

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: IN THE MINDS OF THE LIVING: THE
ADAPTIVE REUSE OF MONUMENTS AND
MEMORIALS

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Since 2015, the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces across the United States has caused the public to question the permanency of monuments generally and their role in perpetuating cultural heritage. Traditionally, Western-style commemorative monuments and memorials were intended to be immutable carriers of memory. In contrast, a historical study of monuments reveals that the public tacitly changes their symbolic meaning over time as collective memory changes. In this unstable commemorative landscape, the public assignment of heritage value to monuments can be contested, inverted, re-contextualized, forgotten or abandoned.

How should historic preservationists respond to these changes to ensure that monuments and memorials continue to serve the social needs of living people? This study draws from a body of research across several disciplines including historic preservation,

history, philosophy, literature, psychology, and others. This evidence will be used to argue for the adaptive reuse of memorials through a democratic and participatory process similar to what is outlined in the Burra Charter. The challenge for preservationists is to mediate the historical value of memorials with their contemporary cultural heritage values since adaptive reuse may require physical changes to the original artifact that are incompatible with its historical appearance. To allow for future changes in collective memory and cultural value systems, modifications to memorials ought to be reversible or temporary, in most cases. As a means of reconciling potential conflict between historical and present value systems, this study advances treatment options—mainly site-specific art installations—guided by philosopher Michel Foucault’s concept of the “heterotopia” or a space in which multiple conflicting or contradictory ideas can coexist. Among monument types, this research particularly focuses on “living memorials” or memorials that also serve as utilitarian buildings since these places pose the greatest opportunity for adaptive reuse.

Subject Headings:

Historic preservation, monuments, memorials, living memorials, commemoration, adaptive reuse, adaptive use, collective memory, heterotopia, recontextualization, Confederate monuments, Burra Charter, site-specific art installation, Michel Foucault

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THE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

Jackson Gilman-Forlini

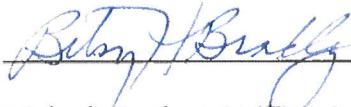
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PREFACE

On the night of May 13, 2017, a group of white supremacists amassed at the base of Memorial Gymnasium on the University of Virginia campus in Charlottesville, Virginia. Led by Richard Spencer, the group gathered to protest the Charlottesville town council's decision to remove a monument to Confederate General Robert E. Lee from a public park. The protestors planned to march through the city while carrying torches and chanting anti-Semitic slogans, before arriving at the statue of Lee. Unknown to anyone at the time, the events of that night would spark a string of protests over the next several months that would culminate in international media attention, violent protest, and homicide.

As the ralliers gathered in the field to light their torches, they probably did not take note of Memorial Gymnasium behind them. In some ways, this was a very different sort of memorial than the monument to Lee that the group had come to defend. Memorial Gymnasium was dedicated to the University of Virginia students who had died in World War I. There was no statue, nor pedestal, nor mounted figure. Except for a small plaque and a name, there was little to no signal of the gymnasium's commemorative purpose. In contrast to the flash point of the Confederate monuments in the following weeks, Memorial Gymnasium was soon left behind in quiet darkness.

Today, few realize that there is more in common between the Lee monument and Memorial Gymnasium than first meets the eye. Both were constructed in exactly the

same year—1924—with ribbon cuttings witnessed by the very same community of people. When the Charlottesville protests boiled over during the summer of 2017, most people failed to see that these events were bookended by two different, but connected, parts of the same commemorative landscape.

The May 13 rally served as the catalyst for a KKK rally on July 8, followed by the infamous Unite The Right Rally on August 12, when a collection of neo-Nazi protesters arrived in town to support the Lee monument. It was at this rally that protesters violently clashed with counter-protesters who had gathered to condemn racism, prejudice, and hatred. The violence culminated with the death of counter-protester Heather Heyer, and the injury of nineteen others, when neo-Nazi James Alex Fields, Jr. intentionally drove his car at high speed into a dense crowd of counter-protesters.

Over the weeks that followed, cities across the country more critically examined their own Confederate monuments in light of the events at Charlottesville. In Baltimore, where I live, Mayor Catherine Pugh formed a task force to determine how to proceed. I was a member of that task force in my capacity as a city employee. An independent commission had been formed in 2015 by the previous mayor to study this issue, and a process of public hearings had resulted in the recommendation by the commission that some of the monuments be relocated. However, by August 2017, no action had yet been taken. The events in Charlottesville lent urgency to the issue by showing us that these monuments were no longer obscure relics of a less enlightened time. They were, in fact, potent symbols of contemporary societal ills. Most important, they were now a matter of life and death.

Mayor Pugh and the task force took swift action. It was the opinion of our legal counsel that, in the aftermath of the Charlottesville protests, the monuments suddenly represented a very real danger to public health and safety. A credible threat had been received by a citizen group that had promised to forcibly tear down the monuments themselves. The potential for additional protests, and the potential for injury or death was very real. Using its police powers, the city quickly removed the monuments overnight and relocated them to an off-site facility. To date, no cemetery, museum, government agency, or private institution has accepted an offer of custody.

Dell Upton, architectural historian and one of the most thoughtful commentators on the subject of Confederate monuments, rightly points out that the current debate is not about monuments generally but about the kinds of values that we, as a society, want to promote.¹ He documents how Confederate monuments are not true relics of the Civil War but were erected decades later in an attempt to mythologize the “Lost Cause” and white supremacy. These monuments were instruments of racist political propaganda, and are untenable with contemporary democratic values.

As much as the Confederate monument debate is not really about monuments, this episode revealed some broader truths about these structures as a means of remembering the past. Upton insightfully informs us that monuments always say more about the values of the people who built them than they say about the people they commemorate.² From the ancient world to the present day, monuments were built out of a vain human quest for metaphorical immortality. Charlottesville has taught us that monuments still represent the

¹ Dell Upton, “Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?” in *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory*, ed. David Gobel and Daves Rossell (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press 2013).

² *Ibid.*

kind of potent symbolism that embodies common values—both good and bad; moral and amoral; popular and unpopular; perspicuous and ambiguous.

What this public controversy has also done is bring other monuments into the spotlight and caused many people to question their usefulness in society. In Chapter II, I rearticulate a question posed by journalism scholar Nicholas Lemann in *The New Yorker* magazine last year: “what to do with monuments whose history we’ve forgotten?”³ Lemann points to the obscure fate of our public commemorative landscape. While Confederate monuments are a flashpoint in the ongoing struggle to define our national culture, they are exceptional in that they excite public controversy. The vast majority of monuments are mostly forgotten relics, evoking the kind of fallen ego expressed by Percy Shelley in his poem *Ozymandias*. We pay these markers little mind as they silently guard our street medians and quiet corners of public parks.

Adding complexity to the commemorative landscape are the mid-20th century monuments, known as *living memorials* that, through modernist abstraction, took the form of functional civic buildings such as auditoriums and recreation centers, like Memorial Gymnasium. As symbols of collective memory, these too are now largely forgotten. On a 2015 visit to Memorial Gymnasium, I could not find a single student or staff person who knew why the gym was consecrated a memorial. This is typical of living memorials. We use them, sometimes daily, but have little connection to their commemorative elements. The juxtaposition of the Lee Monument and Memorial Gymnasium demonstrates the complexity—and at times polarity—of how our society

³ Nicholas Lemann, “What To Do With The Monuments Whose History We’ve Forgotten,” *The New Yorker*, November 26, 2017.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-to-do-with-monuments-whose-history-weve-forgotten>

tries to represent collective memory. These two memorials were built in the same place at the same time. Today, one attracts neo-Nazis while the other is obscure and forgotten.

In recent decades, the success of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial has ushered in a rebirth of commemoration in the form of outdoor spatial memorials such as the 9/11 Memorial (2011) in New York, or the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005) in Berlin. These memorials draw upon the historical models of the past and, in some ways, they mitigate the hegemonic symbolism of their ancient antecedents by providing space for the public to draw their own conclusions. However, commemorative structures inevitably lose the ability to connect us with the distant past. It is only through our direct meaningful experience with these places that we can discover their value. As profound as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is today, history teaches us that one day in the not too distant future, Lin's *magnum opus* will succumb to atrophy of relevance as generations pass and collective memory is forgotten.

