of monumentalization.

Some scholars might criticize the counter-monument movement for unleashing a riot of plaques upon city squares, pock-marking our public spaces and effectively shirking their duty of anchoring memory in a visible object (fig.28). One might ask why the Gerz’ don’t resurrect their monument periodically and re-perform the act of its

dissolution. However, this nostalgic attempt to preserve the monument as happening, would indeed contribute to a reification of the process itself. I have ultimately concluded that speeding on the ruin, or what I call human-made erosion, is an interesting parody of the monumentalization, because it is dependent on a process that happens in real time, however fleeting, and yet is constructed to mimic the forces of time-passing. Counter-monument makers then, use the principle of absolute dissolution and invisibility in order to counter what is usually a spectacle of monument erection and commemoration. The hope is that the burying act featured in their monuments becomes a bizarre re-subsuming into remembrance. The erasure of the monument inaugurates the larger project of social responsibility the monument speaks to, initiated internally within each active participator in the monument's demise.

In this way, the monument goes beyond its own demise, in a way that is unique, even amongst counter-monuments. In contrast, Horst Hoheisel's *Negative Form Monument* (1987) is essentially a buried ruin of what was known as the Jew's Fountain during World War Two. The artist literally resurrected the ruin of the pyramid-shaped fountain destroyed during the Nazi regime, but inverted it into the ground. Although it is true that this monument is more a subversion of the act of restoration than anything else, the inverted pyramid became "a funnel into whose darkness water runs down...a hole which...deep down in the water, creates an image reflecting back the entire shape of the fountain" (Young, 2000: 99). In this way, the monument is re-experienced in its whole, is a monument once more. This ruin is resurrected anew, in its totality, and mocks the spectacle of erection and commemoration. However, despite peering into its depths, there is no connective act that links this ruin-cum-monument to the people of Kassel.

The monument is lowered into the ground by artistic imperative, the reflection of the whole fountain is capped, and the potency of the monument is “stopped” up with a lid, a low pedestal, supposedly as an “invitation for passersby to stand upon it to search for the memorial in their own heads” (100). This interrogation of the monument’s form still seems to suggest that the monument must be “whole” (though underground) to be significant, and relies upon a pondering public to reflect on what this might mean without necessarily allowing them to affect the monument’s form. Like the empty platform in Harburg, the monument is the space that is left.

The Reluctant Monument

From disappearing steles to subterranean memorials, monuments are more complicated than mere memory markers in their current incarnation. What they are, in effect, are monuments that disappear, thereby embracing their own invisibility, while bestowing this very invisibility or vanishing with an “aura”, that of the lost original⁶. The monument becomes rearticulated as the lost object itself; the nostalgia for representation, is alleviated by re-presenting this loss. Regardless of whether these monuments are still “monumentalizing” *qua* monuments, counter-monument makers are grappling with the paradox that “if something is unforgettable this is because it [cannot] be remembered” (Roth, 1995: 208). They are painfully conscious of the fact that they are working with matter, which is, ultimately, destined to become meaningless.

But is the counter-monumental strategy of critique even possible? For surely, one must interrogate to what extent the counter-monument still performs a

⁶ For an illuminating analysis of Rachel Whiteread’s work vis-à-vis this point see Rebecca Comay’s “Memory Block” in *Image and Remembrance* [Shelly Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz eds.] Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003: 251-271.

monumentalization, despite itself. Do counter-monument makers “fall prey to a nostalgic essentialism that affirms the reality of an origin by proclaiming its loss?” as John Frow suggests that today’s memory theorists do? (Frow, 1997: 225). Are they merely a restoration of an idealization of memory? Furthermore, are monuments that convey distance and the failure of transmission (implicit in all monumentalizations) the solution? Though counter-monumental artists may be using monumentalization against itself, I contend that the non-site has become the new object of contemplation, marked with an armature of explicatory plaques and exposition, perhaps even leading to the creation of mini-museums in public squares. The conventions of monumentalization are turned in on themselves, but this does not necessarily guarantee a new and improved model of monumentalization.

Monuments on a pedestal are essentially objects placed above the flow of history itself. This distancing (or forgetting), both from the site and the event the monument is supposedly commemorating rests on the idea of contemplative distance, and the idea that the monument represents the memory in question. This double process, of being outside but yet somehow resonating within the spectator is dependent on aura, much maligned by some counter-monument makers but seemingly unavoidable. Walter Benjamin defines (and creates) the concept of aura in his oft-quoted “Work of Art In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936) as: “a unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it [an art work] may be” (Benjamin, 1993: 222). The aura is shattered by a world in which the copy (here the photograph) makes the representational world more accessible. This distance is precisely what monumentalization depends upon; monuments, as place-makers, are necessarily auratic in character, secured to a site, marking its importance.

Counter-monument makers want to scratch this auratic surface; they are distrustful of reifications and the imperious solidity of matter.

The lament of the loss of aura is essentially a lament for the artwork's loss of place. Benjamin decries how photography makes it possible for a representation to exist without a physical referent, or a real presence, anywhere. Like Aristotle's idea of memory, derived from the concept of a copy, a stamping, and an impression received from the outside, the loss of aura translates into a loss of origin. The belief in this "loss of aura" spurs on a melancholic longing, what Freud saw as "a desired loss, that anticipates the loss of the object" (Freud, 1957: 161). The aura is, in effect, an expression of the need to bring what is far closer, our own fascination with spatial and temporal distance.

Counter-monuments attempt to break down this aura, even while renewing it. Although its advocates attempt to de-materialize, de-commemorate and render the monumental form interactive and familiar, a practice in everyday life, they are necessarily resurrecting an auratic original, and sanctifying a place. The monument-in-ruins no longer hovers above the landscape, mediated by a pedestal; it has grafted itself back onto a place, has seeped into the site itself. The monument has, like the body reaching a final resting place, passed back into the land.

Chapter Three

Unearthing the Monument: Landscape in Memoriam

*"Earth, is this not what you want: to arise within us invisibly?" Duinesian Elegies, RM
Rilke*

*"Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down/ Learn of the green-world what can be thy place"
Ezra Pound, Canto IXXXI*

Although it has been said that the symbolic hole or memorial void was "popularized by the Holocaust" (Michalski, 1998: 176), the only way to wrest the problematic of the monument-in-ruins from the cleft of Western European consciousness is to trace the counter-monument back to its "source", the site itself. In fact, one could look at the negation of monumentalization of the early 1990s as being an echo of an earlier questioning of the monument's logic, begun with the work of the Conceptualists and Earthworks artists of the 60s. Here the dematerialization of the art object is also featured at its limit, by using the "medium" of the Earth itself. The "invisible" monument, a form so triumphed by German counter-monument makers, can be seen as informed by the dominant strategy of critique of the 60s namely, that of "inversion, a device that got a lot of play [in 1967]" (Boettger, 2002: 8). This was inaugurated with Claes Oldenburg's playful tomb-making dubbed "The Placid Civic Monument", a hole dug behind the Met in 1967. Instead of projecting upwards from the earth to mark a burial, the monument becomes the burial itself, a recession into the ground. This subterranean movement is still a recurrent theme in Holocaust memorials that, in their very structure, seem to urge the viewer downwards into the earth. Riegl's idea of the timeworn is cast differently here. These earth-based monuments conceal themselves, or are finally engulfed by the tides; the passage of time and the inevitability of their

dissolution are imprinted on the skin of the earth as a kind of writing trace, a record or mark destined to disappear. These monuments hinge upon the idea of the destruction and forgetting implicit within the landscape, an idea that introduces the concept of “nature” itself in an entropic state of decay.

Therefore, the counter-monument movement of the 90s finds its equivalent in the monuments-in-reverse of the 60s. Both use similar strategies of critique; in both monumental moments there is an effort to peel the monument away from the much-maligned monument. This is done in many ways: first, by using the “original form” of the material of art, by using other media to comment upon the monument in a self-reflexive way, and by insisting on a participatory component to monumental forms, (continuing in the trend put forth by Conceptual artists) by requiring an active presence on the part of the spectator. By using marked sites that are subject to the environmental erosion of time passing, or using ephemeral media to mark impermanent sites and moments, and encouraging the presence of spectators to symbolically “erode” the monument, Earthworks aesthetics and practice are rooted in counter-monumentality. In this chapter I will trace out how these strategies of critique are made manifest in the Earthworks tradition, and suggest that the discourse of ecological reclamation has, in effect, contributed to a monumentalized landscape. The idea of reclamation suggests a finding, a rescuing from forgetting, an idea that suggests that today’s landscape architecture and art is an ongoing quest for an original purity. I see this as related to the nostalgic mode of remembrance offered by the monument itself.

The Burial, The Mound, The Wound

John Beardsley attempts to get at the meat of the term “Earthworks” in his introduction to Land Art, saying that those who “alter the landscape” are more than earth artists although “land projects is perhaps still inadequate as a descriptive term but flexible enough to encompass all works inextricably bound to their sites” (Beardsley, 9). In his view, the term includes “works with a distinct formal character which is revealed or extended by the changing conditions of light, weather, or the seasons of a particular site” (9). Therefore, the idea of altering the landscape, and of elevating processes in nature as a work of art is a uniting feature of Earthworks practice.

The Earthworks artists are usually credited with being the first to realize the aesthetic potential of the hole, but the term itself evolved from pre-existing archeological and engineering terms (Boettger, 2002: 46), as well as the generic word for the megaliths in Dorset, England (61). Because “earth” and “work” was first combined in Robert Smithson’s 1967 proposal and in an art exhibit at Virginia Dwan’s gallery, “it is considered American, [but] it is not a formal movement” (19). Gilles Tiberghien sees the development of the Land Art artist as “characterized by the search for new forms, new models, new concepts even if they draw their references from megalithic art and pre-Columbian civilizations. Their sculpture...confront[s] its own limits” (Tiberghien, 1995: 2).

In a work that traces the evolution of Earthworks from pre-Columbian native Incan land art onward, Lucy Lippard notes that there is no land art in Ancient Greek culture. She associates the Earthworks project as a western American phenomenon. In her words: “the obsession with giant scale in the American art world of the 60s and 70s can

be interpreted as an extension of the self, to the point of occasional megalomania” (Lippard, 1983:142). Land Art (at least in an American context) is connected to the American ego; many of the monuments can only be fully comprehended during aerial viewings, perhaps a mode of visibility that is connected to the tendency to “scan” the landscape, reflecting the Frontier mentality and its emphasis on “horizontality, distance, and accents in the landscape”. Both Beardsley and Lippard link land –based artwork to pre-historic structures, as well as to Earthworks artists themselves who cite Egyptian, Mayan, and Incan inspiration⁵. However, Beardsley is quick to point out that “while they allude to certain prehistoric monuments, they are clearly not meant to resemble them” (18). Suzaan Boettger expands: “Earthworks are different from...burial mounds in that they are ‘abstract’ and intentionally artistic” (Boettger, 2002: 189)

Rosalind Krauss speaks rather acerbically when she discusses sculpture of the 60s, about the desire to legitimize Earthworks as a movement by primitivizing it. She says: “the historian/critic simply performed a more extended sleight of hand and began to construct his genealogies out of millennia rather than decades. Stonehenge, the Nazca lines, the Toltec ballcourts, Indian burial mounds—anything at all could be hauled into court to bear witness to this work’s connection to history and thereby legitimize its status as sculpture” (Krauss, 1985: 279).

Regardless of whether Native burial mounds were “unintentionally” artistic, the mounds of pre-Columbian society were more than the bulldozed vision of a commissioned artist on a private pilgrimage. For the Cahokia people, a tribe that populated what is now Southern Ohio and Missouri, for instance, the act of mound-building was a communal act, intended as a tomb for the dead, but also essential as a

⁵ see Heizer’s Complex One or Pratt’s Burial Mound at Pratt Farm, for example.

community-building activity, as well as a hilltop site that acted as a meeting place between tribes. In his book on the mounds in Eastern North America, George Milner speaks of how these were more than burial mounds but in fact ceremonial platforms, “carefully prepared surfaces that were periodically renewed by the addition of more soil” (Milner, 2004: 73) Because these mounds contained ashes of buildings, as well as always-expanding graves, this meant that the mound was maintained over long periods of time and the “periodic renewal of mound surfaces...was presumably related to ceremonies that re-consecrated the ground” (61). The act of building a mound, then, was a communal and communicative act, not the personal vision of a desert-dwelling eccentric.

The confusion that arises when attempting to taxonomize monuments as sites within the landscape is precisely that: the monument now extends to the site in which it dwells, becoming the place itself. Rosalind Krauss traces this movement away from the monumental object to the monumentalization of spaces when she elucidates the “fading” of the monument’s logic to the late nineteenth century, with Rodin’s failed Balzac and Gates of Hell commission in the 1890s (Krauss, 1985: 280). It is here that she postulates a *punctum*—a slipping into the monument’s negation. She submits that this is when one enters modernism: “a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place” (280). She characterizes modernist sculptural production as one “that operates in relation to this loss of site, producing the monument as abstraction, the monument as pure marker or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential” (280).

This placelessness finds a material equivalent in the tenets of minimalism, namely, “the absence of pedestal or base, the importance accorded to the temporal

dimension and the formal simplicity of the works" (Tiberghien, 1995: 48). Beardsley links the rise of Land Art with that of minimalist sculpture, specifically with Carl André's idea that sculpture is "form-structure-place" (Beardsley, 1977: 13). So too, did Minimalism focus on the spatial and temporal notion of experiencing art. But as Beardsley writes: "it was not simply that these works required time to be fully apprehended, but that change was implicit in them. Time as well as motion through space became essential to experiencing the works, as they divulged the process of making the work" (Beardsley, 1977: 13). The typically minimalist proclamation that the work of art is nothing but its materiality (Tiberghien, 1995: 39) is re-iterated in the counter-monument practice. Counter-monument artists draw from the Earthworks precedent and are equally concerned with highlighting the inadequacies of the material form to communicate memory.

The idea of materiality, as Beardsley points out, is manifest in the works, as the sheer physical effort required for their construction is plainly visible. In the impermanence of the Earthwork lies its meaning; the "interaction between these works and the ambient space means that one is often unsure of whether the work consists only of manipulated materials, or of all the environmental factors the work brings into play" (Beardsley, 11) In this way, there is a blurring between the category of landscape as space; it is no longer separate from the material of the art work. In fact, as Beardsley says, the earthwork form becomes "a vehicle to experience space, direction, location" (21).

According to some scholars, Earthworks are outside the confines of the gallery—these sculptures are said to "produce their effect by themselves and not by means of a

space that they should decorate or 'super'-symbolize, and therefore are given a space that is deemed neutral" (Leenhardt, 1996: 38). However, a quick perusal of most of the works in the US reveals that most of these spaces are owned by Dia, an art foundation housed in an old cracker-box factory in New York State. This movement away from the more obvious display spaces of galleries and museums may be seen as an extending of the museum, and has been lauded by some and parodied by many artists working within these confines.

Walter de Maria's *Lightning Field* (1977) conflates the "natural" with the monumental in a provocative way. The site is a supposedly awe-inspiring quasi-religious experience, if one is lucky enough to have rain. The field, 400 poles of steel poles in straight lines over almost a mile square, is "activated only 3 to 30" times a year by thunderstorms" (Lippard, 1983: 6B). Dia bought the land in 1975, and local high-school students helped install the poles. The cost for the project was one million dollars "but what was incalculable...was its artistic value. On extremely rare occasions, a bolt of lightning has struck one of the poles. Otherwise, the art entailed psychic intangibles: taking in the silent, peaceable, solitary passage of time in the high desert and the vastness of space—and noticing how subtly different the poles looked as the sun moved across the sky" (Kimmelman, 2003: 36)

Although this work re-introduces notions of pilgrimage, in that we may go so far as to say that the distance traveled to this site is perhaps its entire meaning, it is also an economic transaction: one must stay the night, tents are forbidden and there is a \$135.00 cabin fee (<http://www.lightningfield.org/reserve.html>). The authenticity of the site relies upon being experienced in real time; no photographs are permitted on the site, and no

lightning is guaranteed. Here the moment of a natural phenomenon, namely, lightning striking, has become elevated to the status of an aesthetic and perhaps even an ecstatic experience. The distance traveled to a remote location near Quemado, New Mexico creates a kind of commemoration in itself; the spectator's body becomes re-implicated by the journey to the site, the delay of the spectacularized moment (here a bolt descending from the sky to strike a rod), and possibility of being awestruck or bitterly unfulfilled. De Maria's piece demands a physical and therefore mental investment in the act of perceiving the monumental moment in a thunderstorm.

Another monument that acts as a "place-holder", namely, as a part of the material of the site itself, is Robert Smithson's seminal spiral (fig. 29). Here, in an earthwork built in 1970 off Rozel Point in the sanguine waters of Great Salt Lake in Utah, one witnesses the evidence of elapsed time—the process of sinking water levels (to 4, 197 feet) and the erosion of the structure that was built submerged evoke many "temporal surfaces" as he called them. The Spiral Jetty, a 1500 foot long spiral of now salt-encrusted basalt and earth, changes according to the chemical composition in Great Salt Lake, but is revealed by these processes.

Here, Smithson divulges the present "both in temporal terms, as that which is happening now, and in terms of cognition and consciousness...attending to actual experienced time rather than to an ideological time" constructed by monuments and museums (Shapiro, 1995: 39). Bizarrely enough, the monument is also owned by Dia in New York, and the gallery has been quite perturbed about preserving such a site, a literal site of time, whose very purpose is to "make manifest the forces of growth, change, decay, spoliation, mixture and drift" (120). For indeed, how would one preserve a

monument that was, in its original moment, submerged, except to throw a stone at it and assist in its entropy? Sadly enough, there are plans in the works to raise the structure; I see this as a disastrous misinterpretation of Smithson's intentions.