This thesis aims to address forgotten monuments in practical terms where others have stopped short. Lemann's question in *The New Yorker* remains unsatisfactorily rhetorical. Upton likewise fails to adequately propose alternatives to the commemorative landscape. He has criticized monuments as "crude tools" by which to remember the past but he does not provide us with any compelling options to compensate for their inherent flaws.⁴ Should we just abandon them and let these places decay? My answer is no. The field of historic preservation, and its canon of literature, shows us that many vestiges of the past can serve new uses, enhancing our orientation in geographic and temporal space.

⁴ Dell Upton, "What Can and Can't Be Said: Commemorating African-American History in the Shadow of the Confederacy." Lecture presented at Goucher College, March 6, 2018.

While Confederate monuments are best removed for reasons discussed in the following pages, there are many thousands of other monuments waiting to be made socially useful.

Artists, architects, and preservationists are currently exploring new methods to mediate old forms with new values, to be explored in Chapter IV. These interventions help to not only provide us with a means to preserve these places but also a reason why. It is a false assumption to think that monuments are exempt from change. The successful preservation of these artifacts may require new symbolic and practical uses completely unlike the originals. This is precisely what we must do with our old monuments and memorials: we must reinvent and repurpose them to fit within our own time in a thoughtful and logical way. It is far more realistic—and indeed humanistic—to change old monuments so that they suit contemporary people than it is to refashion contemporary people to suit the expectations of long dead monument builders.

This work is dedicated to the memory of

James D. Dilts

Public Historian, Preservationist, and Friend

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

See! men of marble piecemeal melt away;
When whose the image we no longer read,
But monuments themselves memorials need.

-George Crabbe, "The Borough" (1810)

Snow is falling
on the age of reason, on Tom Jefferson's
little hill & on the age of sensibility.

...

Outside this monument, the snow
catches, star shaped,
in the vaginal leaves of old magnolias.

-Robert Hass, "Monticello" (2016)

The construction of commemorative monuments is an ancient tradition that continues to shape a ubiquitous part of the present-day built environment. The precise etymological meaning of the word "commemorate" is "to relate together in all minds."⁵ At their most fundamental level, commemorative monuments are tools to recall and preserve collective memory by attempting to reinforce commonality between the minds of all people. It is for this reason that most commemorative monuments are constructed in public places where they are easily viewed and experienced by the public. In the Western tradition, these structures are built to be permanent and immutable in terms of both symbolic meaning and physical form so as to perpetuate collective memory regardless of

⁵ The word "commemorate" is derived from the Latin prefix *com-* meaning 'altogether' and the verb *memorare*, meaning 'to relate,' which is derived from the root *memor* or 'mindful'. "Monument" is derived from the Latin verb *monere*, meaning "to remind."

present circumstances. Monument builders use architectural and artistic symbolism with the intention of preserving the memory of past people and events. Beginning in the late 19th century, and throughout the 20th century, monument design evolved into the modern “memorial,” a spatially complex monument type, appearing in a variety of architectural designs and landscapes, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.

At both the individual and collective levels, memory is neither permanent nor objective.⁶ Although intended to foster common memories between all people, monument efficacy has historically declined when the collective memory of the public has not aligned with the version of memory presented by the monument. In the modern period, collective memory has evolved so that it is formed more by the direct experience of the individual than by standardized received information.⁷ For these reasons, consensus between all people is never complete and true commemoration in its strictest sense is unachievable. The failure of monuments to achieve their intended aims is substantiated by how the public has historically changed assignments of symbolic meaning through their actions and experiences. Monuments fall to obscurity as members of the public lose direct connection to past people and events and thus lose connection with the original intended symbolism. In this unstable commemorative landscape, the public assignment of value to monuments can be contested, inverted, re-contextualized, forgotten or abandoned.

⁶ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 193-210.

⁷ Nicholas Russell, “Collective memory before and after Halbwachs.” *The French Review* 79(4), 2006.

The concept of true permanence, whether it is physical or ideological, is a fallacy. As the ancient Roman poet Juvenal remarked, “even sepulchres have their doom assigned to them” (*Quandoquidem data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulcris*).⁸ Monuments make pretensions of permanency, but the psychological characteristics of human collective memory are ephemeral.⁹ When its original commemorative value is lost, the physical durability of a monument falters as they are abandoned, left to decay, or destroyed.¹⁰ Examining monuments through the lens of historic preservation theory must begin with the understanding that they are susceptible to literal and figurative decline and that preserving their purpose is impossible without the consent of a plurality of living people. Instead of seeing monuments as inherently valuable historical artifacts, the true value for monuments is measured by how well they serve the intellectual and psychological needs of the public in the present moment. To fill these needs, monuments might need to assume new symbolic uses and receive physical changes to facilitate new uses. Changing the symbolic meaning of a monument to justify its continued existence is very similar to the historic preservation treatment of adaptive reuse. If the original use of a building or monument ceases to be relevant to the public, then its historical value alone may not be sufficient justification to preserve it without changing its use.

⁸ Juvenal, Satire 10, Line 146

⁹ Henry L. Roediger, III and K. Andrew DeSoto, “Forgetting the Presidents,” *Science* 346, no. 6213 (Nov 2014): 1106-1109; Henry L. Roediger, III and K. Andrew DeSoto, “Recognizing the Presidents: Was Alexander Hamilton President?,” *Psychological Science* 27 no. 5 (2016): 644-650.

¹⁰ Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Keith Eggener, “The Demolition and Afterlife of Baltimore Memorial Stadium,” *Places Journal*, October 2012. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-demolition-and-afterlife-of-baltimore-memorial-stadium/>.

To what extent is it possible to apply the practice of adaptive reuse to monuments so as to ensure they continue to serve the social needs of living people? This study will draw from a body of literature in historic preservation and other disciplines to argue for the adaptive reuse of historic monuments and memorials through a democratic and participatory process. In so doing, the challenge for preservationists is to mediate the historical value of memorials with their contemporary cultural values since adaptive reuse may require physical changes to the original artifact that are incompatible with its historical appearance. The new symbolic use of the memorial must take priority over historical uses and appearances. However, historical value should still be equitably balanced with newer value systems when possible so as to respect the rights of those individuals who may continue to attribute intrinsic value to the artifact. As a means of reconciling potential conflict between historical and present values, this study advances treatment options—mainly site-specific art installations—guided by philosopher Michel Foucault’s concept of the “heterotopia” or spaces in which multiple conflicting or contradictory ideas can coexist.

Definitions and Scope of Research

The scope of this research will be international but not universal. While commemorative structures exist throughout the world and across many different cultures, this study will be limited to Western-style monuments and memorials, especially those in the United States, Australia, and Europe. The terms “monument” and “memorial” will both be used to describe two distinct but closely related definitions. “Monument” is a broader term encompassing any intentional structure built for the purpose of symbolically

representing or commemorating collective memory. In places where the term “monument” is used alone, it is intended to encompass both traditional monuments and memorials. “Memorial” will be used more precisely to refer to a spatial monument type that developed beginning in the late 19th century. In contrast to the spatial memorials of the modern era, most pre-modern monuments took traditional monolithic forms such as statues, columns, arches, and obelisks. From the ancient to early modern periods, these structures were designed as physical monoliths because collective memory existed in a permanent and monolithic sense to immortalize past heroic people and deeds. These structures derive meaning from the semiotics of their form and from the content of their inscriptions. Traditional monuments should also be understood as assertions of power within the public sphere, either by individuals or special groups. These designs were intended to encourage the collective memory of groups within their respective communities, while also asserting the values of the people who built them, often without democratic consent.¹¹

Over the past two hundred years, the shift from traditional monument to memorial has reflected changes in the nature of collective memory. During the modern era, memorials began to prioritize the identity and personal experiences of the group forming that memory.¹² While certain types of commemorative collective actions take place at traditional monuments, these structures are more experientially static in that they are not

¹¹ Dell Upton, “Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?” in *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory*, ed. David Gobel and Daves Russell (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press 2013).

¹² Nicholas Russell, “Collective memory before and after Halbwachs.” *The French Review* 79(4), 2006.

spatially occupiable and are intended to be viewed as an object from afar.¹³ Although memory exists independently from its own physical reminders, memorial design has evolved over the past two hundred years to allow groups—and individuals—to understand commemorative memories through personal experience. Even though the terms monument and memorial are often used interchangeably, this difference in collective memory and spatial design tends to differentiate the two definitions in most cases.