The spiral highlights the fact that everything is already in a state of dissolution and that monuments are decaying the moment they arise. To further complicate things, Smithson's spiral signature, which many critics have linked to the structure of the Tower of Babel, can be seen as an "advanced stage of a process in which a spiraling tower has gradually been flattened to the ground and inserted in the water, where it may even sink below the level of the surface." (226). Like most counter-monuments, this one offers more than one interpretation; it can be interpreted as a burial and a revealing. It is a marking of the earth that hints at human presence but only to point out the ineluctable slip into absence. This work was built with intended impermanence, and should be experienced by walking on top of it, tracing the movement away from and towards the center, the mind-emptying movement of turning within a vortex. Many will never make this pilgrimage; I have to confess that my only experience of this monument has been mediated through Smithson's film at the Tate Modern, an irony that is not lost on me.

Smithson sees the return to the site, a return to origins of some sort. He says: "My interest in the site was really a return to the origins of the material, sort of a dematerialization of refined matter. Like if you took a tube of paint and followed it back to its original sources" (Lippard, 1973: 87). In fact most earthworks are obsessed by this imperative. Micheal Heizer's boulder displacements, (*Displaced/Replaced Mass* (1969)), are "formed of three rocks, each dozens of tons in weight, placed at equal distances from each other in the Nevada desert" (Tiberghien, 1995: 67). The monument is more

interested in expressing materiality, than aesthetic beauty and as Heizer says: “the earth is the material with the most potential because it is the original source material” (67). The Earthworks project, then, can be seen as unabashedly nostalgic, purporting a return to origins, of the artwork itself.

Unveiling the Monumental Landscape

When Christo wrapped the Pont Neuf in Paris, or swathed an entire coastline in Australia, he was playing with monumentality. By concealing features of the landscape, he was in effect, revealing it, bestowing an aura onto the landscape precisely because he enclosed it. Using the outdoor equivalent of a tablecloth, Christo’s interventions reveal the landscape by covering it up. Landscape recovery performs much of the same monumentalizing functions. The term “recovery implies that something once lost, devalued, forgotten, or misplaced has been found again, retrieved and brought forward with renewed vitality. Also implied are repossession, taking control, and the regaining of health and normalcy, as in a rightful return” (Corner, 1999: 10). James Corner sees the term recovery as linked with power, possession and nostalgia, as well as connoting optimism for the future (10).

Recovering place, which is the project of all monuments, involves the recovering of a memory, the recovering of ecology, the recovery of a lost site and the promise of a return (non polluted and pure) to that site. This is a familiar mode of operation that is expressed in a rhetoric that suggests the process of monumentalization without ever mentioning it by name. Indeed, a casual perusal of a landscape-architecture textbook has revealed to me how the very discourse of landscape architecture is tethered to the discourse of recovery, remembrance, and of place-making. Christophe Girot’s work in his

essay "The Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture" echoes the task of monumentalization, namely the process of "landing, grounding, finding, founding" as a means of "discovering" and reconstructing a site that has a collective resonance (Giot, 1999: 59-68). It would seem that in current land reclamation/art practice, as in counter-monumental practices, the trace of human presence in nature is safeguarded as a kind of memorial.

In land-based art the landscape is engaged, not pictorially, but as a kind of medium for ephemeral artistic expression. Working with the earth is said to have sprung up from the "general impulse to reaffirm our connections to the natural world, to counter the drift toward the increasing urbanization of contemporary life" (Beardsley, 1977: 27). But it must be emphasized that these artists are not environmental activists, and sometimes their work is at odds with preservationist ecological concerns, namely the idea of conserving an unpolluted "natural" environment, saved from the scarification of humankind. Robert Smithson was opposed to this sort of ecology, because it is "based on a kind of late-nineteenth-century puritanical view of nature. In the puritanical ethic, there is a tendency to put man outside of nature, so that whatever he does is fundamentally unnatural" (qtd. by Beardsley, 1977: 28). Clearly, the division between the urban and the natural is a Romantic conception that is evident in the discourse surrounding the construction of parks as an refuge from the evils of urban life, as Frederick Law Olmstead did, with his plans to design Central Park surrounded by forest and "completely shut out the city from our landscapes" (Olmstead, 1973: 111). As Anita Berrizbeita points out in her unpacking of the spatial rhetoric of parks, this dichotomy between urban space

and “natural space” (read: orderly nature) saturates the park with “aura”, as an authentically “natural” environment, as opposed to the “unnatural” city around it.

The Restorative Monument

But how does the land itself contain a memory? And, more pertinently, how does the monument become re-defined in light of the new imperative to restore and recoup the landscape to its original state? One example of the ecological monument turn is quite well performed with Noel Harding’s *Elevated Wetlands*, perplexing commuters along the Don Valley Parkway since October 1998 (fig. 30). The cluster of monuments, reminiscent of strange molars or pre-historic bones, is, in effect “made of expanded polystyrene...and entirely coated with acrylic stucco. They are filled with a soil substitute made from waste plastic that sustains a wide range of plants, shrubs, and trees selected for their natural ability to remove certain pollutants from the environment. Solar-powered pumps lift water from the polluted Don River into the raised plastic planters. The water flows through the containers...the recycled plastics function as a mechanical filter and the plants as a biological filter retrieving wastes, toxins, and other impurities from the water. The surrounding land is then irrigated as the cleansed water cascades forth, eventually making its way back to the river” (www.elevatedwetlands.com/n2.html).

This functioning monument (or more aptly trio of monuments, creating a “visual gateway” across the DVP) has implicitly absorbed the discourse of monumentalization. Here the process of filtration and purification, has baptismal overtones, and has been elevated, put on a plinth, and become a monument to our own desire to cleanse our consciousness of the stain we have left on the Earth. According to one article “the water purifying Elevated Wetlands does is mainly symbolic...with a flow of only a few dozen

liters a minute, the sculpture isn't going to clean up the whole river. In fact water won't even run through it year round" (Immen, 1998: glob3.jpg).

The tooth-like plinths were chosen as a deliberate response to the propensity of people to ignore drive-by monuments, as a strategic way to get commuters curious and feel compelled to explore the space. The monuments are accessible via a hidden entrance off the highway, and exist in an almost pastoral state. They drain into each other, nestled in sumac, cattails, wild iris, spotted Joe Pye weed and broad-leafed arrowhead. Snails climb up the plastic surface, where kids have defaced the vaulted "arches" of the structures in Hebrew graffiti. In fact, the monument could be read as an effort to re-invoke the landscape as it was without the presence of humans; the monumentalized wetlands use the purification process as a foil to comment on the disappearance of a landscape. It is an expression of the memory of the land, as it was, before we forgot about it. The monument reveals the imperceptible force of the wetland itself, and raising it above the ground itself, produces a tension between a landscape that is, and the ideal and always-somewhat-lost original landscape.

The wetland, usually desiccated by urban development, filled in, and forgotten, now is allowed its resurrection, its wetness. And the return is literally a promise of purification; its cleansing waters will mitigate the squalor of the Don River. According to Anita Berizbetta, "aura, as it relates to landscape is re-translated as a distance between the subject and the landscape that is conceived as something mystical" (Berizbetta, 1999: 203). In fact, *Elevated Wetlands* can be seen as re-iteration of aura within the landscape; the mimetic representation of ecological processes is a means of monumentalizing them, as a promise of the return of the original pure state of the Don River.

The Park As Memorial

Arguably, ever since Richard Haag made the decision to “save” the industrial ruins in Seattle’s Gas Works Park in the 1970s, landscape architecture has been obsessed with memorializing landscapes. Quite fittingly, the new MOMA is currently exhibiting “Groundswell”, a show that showcases 23 projects that deal with “the postindustrial landscape, in particular with its legacy of violence and decay” (Ouroussoff, 2005: B1). Not surprisingly the show’s tone is optimistic: “rooted in the power of landscape design to act as a healing agent” (B1). Clearly then, landscape, in its various permutations of scarred, toxic and finally, renewed, becomes a means in which to explore “communal memory—an attempt to openly engage with dark history rather than cover over it” (B1). Whether gardens peppered with exposed ruins re-imbue cities with fertile terrain for remembrance or the “sacred” is a moot point. The point is that it has become very *en vogue* to say so. When I visited the exhibit, I was struck by how many designs suggested that a traumatic past became resolved by this kind of mythic plenitude of nature.

A short perusal of the proposals for Ground Zero reveals this trend; many monument-makers were indeed landscape architects who believed in the healing powers of a garden. Some played with the bio-remedial angle; others were fervent in their belief of the “soothing balm of nature” and the redemptive qualities of the pastoral. Most of the proposals for the site have fetishized the absence of the towers, no doubt due to the fact that designers were asked to include the original footprints of the towers as part of the guidelines, “thereby furnishing a sort of memorial park space between the new structures and the spaces where they once stood” (Muschamp, 2002: 1).