This study will particularly emphasize memorials that are also complete buildings. Their facilities afford the greatest opportunity for repurposing because they provide space that can be easily occupied and used by the public for a variety of activities. These buildings, known as *living memorials* are defined by three main characteristics. First, they create a space that can be occupied and used by the public. Second, they display monumental architectural details that distinguish the building as having a commemorative purpose. Finally, and most importantly, living memorials provide facilities for functions other than commemoration. Most popular in the United States from 1920 to 1980, living memorials often took the form of auditoriums, recreational facilities, stadiums, libraries, theaters, and other types of civic buildings. Prominent examples include the former Soldier Field in Chicago or War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco. Today, there are hundreds of these buildings across the US, and many thousands more worldwide.¹⁴

¹³ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 181.

¹⁴ Andrew Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II.” *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 132.

In a sense, the grandeur and monumentality of living memorials mnemonically functions in a traditional way. Although monumental in form, living memorials also embody the modernist concept of providing architectural space to pass through, rather than to observe.¹⁵ As such, living memorials attempt to capture collective memory while simultaneously shaping it through collective action. As civic spaces, living memorials play a role in shaping personal and communal identities while providing ontological security to those individuals that use them.¹⁶ By creating public facilities explicitly for community building, living memorials hybridize multiple forms of commemoration and collective memory—working at the traditional and modern levels. For these reasons, living memorials are ideal for exploring how to understand and preserve monuments and memorials generally.

This study will be most concerned with what do with monuments and memorials once their original meaning has faded or been forgotten. In some instances, the associated ideas behind monuments become untenable and the monument is removed or destroyed. Since 2015, the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces across the United States has caused the public to question the permanency of monuments generally and their role in perpetuating cultural heritage.¹⁷ In addition to iconoclasm, memorials more commonly suffer from a gradual atrophy of meaning and demolition by neglect. While some memorials are preserved because their original meaning is maintained or extended,

¹⁵ Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) 14.

¹⁶ Jane Grenville, “Conservation as Psychology: Ontological Security and the Built Environment,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Volume 13, Issue 6. 2007.

¹⁷ Dell Upton, “Confederate Monuments and Civic Values in the Wake of Charlottesville”, Society of Architectural Historians Blog. September 13, 2017.

the original meaning alone may not be sufficient to justify the memorials continued existence.¹⁸ For buildings dedicated as memorials, the sustainability of the memorial is especially precarious as the practicality of the facility changes independently of its commemorative components. When this happens, memorial managers should acknowledge and accommodate new symbolic meanings based on how the public has come to understand the memorial. While changing the meaning of a memorial might seem antithetical to its purpose, preservationists must find ways of keeping their meanings relevant to contemporary people because collective memory is not inherent to monument material. This study will consider how collective memory exists in the minds of people as an external cultural value system, rather than something that exists intrinsically to memorials. For this reason, the prevailing American justification for preserving artifacts for their intrinsic historical value is insufficient when applied to monuments and memorials.

Preservation of Monuments and Memorials

Following an examination of collective memory and monuments as a physical outgrowth of memory, this study will show how the temporary nature of monuments undermines the normal justification for preservation. By probing the canon of foundational historic preservation literature, it will be shown that early preservation philosophers defined historic preservation in monumental terms. While 20th century American preservation policy has de-emphasized the eligibility of monuments as historic artifacts, the underlying idea of “monumentality,” or inherent permanence, has propelled

¹⁸ Quentin Stevens and Karen Franck, *Memorials As Spaces of Engagement: Design, Use, and Meaning* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015)

much of the overriding justification for this policy. This study will dispute the common preservation assumption that an authentic artifact is inherently valuable because of its ability to use the past to teach people about themselves. This is evidenced by the fact that monumentality is actually temporary, thus expanding the definition of what changes are allowable to a historic place.

When viewed within the context of historic preservation literature, the symbolic meaning of monuments is closely related to the preservation concept of “significance.” In orthodox preservation thinking, the historical significance of a resource often justifies its preservation. In current practice, the assignment of significance is treated as inherent to the physical artifact, and therefore permanent. In current practice, significance is defined by select historians through archival research rather than through consultation with the public. Assigning a permanent significance to monuments by this method creates an apparent conflict since collective memory, and by extension monument meaning, is both temporary and defined by the collective body. This research will attempt to reconcile these conflicts by building on recent scholarship that challenges the conventional concept of significance.

Instead of declaring significance as inherent, recent scholarship advocates for an acknowledgement of significance as created and assigned, and therefore always in flux. Borrowing from the study of cultural landscapes, preservation scholar Randall Mason advocates for a “values-centered theory” of preservation in which the multiple, often conflicting value systems found at historic sites are jointly acknowledged and mediated.¹⁹

¹⁹Randall Mason, “Management for Cultural Landscape Preservation,” *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) 184.

A process for implementing this theory is outlined in the Burra Charter (1979), a set of principles and guidelines maintained by the Australia Chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).²⁰ Applied to the preservation of commemorative monuments, this theory allows for flexibility in understanding of how the public redefines symbolic meaning over time. In practice, values-centered theory presents challenges for historic site operators because of the potential for competition between incompatible values. As with historic sites generally, value primacy at memorials should be guided by a transparent and participatory process by which the prevailing collective memory of the majority of contemporary people is given priority. In contrast to documentary or archival research, a values-centered theory heavily relies on guidance from public consultation to understand why and how value is or is not assigned to a particular place. To properly understand the value of a memorial, the public must be consulted because memorials presume to represent and speak for the public.

To accommodate contemporary public need, this study recommends treatment options akin to adaptive reuse, a widely accepted preservation model to ensure the ongoing usefulness of historic resources. The principles of adaptive reuse are not widely applied to monuments and memorials because it is incorrectly assumed that their symbolic uses are permanent. Moreover, it is assumed that monuments and memorials can only have one meaning because their symbolism has historically been hegemonic. In this view, to change meaning is to erase the past. However, an examination of collective memory will demonstrate that memory and its physical signifiers are both temporary and nonexclusive. Therefore, as markers of collective memory, it is possible to repurpose

²⁰ The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, As Amended 2013. <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

monuments and memorials so that they allow for an evolving multiplicity of public value-systems and symbolic meanings.

In order to develop guidelines for how to repurpose monuments and memorials, this research will examine these issues through a postmodern lens. It will apply philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of the "heterotopia" to memorials in order to explain how multiple conflicting meanings can coexist in a single space, including potential conflicts between historical values and contemporary cultural values. Using the heterotopia as an entry-point, this study will develop specific treatment recommendations for the adaptive reuse of monuments and memorials. These treatment recommendations will center around programmatic and physical interventions that acknowledge new and different value systems without completely removing old ones. By layering new symbolic meaning over old, preservationists can ensure the continued usefulness of memorials by accommodating various types of collective memory. Although physical modifications might be necessary to accomplish this task, subtractive or non-reversible interventions will be discouraged. This is not to say that all monuments and memorials are deserving of physical preservation. Specific instances will be presented to show how monuments with symbolic value that is wholly incompatible with prevailing contemporary values are less suitable for adaptive reuse.

Within conventional American historic preservation practice, it is generally desirable to protect the physical integrity of historic resources, including monuments and memorials. The *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation* advocate for the retention of "character-defining features," so as to recognize properties as a "physical

record of their time, place, and use.”²¹ The reason for retaining a physical record of the past is to support the version of significance assigned to the object by historians. However, this philosophy assumes that original assignments of significance are *prima facie* justification for the preservation of these features. This philosophy fails to adequately consider scenarios in which monuments might not represent an accurate view of the past. It also does not address what happens if historical appearance is incompatible with contemporary values. Since the public changes collective memory and cultural heritage values, adaptive reuse might require the alteration or removal of character-defining features, as they are commonly defined. Nevertheless, the original significance of a memorial will remain relevant to an increasingly small, but still present, number of people. Therefore, modifications that reconcile character-defining features with newer value-systems should be considered so as not to inordinately infringe on the rights of the minority. If feasible, various value systems should each be allowed to coexist in an accessible state for those who seek them, so long as one does not disproportionately infringe on the existence of the other.