Sherwin Nuland, a speaker at Columbia's "Monument And Memory" conference, which took place a year after the disaster, insisted on the healing power of green space. He called for "a garden of meditation, a mystical plot of American earth-if only for the moment snatched from the cacophony of getting and spending- we can be something better than what we are, where we can renew our faith in ourselves as Americans, as people of the world community and as men and women who love and were loved" (Nuland, 2002: 39). This to me harkens back to the Enlightenment idea of a garden being a means of exerting a civilizing force, an example of controlled nature within a city, which would encourage proper civic conduct.

Other urban theorists and architects have responded with similar ideologically-loaded green spaces. Michael Sorkin called for a "berm surrounding the site...eventually this berm would become permanent and within it a shallow green crater-filled with earth from every country- will be an Elysian field in perpetual memory of the fallen" (Sorkin, 2002: 197-209). Tadao Ando, a Japanese architect, suggested a 100 foot high mound of earth "whose radius is one thirty thousandth of the earth's" (Fogey, 2002: C01), inviting the contemplator to sense the "invisible presence of a complete circle".

To further buttress the idea that landscape architects have become the new monument makers, the New York Times Magazine has been showcasing the works of landscape memorials for Ground Zero, featuring the works of numerous firms who are united by the idea that the only fitting way to remember the place is to "naturalize" it, quite literally. "Why not turn Ground Zero into a park?" is symptomatic of the shift from void, to sublime void—using the land itself to commemorate and build a collective experience.

Still there are those who wonder whether greening a space is a fitting and potent enough symbol to carry a memorial space. Many are suspicious that the new monument is no more than a civic park, and are disappointed with the prospect of “pool-filled footprints...softened with trees and benches to create a benign urban park” (Dietsch, 2004: 11A). Deborah Dietsch, for one, laments that these green spaces do not stand alone, they do not communicate enough and should be replaced by “didactic displays” that explain the “gravity and complexity of calamitous events” (11A). However, it is my belief that these “naturalized” memorial spaces highlight what is implicit within the monument itself: the inevitable naturalization, and hence neutralization of a loss.

Making park-like memorials can be an ideological move to embrace the temporal erosion of the site. “Natural” processes become an ideal way to trope upon the idea of cyclical healing, regeneration and return. Workshop’s proposal features islands as “silent memorials” that make up the area of the residual footprints and exist because “historically much of the World Trade Center site was under water, today’s Greenwich Street is the original shoreline of the Hudson River” (*New York Times*, 2004: 57). Here, the landscape has memory, namely of having once been part of the Hudson and ready to be subsumed once more; in the Workshop’s schema picnicking on one of the islands becomes the commemorative act.

In James Corner’s proposal, he suggests a “memorial forest”, a place that would not only house ruins of the World Trade Center, but also work as a tree nursery (59). His “memorial arboretum” is an archival fantasy: “a large sunken garden of flowers and wildlife from all over the world”. In this sense, the purity of the proverbial “getting back

to the garden", that is, recreating a pre-lapsarian state, recasts remembrance as a reforestation.

As with any memorial effort, there is a danger of offering an overly sanitized space of reflection, which spurs on a vacant contemplation rather than an active remembrance. One of the most interesting monument-landscape proposals comes from the DIRT studio, a proposal that echoes the counter-monument tenet of "place emerging through process" quite convincingly (62). The group reminds us that the average tree in Manhattan only lives for seven years, and that the focus of the memorial should be turned onto the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, where "1.4 million tons of WTC debris remain atop Mound No. 1/9" (63). Here the process of regeneration is literally played out in the regeneration of soil produced at the Fresh Kills site and transported to Manhattan in a sort of commemorative cavalcade reminiscent of Robert Smithson's barge drawings of the late 60s. In this way the memorial is connected to the earth, and to the movement of the earth, as well as to the commuters who make their way to Manhattan each day from the island. The group aptly points out that to memorialize really means to forget, and their proposal in direct response to the inadequacies of monumentalization, choosing instead to communicate loss/regeneration with a massive tree planting. In fact many of the proposals involved using trees as symbols of renewal and growth, as they are intergenerational fixtures on the landscape. As Douglas Davies states in his essay "The Evocative Symbolism of Trees": "the tree presents itself as a medium of thought in a direct and obvious way through its possession of trunk, roots and branches. [I]t stands, both literally and metaphorically, as a living entity spanning many human generations. As such it avails itself as a historical marker...as a link with the past" (Davies, 1988: 34).

Here I cannot help but recall the preservation of the last tree standing in the Oklahoma City Bombing, its unbelievable permanence reified, and revered.

The monumentalization that I have been most involved with of late seems to be keeping step with this thesis work in an almost eerily synchronized way. Disappointed by the fountain-voids that are going to grace Ground Zero, the City of New York held another competition to honor the workers who cleared the remains of 9-11 and reclaim and renew the Fresh Kills Landfill site, the largest brownfield in North America and also the dumping site of the World Trade Center debris. The site has been a dump for more than half a century, but now that the debris of the towers has sanctified it, what was once toxic has been transformed into a place of beauty, as well as a “realm of memory”. Last March, the community of Staten Island and the staff of Field Operations (owned by James Corner), who proposed the winning design of “Lifescape”, met to discuss the proposed earthwork monument at the site of the landfill (fig. 30, 31). The West Mound of the landfill, where the contents of the September 11th disaster have been sloughed off, has become the literal gravesite of the twin towers. The proposed monument is to be a “processional earthwork in an expansive wildflower meadow” at the top of the mound. The design features “two earth forms that mirror the exact width and height of the towers, and its second incline is on the axis with the skyline vista where the towers once stood. This allows for a 360-degree view of the region including a vista of Lower Manhattan” (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/about/pr121801.html>). Like Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial*, the Fresh Kills site creates a line of visual reciprocity, an axis that points to the Manhattan skyline (presumably to be filled by newer, better and bigger incarnations of the World Trade Center) and the memorial dumping ground. This place

offers a panoramic visual display, removed from the actual site, but also a connective sightline that links the building's end with its new beginning. In this sense, the meaning of the destruction of the towers themselves has accrued at the site of their burial. The monumental experience will "take 15 minutes walking through wildflower meadows and under a big sky and a horizon as far as the eye can see" (Raver, 2005:D6).

In Corner's words: "it's an anti-monument, in the sense that the real experience comes through walking" (D6). The plan has been lauded wildly in the press as an example of landscape architects "helping nature reclaim the site" thereby ensuring a "good place for healing and reflection" (D6).

I find myself wondering if, in twenty years, when Arad's void/fountains have become derelict spaces, with non-functioning water jets, and cracked concrete marring its minimalist effect, the Fresh Kills memorial site, nestled in what is promised to be "the most significant park-building endeavor New York city has undertaken in over a century", will be the location where people will find resonance and meaning. At 2, 200 acres, it is three times the size of Central Park and it will take "at least 30 years to build up the thin soil that covers [the mound], enrich its sparse habitats and create the amenities ...to draw visitors" (D6). The monument, here marking a landfill site that is filled by the remnants of destruction, was created by the veritable act of "filling in". This is, in my view, a trans-monumental moment; the negative monument is bursting with the leftovers of a landscape that has been cast away. I do not know if the Fresh Kills monument will be noticed and appreciated by the people who visit the park. The success of the monument, no matter how self-critical, is dependent its own adaptability, as a constantly changing, eroding, and expanding medium.

Perhaps the turn to “naturalize” the monument, quite literally to re-inscribe a loss within a temporal *site*, is a new means of dealing with the seemingly inescapable monumentalization of monumentalization. By recasting the fetishization of bereavement in a temporal space, one that is continuously changing and being “made” just by existing in nature, the monumentalized landscape is an inversion of the monument that stands in for the place, the event, the loss itself. Death is easier to deal with when it is metaphorically represented; it becomes “naturalized” when represented within the landscape, and always recouped. In the ecological monument’s schema, the loss is always recovered: the trees bear fruit, scars recede into the earth, even as they are being re-noticed, there is the promise of irreverent moss. As a living monument, the ecological monument is always in the process of everyone’s favorite gerund: becoming. The counter-monument problematic of producing the double loss of the monument and the loss itself is surmounted here. For here, the monument came before the moment. The monument as a landscape is always already there.

Conclusion

Memory Once Removed: Commemorative Practices and Other Possibilities

All art is a commemoration—Micheal Heizer

So far, I have been focusing on the collapse of the monument into the counter-monument, and the monument's final slippage back into the site itself. I will now turn to a consideration of how these sites, as sensorial places, address the modern pilgrim. Paradoxically, self-critical monuments rely on critical *viewers*, and therefore depend on the reception of the monument itself, the ideal spectator who possesses the monument in his/her own "interior memorial". At bottom, it may be that the counter-monument, which invites a reinterpretation of memorialization, is perhaps just a formal interrogation, a material critique, unless a commemorative and communicative act, an experience, is attached to it. While the counter-monument may be caught in the bind of anti-monumentalization, namely the problematic of being a monument against itself that inescapably monumentalizes itself anyway, the particular viewing strategies the monument inspires may be the only way to surmount this inevitable trap: by employing a participatory mode of visualization, the invisible monument may be made visible.