Historian and geographer David Lowenthal explains that “because artifacts are at once past and present, their historical and modern roles interact...The tangible past is in continual flux, altering, ageing, renewing, and always interacting with the present.”²² However, in our current preservation practice, historic artifacts are rarely sources of inspiration for how we might creatively reshape their form and function in the present. In order to return forgotten monuments and memorials back to productive use, the symbolic

²¹ “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Preservation,” National Park Service website, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-preservation.htm>

²² Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 248.

artistry of the original must be updated as part of the adaptive reuse process. Since the original symbolism of most monuments was created through artistry of some kind, symbolic adaptation benefits from the creative re-envisioning of these places by contemporary artists. In order to illustrate how this process might work in practice, this study will draw upon several contemporary artists whose work enhances, challenges, inverts, and re-contextualizes existing monuments and memorials. These examples are intended to provide a glimpse into what effective practices are available for repurposing memorials in such a way that ensures their continued relevance and public usefulness.

Analytical Framework, Scope, and Exclusions

This study will rely on an inductive philosophical argument to examine if it is possible to preserve the usefulness of memorials through the repurposing of their symbolic meaning. Although this study will be presented as a philosophical argument, the nature of historic preservation is that it is an applied field that draws from real-world scenarios. Therefore, the logical premise presented at each stage in the argument will be further substantiated by the in-depth analysis of a select group of case studies. The strength of each logical premise will be determined both by the logic of the preceding premise, and by the observable nature of the case studies.

Although this argument will be inductive, it is hoped that the evidence provided will support a cogent roadmap for both future study and application in real-world scenarios by other preservationists. The ultimate goal of this study is to arrive at a philosophy of treatment that is logical and effective at preserving monuments and memorials as markers of external public values. These treatment options will focus on

physical and programmatic changes to modify the symbolic meaning of these places to justify their preservation. This research will not go into the physical conservation of monument materials, such as stone and metal. Scholarship in materials conservation already exists extensively in other places.²³ This body of material science research presupposes that there exists a *de jure* reason to preserve monuments. This canon fails to adequately consider what circumstances might justify the expense and effort of their maintenance. The preservation treatments to be considered in this study will attempt to address the social, political, and psychological reasons why monuments and memorials are left to decay. Also excluded from this study will be an examination of so-called “temporary memorials,” or the spontaneous public accumulation of mementos following a cataclysmic event, such as September 11 or the death of Princess Diana. An extensive study of these memorials has already been conducted by art historian Erika Doss.²⁴ Unlike monuments or monumental memorials, these temporary memorials are assembled without the expectation that they last forever. Therefore, they are largely exempt from the field of historic preservation as it is usually defined.

The time period examined will span classical antiquity (when most monument forms were developed) up through the postmodern era, defined as 1973 to the present. Some historic preservation concepts will be drawn from other nations—particularly

²³ See, for example: *Preserving and Restoring Monuments and Historic Buildings*. Museums and Monuments, 14 (Paris: UNESCO, 1972); National Research Council (U.S.). Committee on Conservation of Historic Stone Buildings and Monuments. *Report of the Committee on Conservation of Historic Stone Buildings and Monuments* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1982).

²⁴ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Erika Doss, “The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials : Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials,” *Meertens Ethnology Cahier* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

Australia—to illustrate alternative approaches to monument preservation. While this research will focus on Western-style memorials, it is important to note that physical reminders of memory are not limited to those stemming from the European tradition and monuments can be found throughout the world in various cultures.

The Empty Pedestal

Monuments and memorials need not become obscure references to forgotten people and events. These places can fill vital present needs for living people, even if these purposes are divergent from what was originally intended. Collective memory is an important facet of the human condition and old monuments can continue to provide outward expression of that memory. Change is inevitable, however, and that which we value in the moment is predicated by our lived experience. Historical commemorative use is frequently incompatible with present cultural value and no amount of stone or metal can guarantee that future people will hold any particular idea important enough for permanent preservation. As the narrator in Percy Shelley's poem *Ozymandias* observes, monuments built out of the vain human quest for metaphorical immortality will be reduced to dust given enough time. Upon encountering two ruined legs of stone, his traveler ironically notes:

And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.²⁵

²⁵ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, ed. Bruce Woodcock (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Poetry Library, 1994) 194.

Shelley's empty pedestal set in a vast expanse of nothingness is a powerful reminder that commemorative permanence is actually temporary. The memories communicated by monuments are mortal so long as humans are mortal. In the current commemorative landscape, preservationists should accept that collective memory changes, and repurpose resources to suit current need. To do otherwise is to doom them to irrelevance and to squander valuable public resources for intellectual stimulation and creative inspiration.

CHAPTER II

MEMORY AND MONUMENTS

Chapter Overview

It is commonly believed that monuments enshrine an idea important enough to be always remembered. Ostensibly then, monuments and memorials are built to permanently preserve memory. A closer look reveals that this is a specious understanding: despite the intent of their builders, monuments are frequently impermanent and are often built for social or political reasons other than merely promoting collective memory. The role that monuments play in society is bound to how memory shapes group identity. The negotiation of collective memory in public space is fraught with complexity and draws into question how memory is formed and forgotten by groups of people. In order to explain these complexities, this chapter will explore how the formation, recollection, and editing of memory is fundamental to an understanding of how monuments and memorials work.

Following an examination of memory, this chapter will also consider monument and memorial design as a changing representation of collective memory over time. Using an understanding of how monuments work, this chapter will then pivot to examine how monuments fail to truly promote memory in a permanent sense. Permanency of symbolic meaning is undermined when monuments assume problematic roles in society, their contexts change, or their significance is contested. The issue of forgotten memory will be

probed, and it will be shown how the meaning of monuments is not permanent because human memory is not permanent. Finally, Michel Foucault's postmodern philosophical idea of the "heterotopia" will be applied to memorials as one possible way of understanding monuments to reconcile symbolic conflict between multiple ideas that coexist within individual memorials.

Memory and Identity

Psychological research into the nature of memory has revealed three basic types of long-term memory: procedural, episodic, and semantic. These types work together, often simultaneously, but function very differently. Procedural memory is often referred to as "muscle memory" because it is shaped by the mechanical repetition of a particular skill. The ability to ride a bicycle is derived from procedural memory. Episodic memory is shaped by our individual and personal past experiences. The memory of a beautiful spring day, a walk on the beach, or the death of a parent is recorded in our minds as episodic memory. It is closely tied to *feeling*, is highly personal, and non-transferrable to other people. Finally, semantic memory is the memory of received information. It is the storage of abstract facts, dates, and patterns from a secondary source. Historical information, phone numbers, and laws are all received from sources other than our own experience and are therefore known to the individual through semantic memory.²⁶

These three types of memory coexist in our minds and, together, form the foundation of our present selves by confirming that we have had a past. As a fundamental human tool for knowing the past, memory has long been understood as a means by which

²⁶ Nicolas Russell, "Collective memory before and after Halbwachs." *The French Review* 79(4). 2006. 798.

we construct a present identity and a sense of self. The 14th century Italian poet Petrarch expressed this essential role of memory in *Canzoniere* 23:

If memory is no help to me now,
As once it was, let pain be my excuse
And that thought which alone inflicts such anguish,
It makes me turn my back on any other
And forces me to lose all sense of self-
It owns what's in me, I merely the shell.²⁷

Without memory of the past the speaker in the poem is cast adrift, losing “all sense of self” and without sufficient grounding to resist the pains of the present. Petrarch’s understanding of memory observes a characteristic human condition. Without memory, we are without the foundation to perceive changes in ourselves, and thus form an identity in the present.

The need to shape our present selves through the lens of the past means that, far from a stable entity, memory is inherently fluid and impermanent. As individuals, we reorganize and reconstruct memory in our minds. We are always editing, resequencing, and forgetting strategically in order to shape versions of the past that are most advantageous to our present selves, creating order out of chaos. In the words of historian David Lowenthal, “the prime function of memory...is not to preserve the past but to adapt it so as to enrich and manipulate the present.”²⁸ Memory is often unreliable enough that the individual needs assistance. One way in which individuals strengthen memory is through the exchange of memories with other individuals. The memories of others

²⁷ Francesco Petrarca, *The Canzoniere*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999) 27.

²⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Past is Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 210.

corroborate what we think we already know and give our own memory longevity.²⁹ This process of exchange creates what philosopher Maurice Halbwachs termed “collective memory,” or the joint representation of the past by a group of people. These groups can be small, such as a nuclear family, or can be large, such as a nation. The shared, collective memory of the group lessens the burden on the individual to maintain her own memories and sense of self. Likewise, the individual’s memory is inseparable from the identity and memory of the group. Working in both directions, collective memory both shapes, and is shaped by, the individual.³⁰ Just as with individual memory, collective memory is created by the group in order to serve the needs of the present. Leaders of a group construct and arrange collective memory in ways that are advantageous to present conditions.³¹

Collective memory encompasses both episodic memory and semantic memory—although not in equal proportion, depending on the time, place and circumstances of the group. Literary scholar Nicolas Russell has shown that, historically, the nature of collective memory changed in the modern period to prioritize episodic memory over semantic memory. From the ancient to early modern periods, collective memory existed in a permanent sense to immortalize past heroic people and deeds. The ancient Greeks especially equated memory with immortality. In their view, even though the physical body would die, a person could conceivably live forever through the perpetuation of their name and deeds in the minds of the living. Yet it was a privileged few who were

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 193-210;

³¹ Maurice Halbwachs, “Space and the Collective Memory,” *On Collective Memory*, [1952] (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 128-158.

immortalized this way. For most people, who were not inscribed in the annals of collective memory, death was equivalent to a forgotten past.³² The select group of heroes whose deeds were enshrined in immortal memory existed outside the conditions of everyday life. Living people received memory of the immortal dead through fixed means: poetry, books, or physical artifacts like monuments. As received information, this kind of collective memory was predominantly recalled as semantic memory.³³

During the modern era, this ancient concept of collective memory shifted to prioritize the identity and personal experiences of the group—and group members—who formed that memory.³⁴ No longer a canonical and exclusive account of heroic deeds, collective memory changed from an emphasis of semantic memory to a subjective system of episodic memory. In this shift, the common person's experiences and memories were gradually made equal to those of broader events, people, and movements. This phenomenon has been studied and measured by psychologists. In one empirical research study from 2009, a team of psychologists led by Norman R. Brown examined the relationship between historically significant events and the formation of autobiographical memory.³⁵ The researchers asked participants in eight different countries to randomly select long-term personal memories and then asked for the participants to date those memories while articulating aloud how they arrived at that date. In some cases, participants recalled dates based on how they fit into periods of their life bookended by "landmark events" such as war, extreme weather, marriage, sporting events, and personal

³² Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 197.

³³ Russell, "Collective Memory," 793.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 799-800.

³⁵ Norman R. Brown, et. al., "Living in History: How War, Terrorism, and Natural Disaster Affect the Organization of Autobiographical Memory," *Psychological Science* 20 (4). 2009. 399-405.

trauma. While some participants relied on landmark events with broad historical impact, the researchers found that “it is personal significance, not historical importance, that determines whether public events play a role in autobiographical memory.”³⁶ For example, participants from New York City who lived through the September 11 terrorist attacks rarely recalled this episode as a landmark event when forming periods of memory. Although historically and geopolitically significant, September 11 did not fundamentally alter the day-to-day lifestyle of most New Yorkers, and was therefore not central to shaping broader memory structures. Instead, participants from New York relied on more personal events, such as college graduations, in forming memory patterns.

Conversely, Bosnian participants heavily relied on recalling the Bosnian civil war (1992-1995) because it traumatically upset their personal lives in a more direct way. Although there are other possible explanations for these data, the researchers theorized that only those historical events that radically change the way people live “play a central role in defining, altering, and augmenting group identity as it unfolds over time.”³⁷ In other words, within groups, the mnemonic importance of a jointly experienced event is not predicated on any objective assignment of historical importance but rather on the episodic memory and personal decisions of the people in that group. The case of September 11 above shows how a historian’s assignment of importance to an event might not align with the level of importance assigned to that same event by the collective memory of the public.

The highly personal nature of memory and group identity in the modern period has had an impact on the construction of memorials, and how the public interacts with

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

those memorials. Changes in the nature of collective memory as a function of group identity and episodic memory have influenced the physical form and psychological mechanics of how humans recall and recognize memory. As one means by which we receive semantic memory, monuments and memorials play a role in the recording, transmission, and creation of memory through visual symbolism.

Monuments as Materialized Collective Memory

The importance of memory, in its various forms, is evidenced by the extent to which humans go to preserve it. Collectivizing memory is one way to counteract its ephemeral nature, but the sharing of memory between individuals requires additional means and methods. These methods include oral tradition, written word, ceremonial ritual, or visual representation, either through art or architecture. For many centuries, books have been the most obvious means of transmitting semantic memory. However, there are limitations to books in that they often fail to reach broad audiences and require a certain level of voluntary commitment on the part of the reader. Historically, societies have found other ways of communicating semantic memory that could reach larger groups of people faster. For example, William Shakespeare's histories were a way of preserving and transmitting the semantic memory of important historical figures among the people of Tudor England, many of whom were illiterate and could not learn about their nation's past through books or other written sources.

Shakespeare alludes to the collective memory system of his historical characters in *Henry VI, Part 1*. At the end of Act IV, Scene 3, the character Sir William Lucy invokes the name of his recently deceased king, referring to him as "our scarce-cold

conqueror, that ever-living man of memory, Henry the Fifth.”³⁸ This line reveals how Shakespeare and his contemporaries recognized the Classical equivalency between memory and immortality. Although dead, Henry is still “ever-living” through the collective memory of those who succeed him. Just as Henry V is preserved through memory within the context of the play, Shakespeare is also suggesting to his audience that the historical characters he depicts are likewise immortal if the audience leaves the theater remembering their names and deeds. Henry V died in 1422, one hundred and seventy years before Shakespeare wrote *Henry VI, Part 1*. No one in Shakespeare’s audience would have had direct episodic memory of Henry V. Therefore, the play transfers semantic memory, keeping alive the classical tradition of his heroic immortality through received memory. The play itself, like all of Shakespeare’s histories, is a kind of theatrical monument, promoting the semantic memory of historical figures and perpetuating their figurative immortality.

Shakespeare’s histories attempt to preserve collective memory through theatrical drama, similar to how monuments attempt to preserve memory through visual symbolism. In the absence of textual evidence or a literate society, intentional monuments and commemorative structures have provided an architectural and visual means by which humans remember the past. In 1903, the Austrian art historian Alois Reigl wrote that “a monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a

³⁸ William Shakespeare, “1 Henry VI,” in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, et. al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 2016) 471.

combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations.”³⁹ Compared to literary or theatrical monuments, like Shakespeare’s histories, architectural monuments are reminders of the past that are material objects constructed in physical space.

The design of traditional Western-style monuments such as statues, obelisks, triumphal arches, and columns is a reflection of the nature of collective memory during the ancient to early modern periods. Since collective memory existed as semantic memory and was perceived as a single received set of indisputable facts, the physical expression of that memory took the shape of monoliths. Traditional monuments are monolithic in both form and symbolic meaning. They are intended to be observed from afar and are built in heavy and enduring materials such as stone and metal. Their semiotics are equally monolithic in that they do not allow for any ambiguity of meaning. The importance of the people and events they commemorate is presented as immortal, heroic, and irrefutable.

The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius (c. 175 C.E.) in Rome typifies monument design from antiquity to modern times. It is the only surviving ancient bronze statue of a Roman emperor and an influential antecedent for later monuments. The statue is gilded with gold leaf and elevated on a plinth, symbolizing the power and elevated status of its subject. In addition, the figure of Marcus Aurelius is larger than human scale and also cast in a slightly larger scale than the horse on which he sits. Although subtle, this mixing of scale is intended to aggrandize the subject as larger than life, not only in

³⁹ Aloïs Riegl, *Moderne Denkmalkultur : sein Wesen und seine Entstehung*, (Wien: K. K. Zentral-Kommission für Kunst- und Historische Denkmale : Braumüller, 1903). Translation first published as Aloïs Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, in *Oppositions*, n. 25 (Fall 1982), 21-51.