The idea of participatory monuments is complicated with the problematic of speaking of a "public sphere", as well as another difficult quandary: how to escape the parodic and perhaps cynically detached veneration of monuments? Clearly too, it becomes difficult to reconcile the seductive involuntary, and spontaneous memory Proust touted as the ideal reminiscence with the stultifying force of obligatory memory. This prompts me to wonder whether the enforced demarcation and sanctification of a site opens up a kind of obliteration of its memorial potency.

Anyone who has ever experienced loss, that ultimate moment of self-definition, knows that there can never be an adequate visual representation of that utter heartbreak. There can be only stand-ins and disappointing substitutes. One never knows when the past will seep into everyday life, punctuating a quotidian act with a bittersweet throb of the heart, a *resentiment*, a tortured lump in the throat. Socially, we are obsessed with reliving our own moments of sorrow, as a means of working through it, or perhaps remember it better (for it is true that we rarely remember it best the first time). As with all trauma, perhaps it is this repetition that makes us remember, as if we would lose our memory if we did not recite, repeat, and enclose what we need to forget, by rote, or, closer to what that means, by heart. The lesson of the counter-monument is the recognition that we delight in our own bereavement; perpetually lost objects that make no pretences in holding memory, are the monumental forms that now seem safe, though they may not appeal to survivors of the traumatic event being commemorated.

The monument has always been motivated by nostalgia for representation, namely, a yearning for a way of representing loss. However, the monument's attempt to reconstruct what is always already lost, has been replaced by elusive, intangible, clever monuments, which interrogate the very premise on which they exist, as if by being self-reflexive the memory work has already been done. Counter-monuments encourage a kind of meta-reception, a sort of game in which viewers declare: "I know this monument is significant precisely because it is not there". The aesthetics of absence can be wearying; the significance in absence becomes a mode of un-visuality that only serves to communicate the idea of Nothingness. This is because absence, though communicable, is not a connective idea, and spurs on contemplation without an object.

However, counter-monuments, as a monumental critique, are only as valuable as the commemorative acts that entrench them within public time and space. Not all monuments can be useful or perform some sort of social function (promote dialogue amongst citizens about the past, clean up that cesspool of a river: in short, cleanse us of “dirty” history), without the engagement of a willing public. The monument-in-ruins purports to bring the past back into the present moment, re-invigorate the present with the past, or as most fans proclaim, make the past bear somehow on the present. However, the memorialization of the present moment played out in counter-monumental forms, is particularly participant-centered, and dependent upon a conception of collective memory that “conscious or not, exists in its material, spatial manifestations in public spaces” (Rosen, 2003: 30-31). Though one Gerz enthusiast submits that counter-monuments act as a “public spatialization of collective memory, as a public vigilance against material injustices that continue in the present” (35), this assumes that by visiting a monument the viewer is actively engaged with it. In the case of the *Hamburg Monument Against Fascism*, an empty space is all that remains, a meaningful space only for those who have their own memory of the monument. To be sure, this means of expressing memory in place becomes a means of place-making in the present without holding the past to one spot. Remembrance is manifested not by the monument but by the ephemeral ritualized acts, be they inscribing a surface, making a pilgrimage, searching or witnessing. Therefore, it is not a question of finding the perfect monument, a monumentalized, expiring, expired moment, but to look at the commemorative acts we use to resurrect the loss itself.

Commemorative acts surrounding the most poignant of monuments, those that acknowledge the wound of the past, usually involve some sort of action, a focus on the *process* of the monument that ensures that it is not merely neutralized, and subsumed into the space itself. This movement usually runs counter to the glib immediate recall associated with the monument: recent commemorative examples have involved journeys through space⁷ or the movement of the hand across a misted glass⁸. These examples bring the act of recollection back to the body, as a sensorial experience that imprints itself in the memory. Monuments, as experiences of sensation move beyond being the inadequate repositories of experience, as they might offer a secondary experience, a post-memory that is closer to unforgettable.

The measure of the monument's success lies in the co-optive potential of the monument itself. Can viewers get inside the monument, affect it, and be affected by it? The monument must be specific but general enough to bind people together and make them feel that it is theirs. The most immediate example that springs to mind here is Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1981). Set within Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 boulevard design, twenty-one diagonal avenues that achieved a "reciprocity of sight" that visually connected all the monuments on Capitol Hill (Boyer, 1994: 347), this work is essentially a partially submerged scar, far from the battlefields of Vietnam, but appropriately placed as an axis that physically points to the Washington obelisk and the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall (fig. 29). As Charles Griswold writes: "unlike all the

⁷ see Renata Stih's and Frieder Schnock's re-activation of the meaning of a bus stop, effectively re-mapping the city with routes to various concentration camps in and around Germany, in Young, James. E. *At Memory's Edge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000: 116-119.

⁸ Tom Kowalski and Jean Koeppel use condensation on plaques in a fruitful way in their Pentagon Memorial proposal. See Bernstein, Fred. "At The Pentagon, Visions of 184 Pieces for the Missing" from *New York Times*, 22 Dec., 2002:44.

other memorials [on the Mall]...the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial is invisible from a distance, particularly as one approaches it from the north...it demands that you enter the space or miss it altogether" (Griswold, 1992: 100). The work focuses on naming individuals, whose names are inscribed chronologically on two tapered walls of polished granite, which also acts as a reflective surface so that visitors may see themselves in it. The memorial incorporates the body of the visitor, but also involves a commemoration act, searching for the name of a loved one, that forces people to linger, contemplate and confront the weight of all the names⁹. As Michael Kimmelman has noted: "the genius of the design is the combination of names with Minimalist sculpture...she [Maya Lin] grasped two things: the value of naming and the nostalgia inherent in what you might call the modern memorial sublime, the way Minimalist art and its Post-Minimal legacy, precisely because of its stripped down, elemental forms, evokes a kind of long lost grandeur" (Kimmelman, 2002: 37). This move to recognize every soldier by name, as a list that seemed ambiguously embedded in the earth, is a pliant minimal Earthworks-informed design, and not surprisingly, was modified greatly when detractors decided to add figurative statues representing soldiers nearby (37).

What Maya Lin did not plan for is the sheer amount of stuff (cigarette cases, flowers, mementoes) still being left at the site by memorial pilgrims. This has resulted in an interesting design problem, one that may even necessitate the creation of an archive, for the safe keeping of all the personal memorabilia left behind. As one caretaker of the grounds recalls, the mementoes left him a "little misty" because they had an immediacy

⁹ It is worth noting that this design has already been quoted and reproduced in Canada. The Vancouver Aids memorial quotes Maya Lin's work, as a submerged ribbon form, engraved with non-chronologically listed names, reflecting the randomness of Aids itself, but also a monument-viewing strategy initiated by the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial.

to them; they were objects that were not like history (Bodnar, 1992: 8). The tension between the individual and spontaneous gestures of memory and a site of institutionalized memory is transcended here. Visitors make charcoal rubbings of the names, and leave souvenirs of their presence there; the monument is not simply a memory prosthesis, but a living site of recollection.

Although monuments work to hypostatize a single moment in time, monuments that resonate with public meaning are those that allow for a plurality of responses. Terence Riley, the chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York submits that Maya Lin's memorial is still holding influence over the way we conceive of the monument experience. He comments: "twenty years ago, Ms. Lin's memorial, which melds 58,000 names into a black gash in the landscape of the Mall, showed that it was possible to capture the common experience, and at the same time focus on the individual" (Bernstein, 2001: 43). John Gillis sees the monument's success differently, as a signal that the "era of collective memorialization is over. Families today insist that victims be commemorated individually. It was not enough for the names to be listed on the Vietnam memorial. People attached pictures and personal items to the wall." (qtd. in Bernstein, 2001: 43).

Many monument makers are aware of a creeping memorial lassitude and are working to include viewers within the reception of their work: the very act of going to see a monument (for indeed, an un-visited monument is surely a failed one) is accompanied by a participatory act, thereby drawing the spectator into an active builder of the monument's meaning and form. For instance, Toronto architect Shane Williamson's proposal for the Pentagon Memorial is comprised of a "grid of cherry blossom trees to

one side of the site and, on the other, a vessel made up of two walls that each holds a jigsaw-like frame for 184 large, angled fragments. The broken pieces are meant to reside eventually with the families of the victims. They might be considered as tombstones or even pieces of furniture but, importantly, they began as part of a larger whole” (Rochon, 2002: R13). Williamson states: “by giving each family a memorial, each family can determine and interpret what a memorial is to them” (R13). In this turn, mobile take-away monuments offer new ways of making the monument “live”. The focus of the monument is turned inward, towards the mourner, that is, towards personal loss and towards the construction of an internalized memorial. In the case of Williamson’s design, the monument’s very persistence may be a testament to an unwillingness to accept the memorialized moment. Many families may choose not to take their piece of the monument away at all. This monument points to the fact that paying homage, being there in body, does not necessarily imply participating, and suggests an antidote to the loss of faith one might have in commemorative visits, and the borrowed solemnity that they provoke. Indeed, the monument fulfills the counter-monument goal of finding new evocative ways to commemorate: by a sanctioned inscribing into it, degrading it, taking pieces of the monument away, leaving scars. It remains to be seen whether there will ever be a monument that doesn’t rely on the negativity of absence, whether a monument can be built (with genuine earnestness), rather than taken away.