Figure 1: The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius (c. 175 C.E.) typifies monument design from classical antiquity to the modern period. The figure's heroism is intended to be symbolically absolute, hegemonic, and uncontested. [Photograph by Rosco, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.5, 2006]

contrast to the viewers below but also to the rest of the statue itself. It is clear that the monument encouraged viewers to remember Marcus Aurelius as superior and perpetually powerful. At least initially, the monument also prompted viewers to recall semantic memories about the achievements of his administration. As a rare survivor from antiquity, the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius influenced artists and thinkers during the Renaissance, especially Michelangelo, thereby helping to create an archetypal design for equestrian mounted monuments.⁴⁰

Monolithic commemoration not only reminded viewers of past heroism, but also functioned at the collective level, granting symbolic cohesion to groups of people. The 19th century French sociologist Émile Durkheim was among the first to study the relationship between commemoration and collective consciousness. In 1915, he wrote that commemorative symbols allowed a group to “renew the sentiment which it has of itself and of its unity; at the same time, individuals are strengthened in their social natures.”⁴¹ The physical manifestations of this commemorative symbolism (i.e. monuments) are “glorious souvenirs” that give group members “a feeling of strength and confidence.” Durkheim explained that group unity results from commemoration because “a man is surer of his faith when he sees to how distant a past it goes back and what great things it has inspired.”⁴² In this view, the monolithic symbolism of a monument is intended to survive from one century to the next, unwavering in its self-proclaimed

⁴⁰ Jeffrey A. Becker, “*Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius*,” in *Smarthistory*, August 8, 2015, <https://smarthistory.org/equestrian-sculpture-of-marcus-aurelius/>.

⁴¹ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 2012) 376.

⁴² *Ibid.*

grandeur, because doing so strengthens the unity of the group's collective consciousness and is a comfort to individuals who belong to that group.⁴³

Although monuments like the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius persisted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, modern changes in collective memory wrought gradual changes in monument design. As episodic memory took priority over semantic memory, the monument as it was historically understood lost its ability to effectively promote an understanding of collective memory. By 1937, architectural critic Lewis Mumford declared the monument dead and attacked the "cult of immortality" that surrounded monument construction. Mumford advocated to "[r]enew...buildings frequently and re-carve their stone."⁴⁴ In his view, memory was driven not by representations of past people but by physical space and the actions that transpired in that space.

Mumford understood collective memory in the modern sense, as further described by philosopher Maurice Halbwachs. In his 1950 book, *The Collective Memory*, Halbwachs redefined our understanding of the relationship between memory, group identity, and space. In explaining the relationship between space and memory, Halbwachs writes that "every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework...it is to space—the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination—that we must turn our attention."⁴⁵ In Halbwachs' view, the memory of the group is formed through the movement and experience of its members,

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Lewis Mumford, "The Death of the Monument," *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937) 263-270.

⁴⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, "Space and the Collective Memory," *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 128-158.

rather than received by some other authority. The space in which this movement occurs has an impact on how memory is formed, reformed, edited, and preserved.

This fascination with space, particularly its relationship to architectural design, was typical of the modern era. In his book *Monument Wars*, architectural historian Kirk Savage describes the rhetorical shift from “public grounds” to “public space” when describing changes made to the National Mall at the end of the 19th century. In Savage’s view, the “ground” was historically measurable, tactile, and familiar; the notion of “space” was abstract and even fearsome. Before the modern period, space represented that which could be perceived but remained mysteriously unseen, and was therefore the exclusive domain of the supernatural. By the late 19th century, architects, urban planners, and landscapers began to conquer space by manipulating and controlling it. Savage writes that, during this period:

Space is disenchanted, taken away from the gods and made subject to modern systems of control and design. Yet it still manages to retain its ancient aura of transcendence. It acquires a new kind of agency, becoming invested with psychological purpose and power. Space envelops the body, lifts it, and *moves* it -- toward exaltation or tension or even trauma.⁴⁶

Around this time, the philosophical shift in how space was perceived and harnessed extended to monument design. Compared to the elevated placement of the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, Auguste Rodin’s 1889 monument *The Burghers of Calais* was designed by the artist to be at eye level so that visitors could walk among the figures and experience them more intimately.⁴⁷ By the end of the 19th century, monuments gradually

⁴⁶ Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2009) 14.

⁴⁷ Quentin Stevens and Karen A. Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement: Design, Use, and Meaning* (New York: Routledge 2016) 19-20.

added occupiable spatial features, such as the *exedra*, or a semi-circular recessed bench, borrowed from classical architecture.

Throughout the 20th century, the desire to create occupiable space was one reason why designers partially abandoned monuments in favor of commemorative buildings, landscapes, and plazas. Since episodic memory cannot be transferred from one individual to the next, these new designs allowed each individual the freedom of movement to experience their own memories while building new ones in a group context. This is particularly true of living memorials, or functional civic buildings dedicated as commemorative places. These memorials were most popular in the U.S. from 1920 to 1980 and attempted to transmit semantic memory to visitors while participating in activities that upheld ideals consistent with the enshrined events. Visitors' actions in these spaces were recorded as episodic memory within the context of the historical facts projected around them, thus attempting to psychologically link semantic with episodic memory. This abstraction of space for the purpose of at once generating and protecting collective memory signaled the adaptation of the *monument* into the *memorial*.⁴⁸ The memorial—a new physical representation of memory—changed what was previously a single point in space into a directional vector.

As a vector, the memorial became a spatially complex type that prioritized episodic over semantic memory. Rather than presenting a single narrative as fact, the memorial encouraged visitors build their own memory through the experience of visitation. In this context, the act of visitation becomes an additive process, layering the individual's episodic memory to the ongoing formation of broader historical narratives.

⁴⁸ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 12-18.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) in Washington D.C. is the preeminent example of this shift in memorial design. Since the Vietnam War was an event in American history that was morally questioned and politically controversial, Maya Lin's design for the VVM was built to accommodate multiple conflicting interpretations of the past. Sociologists Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz have shown how "the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and devices like it come into view not as symbols of solidarity but as structures that render more explicit, and more comprehensible, a nation's conflicting conceptions of itself and its past."⁴⁹ The VVM and other contemporary spatial memorials represent a break from the traditional role of commemoration as explained by Durkheim.

Rather than attempting to build glorious unity predicated on joint acceptance of semantic memory, the VVM mediates contested meaning by emphasizing the episodic memory of each visitor. The memorial encourages visitors to leave small mementos, notes, and flowers. These items are viewed by other visitors who add their own items, thus forming a collective memory based on each person's individual actions. The National Park Service has a policy to gather these items and then accession and curate them, thereby creating an ongoing record of the collective episodic memory simultaneously displayed and created at the memorial.⁵⁰ Although the memorial is formally dedicated to particular events and people in the past, it is the ongoing experience of visitors that continues to form new collective memory and justify its usefulness. To be sure, the events of the Vietnam War are not transmitted to the majority of visitors as

⁴⁹ Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past," *American Journal of Sociology* 97, No. 2 (Sep., 1991) 376.

⁵⁰ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 177.



Figure 2: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982) allows visitors to move through space and leave mementos, creating an interactive and dynamic individual and collective experience. [Photo by Kkmd, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0, 2004]

episodic memory; only those individuals old enough to have lived through the war will truly come away from the memorial having recalled episodic memory of the commemorated events. While the memorial still attempts to convey the significance of the war as semantic memory through the inscription of names, it is in the act of visitation itself that the visitor forms new episodic memory. Therefore, the memorial auto-generates its own significance with each new viewer.

The case of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial also reveals another reason why monuments and memorials are built. Although an expression of collective memory, memorials also work on an individual level. Psychologists have studied the Vietnam

Veterans Memorial and found that the design has a measurable effect on the healing of trauma among veterans of the Vietnam War.⁵¹ Ideally, as places of mourning, memorials can accommodate the highly personal and individual rites associated with death and memory.⁵² The practice of leaving flowers, candles, and notes at memorials is indicative of the material practices we use to cope with death and trauma.

Historically, these practices have been reserved for private spaces; however, in the 20th century they have increasingly moved to the public sphere. Public places like memorials are appropriated independently by individuals for personal uses, as with the leaving of flowers. Anthropologists Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey contend that the individual's experience with death in the context of collective memory challenges "the sequestration of keepsakes and mementoes to a private sphere of individualized grief and address[es] them within a broadly conceived network of social relations and social spaces."⁵³ Our memories, both individual and collective, are sustained through a co-localization of "material spaces, bodies, and objects" in public places like memorials. Thus, the modern memorials, like the Vietnam Veterans Memorials, are not only about perpetuating collective memory, but also about serving the psychological needs of individuals.

⁵¹ Nicholas Watkins, et. al., "The War Memorial as Healing Environment: The Psychological Effect of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Vietnam War Combat Veterans' Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms," *Environment and Behavior* 42, no. 3 (March 2010) 351-375.

⁵² Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory, & Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) 92-94.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 100.

The Problem with Monuments in a Modern Context

Despite this modernist shift from monument to memorial—or perhaps because of it—the construction of traditional monuments has remained widespread in the United States from the 19th century to the present day. The role of strengthening group unity that Durkheim assigned to commemoration has been weaponized throughout the past century as a defense against perceived assaults to group identity. It is not coincidental that the period from 1880 to 1930 saw both a rapid transition toward modernity and also widespread construction of civic monuments. To the communities and individuals who built them, these monuments were seen as a means of reaffirming traditional identity in the face of large-scale sociopolitical upheaval including immigration, women’s suffrage, technological advancements, World War I, and the Great Migration of African Americans from the south into northern cities. For the traditional sociopolitical establishment at that time—mostly white, male, and Protestant—the construction of monuments was an attempt at reasserting traditional value systems, usually within a nationalistic context.

Halbwachs writes that “the collective thought of [a] group has the best chance of immobilizing itself and enduring when it concentrates on places, sealing itself within the confines and molding its character to [those places].”⁵⁴ In other words, when a hegemonic group is faced with a perceived existential threat due to social upheaval, one method of trying to preserve hegemony is through the creation of places like monuments. These monuments interpret the past and collective memory in a traditional way, prioritizing the semantic memory of the powerful elite and communicating a particular

⁵⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, “Space and the Collective Memory” 1950.

message of traditional hegemony. In this way, it is a fundamentally political decision to insert a traditional monument into a modern context.⁵⁵

The need to reaffirm hegemonic ideas and values stems not only from a collective social imperative, but more fundamentally from a psychological one that happens on an individual level. As a means of survival, humans need what sociologist Anthony Giddens termed, “ontological security,” or “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action.”⁵⁶ In other words, the regularity and stability of our environment helps to ground our sense of self-identity and acts as armor against the stresses of living. Archeologist Jane Grenville has shown how our individual need for ontological security informs our desire to protect the built environment. The preservation of our built environment, particularly familiar places, promotes our sense of ontological security. There is an irony to ontological security, however: the more things stay the same, the more we are open to changes. The security of knowing constancy makes the individual more open to creativity, novelty, and gradual adaptation. Conversely, if the individual lacks ontological security due to a radical upheaval of that which is familiar, this upheaval will trigger a desire in the individual to forcefully re-establish that which was lost in exactly the way it used to be.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Dell Upton, “Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?,” in *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory*, ed. David Gobel and Daves Rossell (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press 2013).

⁵⁶ Qtd. in Jane Grenville, “Conservation as Psychology: Ontological Security and the Built Environment,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Volume 13, Issue 6. 2007. 448.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Monuments that are constructed in modern times, especially during social or political upheaval, serve purposes at both the group and individual level. They are built to reaffirm hegemonic ideas—particularly nationalism—in a traditional way. They are also a means of compensating for the individual's lack of ontological security in the face of radical changes to the built environment. Monuments once represented an effective means of propagating collective memory in that they reinforced and assisted with the promotion of semantic memory at a time when semantic memory was collectively prioritized. Before widespread literacy, monuments used visual allegory to remind viewers of stories that they had previously heard, but that they may have temporarily forgotten. In the 21st century, access to information via the internet has changed the means by which we form collective memory by broadening the individual's ability to access information specific to her circumstances. As the nature of collective memory has changed, so has the physical means by which we express that memory. If personal experience is important in shaping collective memory and group identity, then the means by which we share memory needs to accommodate memories of our own experience.

In recent years, we have seen this collective accommodation of individual experience in the ascendancy of social media. Monument design also has been moving toward individual experience over the past two hundred years. Spatial memorials that provide for collective experience, meaning, and memory prioritize the episodic memory of the individual, and in that sense the collective memory type of the modern age. The event or person commemorated by a memorial is still transmitted to us as semantic memory, while the act of visitation becomes its own episodic memory. The recall of semantic memory as an act of episodic memory helps to justify the importance of the

former by contextualizing it within our day to day lives. This personal context helps to justify the importance of that semantic memory, and thereby strengthen our ability to recall it. Therefore, knowing the time in which a monument or a memorial was constructed is important to understanding why it was built. Just as monument design has shifted over time, so too have the cultural means of constructing memory systems changed.

Contested Meaning and Contexts

At the heart of monument construction is a desire to maintain memory, and by extension, group and individual identity. Group identity is difficult to define, however, because group membership is never uniform and consensus is never complete. Moreover, monuments and memorials change audience over time as generations pass and demographics change. While the monument might physically stay the same, changes in the monument's social context undermines the permanency of its symbolic meaning. According to architectural historian Dell Upton, one of the primary flaws with monuments in a contemporary public setting is that they project an incomplete image of consensus. In a democracy, consensus is very rare; monuments in their monolithic sense create symbolic conflict. The desire to assert single identities for an increasingly fragmented and diffuse society is doomed to failure as formerly peripheralized groups reject the notion that one group ought to speak for the rest. Upton identifies a paradox with contemporary monuments in that their builders "can no longer rely on the fiction of consensus but they still want to create it."⁵⁸ Upton points to this paradox as an

⁵⁸ Upton, "Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?"

explanation for why contemporary monuments rely more on didactic text than on visual symbolism. Icons and symbols work differently than language in that they cannot impart new information. An understanding of the meaning behind any given semiotic system is reliant upon the viewer having already been exposed to, and accepted, a linkage between the symbol and its associated meaning.⁵⁹ As more and more people derive their own personal meaning from public space, and subscribe to their own semiotic systems, a single message cannot be satisfactorily communicated through traditional visual symbols such as classical orders or sculptural contrapposto. In short, merely placing a figure on a plinth no longer guarantees that he will be regarded as heroic.

When placed in public space, monuments project, or try to project, a level of symbolic hegemony based around this false notion of consensus. This hegemony draws into question the true nature of public space as commons. The “commons” is loosely defined as “shared resources in which each stakeholder has an equal interest.”⁶⁰ As a type of commons, public space must allow for equal representation and access, both in terms of physical space but also exchange of ideas within that space. However, there are limits to the neutrality of this exchange. There are those viewpoints that are clearly untenable, particularly those ideas that infringe on the rights of other individuals or groups. Legal scholar Sanford Levinson argues that when it comes to monuments, a completely neutral state is impossible given the intractable role that government inevitably plays in the creation, and privileging, of intellectual information. Even the basic government role of

⁵⁹ William Hubbard, "A Meaning for Monuments" *Public Interest* Winter (1984): 22.

⁶⁰ C. Hess, “Research on the Commons, Common-Pool Resources, and Common Property,” Digital Library of the Commons website, University of Indiana, October 2006. <http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/contentguidelines>

naming streets carries with it some level of partiality and cultural capital. It is unrealistic to expect that all viewpoints will be allowed validation at all times.⁶¹

Despite the impossibility of neutrality in public space, the imposition of hegemonic symbolism into the built environment is still problematic. Legal scholar James Forman Jr. hypothesizes that the United States Constitution protects against hegemonic symbolism in public space. He argues that if the state legitimizes the public display of a symbol with the express intent of subjugating a minority group, that decision infringes on the 14th Amendment and equal protection under the law.⁶² Forman specifically uses official displays of the Confederate flag as an example of an unconstitutional use of symbolism in public space. The same argument could also be applied to monuments if it were demonstrated that there was a specific intent to deny equal protection. This argument is plausible but has not yet been accepted by a court of law, nor stopped certain groups from trying to maintain hegemony over public space through monumental symbolism.⁶³

The use of monumental symbolism as a tool of hegemony in public space is drawn into relief especially among monuments in the United States dedicated to the Confederacy. In 1995, a large-scale public debate was waged in Richmond, Virginia over a proposed statue dedicated to tennis star and human rights activist Arthur Ashe. The debate centered over whether or not to “integrate” the existing monuments dedicated to leaders of the Confederacy along Monument Avenue by placing the statue of Ashe, who

⁶¹ Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1998) 87.