A Remembering Body

Paul Connerton, in How Societies Remember, rightly asserts that recollection is “at work in two distinct areas of social activity: in commemorative ceremonies and in bodily practices” (Connerton, 1989: 7). In his view, ritual is a “bodily form of symbolic

re-enactment” (23) that literally serves to re-present that which has already happened or been forgotten. Rituals like the pilgrimage, usually involve leaving and collecting a memento at the site, laying down a wreath and picking a flower to press between the pages of a book, thereby replaying the drama of loss and recuperation. As Karen Pechilis writes, this interchange also ensures that the space of the home and the memorial site are connected, which renders the memorial site an “intersection between the known and the unknown” (Pechilis, 1992: 66), and I would submit, a space where the public and private are productively blurred.

In Edward Casey’s Remembering, he remarks that commemoration, means literally “an intensified remembering” (Casey 2000, 217) necessarily acted out in the companionship of other co-rememberers (220). In its oldest sense, the word referred to the deliverance of a formal eulogy and participation in a liturgical service” (217). In his schema, the commemorative act must not be everyday, it must be invested with a numinous quality that elevates it from mundane every day existence. His argument does not allow for a vernacular commemoration, a spontaneous ceremony, and a more light-hearted approach to remembering together.

Pierre Nora lamented that ritual was dead, hence the need for those socially irrelevant sites of memory. However, counter-monuments are almost playful in their subversion and recasting of the ritual act. The Gerz’ *Place of the Invisible Memorial—2, 146 Stones Against Racism* (1997), is implicated in everyone’s crossing of the Saarbrücken courtyard regardless of whether they are aware of the names of Jewish cemeteries etched into the undersides of the cobblestones; the simple everyday act of crossing the square becomes a literal acting out of how less desirable memories are

trodden upon, beneath the feet of people going about the business of living their lives. The idea that the ritual has to be somber, tinted with an appropriate amount of decorum, does not necessarily hold in the counter-monument schema. The fact that there are no physical traces of the monument means that the monument is “out of sight, and therefore, Gerz hoped, in mind” (Young, 2000: 142). As monuments are no longer monumentalized apart from the landscape in which they rest, the very act of taking a walk could constitute a commemorative experience.

Although counter-monuments might work towards an ideal participatory memorialization, one that eschews a mere “going through the motions”, to a large degree, not everyone may be aware of them. Ritualistic and commemorative acts, in theory at least, assure that our monuments do not have to be permanent; the commemoration keeps the memory in the minds of the “collective”, but the counter-monumental commemorations always have an expiry date. It is more than just a question of the temporary memorial, but the act of commemoration, characteristically one that bridges two temporal moments, is rendered suspect.

Like the flare-up of Proust’s involuntary memory, the commemorative act makes the memory extend through two moments (the past of the event, the present of the commemoration) at once. Casey sees the ritual’s potency as lying within its emphasis on temporality and writes: “in contrast with place and its situating/stabilizing effect, ritual is a dynamic affair whose determinative matrix is temporal rather than spatial”. For him, ritual is action-oriented and he champions the ritualist as the direct participator. He states: “The initial alienation of confronting a written text gives way to an experience less dependent on a fixed medium such as print (paint, stone, film images etc.) Indeed, it

gives way precisely to the body, which...ties us in an intimate and non- alienating way to our immediate ambiance. For rituals are performed by bodily actions—actions that link us to our proximal environs by orienting us in them” (221). By orienting us in space and time, the ritual forms a connective tissue between the body and the space, and the monument gains its full communicative and commemorative potency.

In Nora’s work on *lieux de mémoire*, Riegl (and later Choay’s) classification of monuments, and in Georg Simmel’s short essay on the ruin, we have seen how the reified material fragments of the past are meant not only to assuage our yearning to be in touch with a moment gone, but as a means of intensifying our experience of the past within the present moment. Nostalgically speaking, this ideal situation is complicated by the spirit in which most monuments are visited today, namely by the frenzy of monument-a-minute sightseeing. Lucy Lippard speaks of the emergence of a kind of “tragic tourism” wherein people travel to experience sufferings second hand, as a kind of consumable sacred site, perhaps spurred on by the idea that it is “socially responsible to wallow in others’ miseries” (Lippard, 1999: 118). Lippard writes: “tourists visit such sites to get a whiff of catastrophe, to rub a bit closer against disaster than is possible in television, movies or novels-although the imagination has to work a bit harder when confronted with the blank terrains, the empty rooms, the neatly mowed lawns, the negligible remains of tragedy” (119).

As she aptly points out, it is impossible to know whether or not these journeys get reduced to spectacle because “false reverence may be paraded; deep sadness may be hidden” (119). The appropriate commemorative response can be messy; anyone who has laughed so hard he/she cries understands how both laughter and tears are close to each

other. Lippard submits that: “the conflict between spectacle and engagement is heightened at the site of tragedy, mediated by awe if the site itself is visually overwhelming”. Furthermore, the tourist experience is likened in James Young’s work as “memory without consequences”, in the sense that the spectacularized tour may harden the tragedy into an eventual amnesia, thereby implicating forgetting in the very act of traveling to visit a monument.

More people now visit Holocaust monuments than were killed in the Holocaust itself, prompting Lippard to remark that “un-peopled places marking the sites of human tragedy must be re-peopled by visitors who, if they are open or attuned enough, become surrogates for the absent, the commemorated” (120). Clearly, this “open-ness” is contingent on how the site hails the visitor, on the amount of aestheticization that has “cleansed” the site in question. Lippard asks why an “empty field with a forlorn marker is more evocative than an antiseptically manicured lawn with an elaborate monument?” (120), recognizing the potency of ruins, the power of recognizable decay. She is adamant that the monument, as a re-visiting of a site, is necessarily a secondary “memory”. This too, is Proust’s heart-wrenching lesson; memory is necessarily predicated on an unrecoverable distance. Monuments, as surrogate media, are always representations of unlived experience, and as such, can seldom be experienced from the “inside”. Indeed, I am no longer sure whether Nora’s privileging of such memory is attainable or even desirable; the secondary experience of apprehending the monument, as a mediation of actual experience, is a mode of remembrance that makes us conscious of our own forgetting.

The monument-in-ruins works to articulate this distance; we can never be closer to the primary event, but we can be closer to our own forgetting of it. By inspiring doubly-mediated memories, in that they are necessarily memories that are secondary, of a loss that is re-presented in the loss of the monument itself, the monument has become its own memorial. But what the participatory counter-monument ensures is that a multitude of commemorative responses will find a place in its opening. The space that is left for the monument and its ruin is necessarily empty, and is to be filled, ideally, by those who notice it. This is made complicated by the mode of un-visuality that most counter-monuments demand. However, this is only the first step towards the acknowledgement that memory can never be contained in a static material object; it must be actively produced. Monuments that are animated by active and participatory contemplation can help us counter social, cultural and biological amnesia. This monumentality, as a sort of trans-monumentality, ensures that the monument can become the means by which we can “live through” memories, or, more correctly, the memories of memories. The monument-ruin or counter-monument surmounts the typical perception of monuments as dead stones deserted by the living. Between the monument and the people who engage with them, meaning and some form of memory remains.

Afterwards

I began this by interrogating whether monuments could ever be repositories of memory. This led me to trace out the monument-in-ruins, it must be said, not necessarily to postulate the monument’s ruin, but I hope, as an original way to open up a consideration of the generative possibilities of the monument. By wandering through

Montreal, remembering ruins, and refining my idea of the monument-in-ruins, I questioned monumentality and the way people extract meaning from the monumental. By rubbing together forgetting and remembering and collapsing the monument into the ruin, I endeavored to bring the monument, and its problematic role as a memory marker, into sharper relief. My examination of the critique of the monumental form has led me to my own critique of monumental critique, and far from Proust and his telephone.

However, by looking at why monuments are built, and how they die, I was groping towards what I have begun calling trans-monumentality, or the ability of the monument to be wrested from its purportedly imminent and immutable form, and transform into a location of memory that transcends its own monumentality.

The typical mode of representation favored by the counter-monument, quite literally making absence present, is definitely Micha Ullman's mode of operation in her piece *Bibliothec* (1996) in Berlin's Bebelplatz. My experience of this space led me to cogitate more deeply on the possible meaning of the counter-monument. The piece, at least as conceived originally by Ullman, is a window, floor or ceiling (depending on one's perspective) that reveals a subterranean room of gleaming white shelves, built to hold the 20 000 volumes that were burned in the square by the Nazis on the 10th of May 1933. The spectator's body is invited into the space in the form of a reflection, marring the surface of the window, marking a moment of shock when one notices that one is literally stepping on a memorial. When I visited the Bebelplatz the entire space was in ruins, disemboweled to make room for a parking garage. I was shocked that the city of Berlin would allow the memorial to be plowed over, but then I caught sight of a pediment in the dark, cordoned off, and wrapped up, and looking surprisingly monumental. After

climbing a series of fences, I was able to scale the plinth-like structure and break the seal of plastic sheeting and plywood. The final irony of this monument, intended to be a negative space but now inverted as a positive raised monument, is that it became more meaningful to me as an unrecognizable counter-monument, wrenched out of context. It resonated with me precisely because it was no longer another subterranean window plaque. In this moment of slipping from counter-monument to counter-counter-monument, a third possibility revealed itself to me. The monument/counter-monument opposition was far less fruitful than a third option: the possibility of memorializing using a trans-monumental form—one that goes beyond a mere negation of the monumental, and is actively built and made by those who seek it out. So too, did this become a monument that I sensed, as a memorial that reminded me of that tree I could never quite climb, of that unreachable branch. This monument remained the most moving for me precisely because I was able to discover it, experience it with my body, sense it as a forbidden and therefore seductively personal thing.

Robert Musil's wry comment that monuments are invisible because "everything permanent loses its ability to impress" (321) is, as I see it, the underlying *raison d'être* for the monument-ruin. His dismissive anti-monument stance also offers surprising insight into the ephemeral quality of memory itself. For as Michel de Certeau wrote, in his meaty book about everyday life: "like those birds that lay their eggs in other species' nests, memory produces in a place that does not belong to it...memory derives its interventionary force from its very capacity to be altered—unmoored, mobile, lacking any fixed position. Its permanent mark is that it is formed...by arising from the other (a circumstance) and by losing it (it is no more than a memory). There is a double alteration,

both of memory, which works when something affects it, and of its object, which is remembered only when it's disappeared" (de Certeau, 1988: 86-87).

Surely, it is the alterity or movement of memory (read: its dependence on forgetting) and the inaccessibility of the past that is recognized and has become the driving spirit behind monument-making today. From erosion-revealed to sinking steles, monuments tend to immortalize their own disappearance. Despite this epistemological loop, (what I see as the double bind of never being able to be completely outside monumentalizing), by building ruins, monument makers are openly acknowledging the oblivion upon which remembering depends. The monument-ruin announces its status as a trace and these non-sites, become places in which memory and forgetting are intertwined, and forever elude a fixed material object. The monument-ruin uses the effacement of the monument as a productive conservation that doesn't always become transferred across temporalities.

These monument makers are painfully aware of, and perhaps even liberated by, the prospect of working with matter that is destined to become meaningless. Although this may seem like a dirge to the counter-monument, I do not mean to suggest that the counter-monument is destined to be un-noticed, like the monument itself. Although many criticisms can be leveled at counter-monument makers for privileging a memory "from the inside", nostalgically reproducing a loss through the substitutional drama of the "loss" of the monument, they do seek to mount a memory by dismantling one, bringing the entire act of remembering into question. Therefore, being forgotten is part of what the monument is. Perhaps it is not within the purview of the monumental or counter-monumental project to facilitate memory, but rather to remind us of our own forgetting.

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fig. 1. The banal and the memorial meet on St. Laurent (author's photo).



fig. 2. Baron Von Hirsch Cemetery as heterotopic space (author's photo).



fig. 3. Tomb for the many (author's photo).



fig. 4. The George-Étienne Cartier monument (author's photo).



fig. 5. History is re-inscribed by the present (author's photo).



fig. 6. The monument made flesh (photo: Abbas Akhavan).



fig. 7. A hotel looms over Macdonald's monument (author's photo).



fig. 8. Beloved Edward VIII's monument an ideal resting place (author's photo).



fig. 9. The decay of the communicable (photo: Abbas Akhavan).

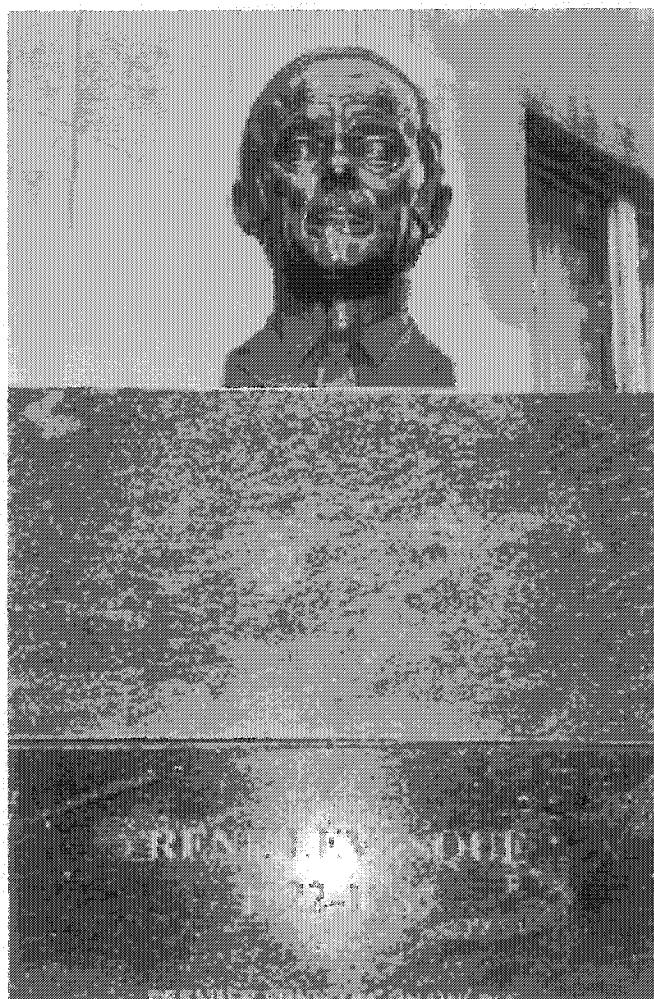


fig. 10. The Premier's decapitation (author's photo).



fig. 11. The artist beheads the monument (photo: Abbas Akhavan).

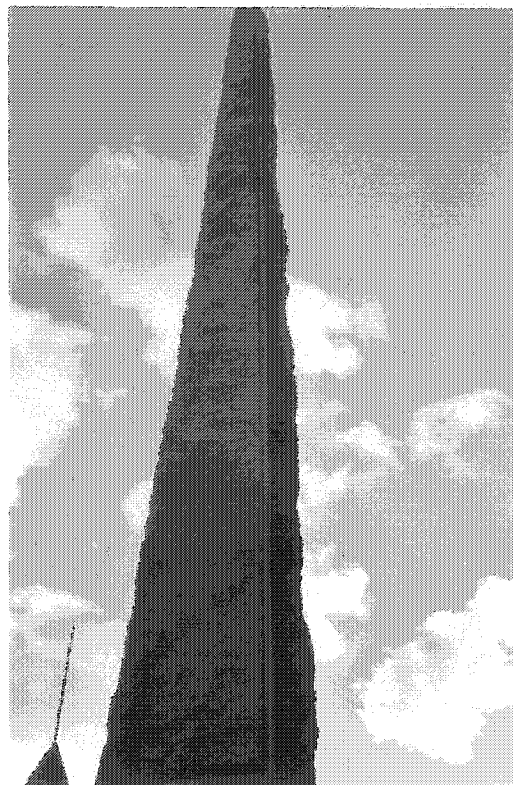


fig. 12. The priapic power of "founding" (author's photo).

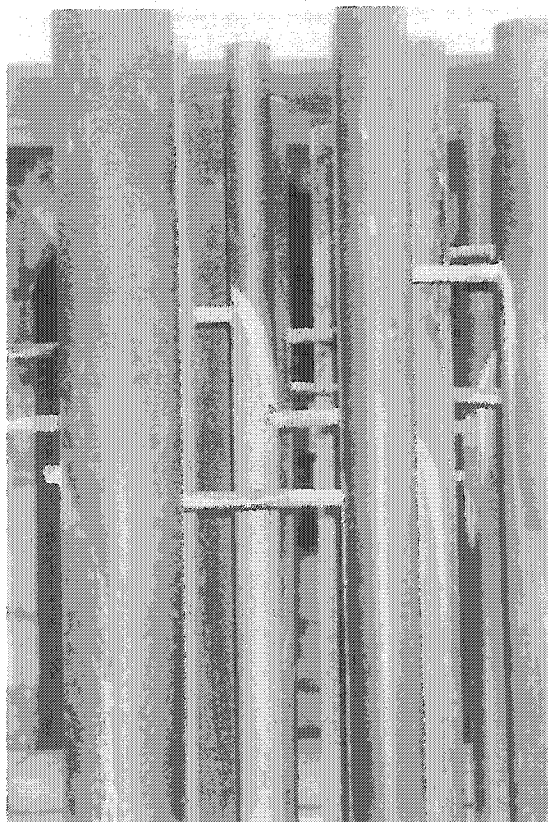


fig. 13. Monument to "founding" a veritable cage (author's photo).



fig. 14. A fragment of the Berlin Wall adorns a shopping mall (author's photo).



fig. 15. Jacques Cartier takes the Metro (author's photo).



fig. 16. The Number Five Grain Elevators as monuments to Montreal's past (author's photo).



fig. 17. The audience as monument (author's photo).



fig. 18. An empty plinth commemorates the absence of a monument (author's photo).



fig. 19. Hrdlicka's Gegen Denkmal (author's photo).



fig. 20. The souvenir kiosks at Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedachtnis-Kirche (author's photo).



fig. 21. New York's new ruin (author's photo).



fig. 22. An Irish ruin in downtown Manhattan (author's photo).



fig. 23. Tragic tourism (author's photo).

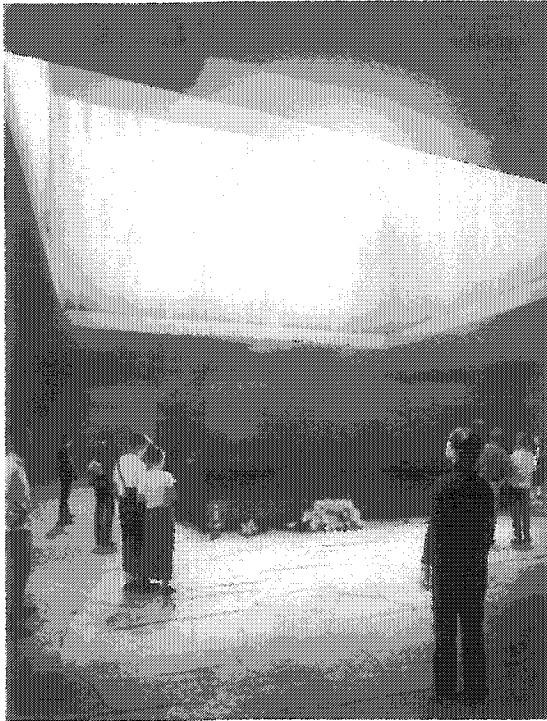


fig. 24. Inside Michael Arad's *Reflecting Absence*
(www.renewnyc.com/images_WMS/final/mem_underground_small.jpg).



fig. 26. Welcome desecration.



fig. 25. The Gerz' Monument Against Fascism: a
celebrated sinking (www.gerz.fr).



fig. 27. The Monument Against Fascism's current incarnation (author's photo).

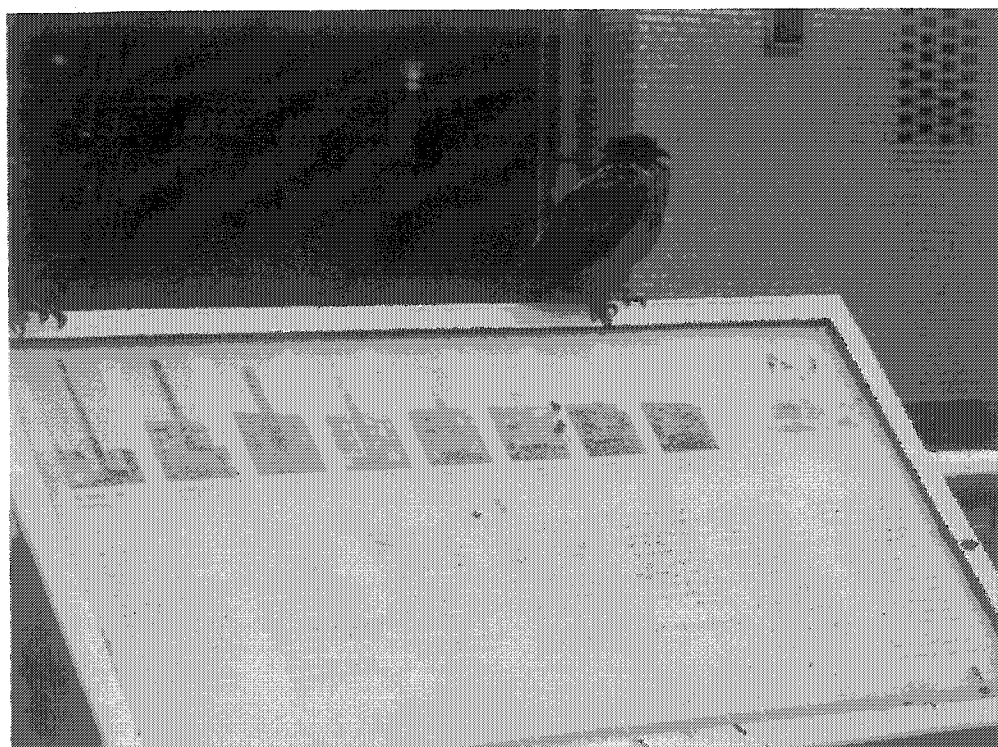


fig. 28. Explanatory plaque (author's photo).



fig. 29. Robert Smithson's spiral (<http://www.mines.utah.edu/~wmgg/Geology/UtahGIFS/SpiralJetty.html>).



fig. 30. *Elevated Wetlands* purifies the landscape (author's photo).



fig. 31. World Trade Center Burial Ground (http://69.20.65.248:8082/home/plan0/parkland/ffk_hidden/9-11.html).



fig. 32. Proposed Earthwork for the Fresh Kills Landfill site (http://69.20.65.248:8082/home/plan0/parkland/ffk_hidden/9-11.more.html).



fig. 33. The scarred landscape of the Mall
(<http://vietnam-veteransmemorial.visit-washington-dc-com/>).

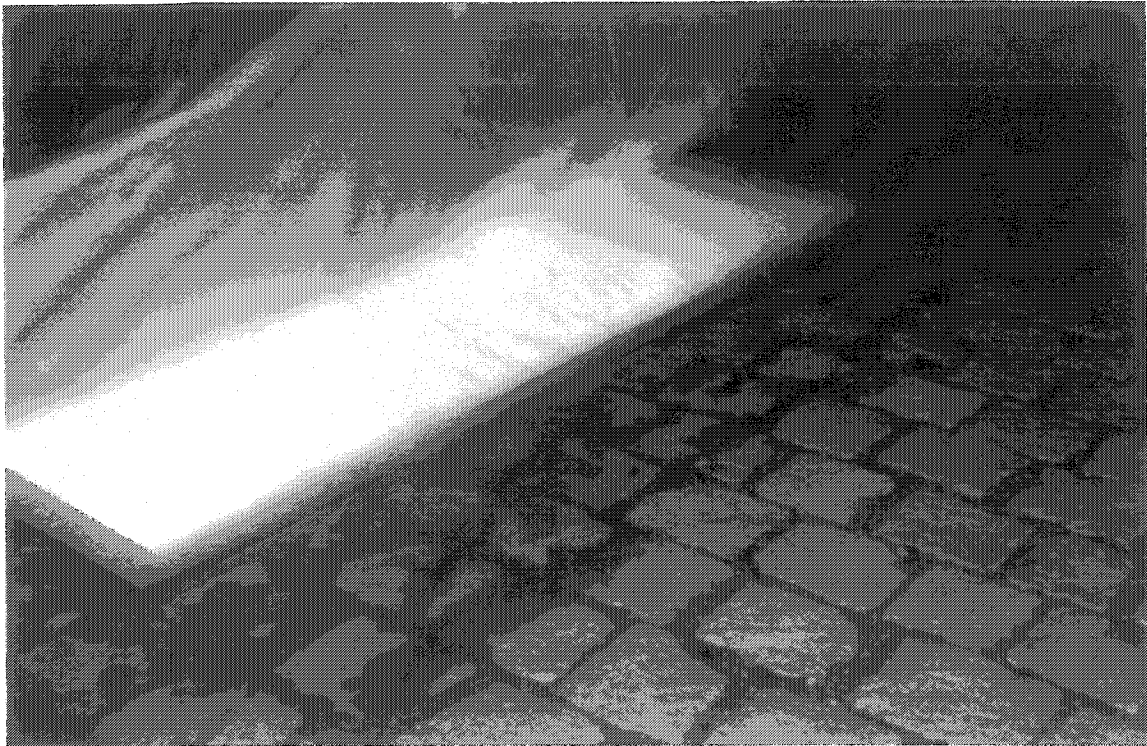


fig. 34. Bibliothek. The Counter-counter monument (author's photo).