⁶² James Forman Jr., “Driving Dixie Down: Removing the Confederate Flag from Southern State Capitols,” *Yale Law Journal* 505 (1991): 101.

⁶³ Levinson, *Written in Stone*, 90-100.

was African American, among them. Although Monument Avenue was public space, the monuments placed there between 1890 and 1920 projected a hegemonic image that glorified the Confederate States of America, and by extension the Southern cause of slavery. Not surprisingly, the decision to place the Ashe statue among symbols of white supremacy was mired in complex racial politics. On the one hand, many whites opposed the location on the grounds that it diminished the symbolic “integrity” of the avenue by calling into question the hitherto uncontested heroism of the Confederates. On the other hand, many African Americans also opposed the proposed location on the grounds that placing a hero like Ashe on the avenue implicitly legitimized the contested heroism of the Confederates. In the end, the Richmond City Council elected to place the Ashe statue on Monument Avenue, in part because doing so would symbolically reaffirm the avenue as public space, open to all people. According to geographer Jonathan I. Leib, “the Ashe debate supports the point that the meanings of monuments and the landscapes in which they are situated are never settled and are always open to contestation.”⁶⁴ Despite the intended permanency of monuments and monument meanings, the shifting sands of their historical context always changes, thereby undermining their own monumentality.

The Politics of Contested Memorials

Even those memorials that embrace a more democratic symbolism are subject to public negotiation and recontextualization. Usually, memorials are intended for a specific group of people who are intimately connected to the memorial meaning, such as veterans

⁶⁴ Jonathan I. Leib, “Separate times, shared spaces: Arthur Ashe, Monument Avenue, and the politics of Richmond, Virginia’s symbolic landscape.” *Cultural Geographies* 9 (2002): 286-312.

or the families of victims. However, as public space, memorials are also occupied by diverse groups of people who may have little to no connection with the original meaning. As part of this occupation, the public interacts with memorials in ways that are often divergent from what was intended by the designer. Urban design scholars Quentin Stevens and Karen A. Franck have written about the various ways in which the public repurposes memorials for new uses. They point to how Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005) in Berlin is frequently used by the public for purposes other than solemn reflection. Visitors will use Eisenman's *stelae* to stage photographs, climb on them, or use them as benches and tables to eat, smoke, drink beer, or play cards.⁶⁵ Likewise, the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain (2004) in London is used by the public for relaxing, picnicking, and bathing on hot days. In both of these cases, the original meaning of the memorial is flexible as various people engage with it differently. Rather than discouraging this behavior, Stevens and Franck make the case that this re-contextualization is inevitable and that designers should anticipate and accommodate multiple uses and interpretations by the public.

This is particularly true for abstract memorials that do not assert one particular message in the way that traditional monuments do. Abstraction is a useful way of allowing groups to form their own episodic memory without the imposition of hegemonic meaning. Nevertheless, there are groups who will have competing interpretations over the meaning of these memorials, and by extension how the public should behave when visiting. While signage can suggest a certain way to behave, in truth it is difficult to control the behavior of visitors entirely without exercising police power. The National

⁶⁵ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 110-138.



Figure 3: The Holocaust Memorial in Berlin (2005) creates abstract space that engages the public in unexpected ways. [Photo by Alphamouse, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0, 2011]

Monument to Victor Emmanuel II (1925) in Rome is policed by *carabinieri* who spend all day admonishing hundreds of tourists for sitting on the front steps of the building, because it is seen as irreverent behavior.⁶⁶ However, sitting on the cold marble steps is a logical use of this monument in a city crowded with hot and tired tourists who have no real connection to symbols of Italian nationalism. Is constantly chasing tourists off the steps a valuable use of time and resources for the police? Probably not, but regardless, the Victor Emmanuel Monument demonstrates the difficulty and expense involved in compelling the public to adopt certain fixed behaviors and understandings.

The complexity of meaning at modern memorials stems from the fact that they attempt to convey both episodic and semantic memory at once. The late 19th century

⁶⁶ Observation of the author, February 4, 2011.

modernist shift that conceived of memorials as fluid space was not complete in its transformation of all monumental forms. We have seen already that traditional monuments continue to persist into the modern period as instruments of hegemonic reaffirmation. However, in other ways, the traditional and modern more subtly co-mingle. Especially after World War I, the traditional amalgamated with the modern. For example, the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. (1922) created architectural space to envelop visitors, heightening the experience of visitation, and creating episodic memory through emotional response. However, the Greek revival architectural style and figurative sculpture communicate the metaphorical deification of Lincoln, recalling older methods of commemoration. The Lincoln Memorial is a hybridized memorial that provides space for collective episodic memory, clothed in monumental symbolism more suited to semantic memory. In the words of literary scholar Steven Trout, “the messages expressed in memorials erected during the interwar decades are frequently muddled, contradictory, or... seemingly left entirely up to the viewer... hesitantly veering back and forth between affirmation and sorrow, celebration and condemnation.”⁶⁷ With notable exceptions, many of the memorials of the 20th and 21st centuries continued the interwar practice of hybridizing systems of semantic and episodic memory.

The US National World War II Memorial (2004) in Washington D.C. demonstrates how this hybridization is still a part of contemporary design practice. On the surface, the design creates occupiable space for visitors to move through and reflect upon. On the other hand, the memorial is resolutely cloaked in neoclassical monumental

⁶⁷ Steven Trout, *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919-1941*. (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012) 108-109.

splendor as it “nostalgically celebrates the nation’s military supremacy.”⁶⁸ The World War II Memorial has been criticized as an obvious throwback to unabashed nationalism and its “authoritarian certitude” reminiscent of 20th century fascism. Despite the hegemony of its message, the memorial’s triumphant symbolism was initially belied by a growing geopolitical unease concerning the U.S.’s place in the international community as a result of the Iraq War. The triumphal arches and bronze laurels recall the military conquests of ancient Rome while omitting many symbolic gestures of mourning.

Ironically, architect Friedrich St. Florian’s original design was far more somber and introspective than the final product would suggest. The original design called for two colonnades recessed into two earthen berms, at once creating occupiable space and recalling Neolithic funeral mounds. As with many memorials, much of the World War II Memorial’s discordance was the result of last minute changes to the original design made by committee to better suit the prevailing tastes of those in political power.⁶⁹ To cut costs, the earthen berms were removed from the design, and triumphal arches added to strengthen the association with military glory. The World War II Memorial reveals some of the conflict inherent in memorials between place and space, traditionalism and modernism, commemoration and mourning.

As has been discussed, one of the problems with traditional monuments in a contemporary setting is that they project an image of incomplete consensus, asserting the hegemonic value system of one group over the value systems of others. This is true of 20th century monuments dedicated to the Confederate States of America that are located in prominent public spaces. These monuments are expressions of a political ideology that

⁶⁸ Savage, *Monument Wars*, 298.

⁶⁹ Savage, *Monument Wars*, 300-302.



Figure 4: The US National WWII Memorial (2004) creates modern space but borrows heavily from classical architectural symbolism, creating a hybridized symbolic landscape poorly suited to accommodate individual experiences. [Photo by Ingfbruno, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0, 2013]

attempted to legitimize the exclusion and oppression of a minority group, namely African Americans. Since 2015, the US has engaged in a heated national debate over the continued place of these monuments in public spaces. In response, dozens of cities across the country have resolved to remove these monuments. The prevailing case for their removal rests on the argument that, in a democracy that strives to grant equal rights to all its citizens, it is untenable to enshrine men whose only ostensible acts of heroism were in the cause of slavery. This debate is more about what kind of society we want to build, rather than a debate about monuments generally.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Dell Upton, “Confederate Monuments and Civic Values in the Wake of Charlottesville”, Society of Architectural Historians Blog. September 13, 2017. <http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/sah->

As a hegemonic assertion of conservative values, monuments such as Confederate monuments are inherently political statements. In his 1998 book *Written in Stone*, Sanford Levinson discusses some of the flaws inherent to monuments, with particular emphasis on the question of Confederate monuments in the United States. He argues that these monuments, and all monuments, are a reflection of prevailing political power at the time of their construction. “Those with political power within a given society organize public space to convey (and thus teach the public) desired political lessons.”⁷¹ On a fundamental level, this organization of public space is seen in the practice of naming roads, parks, and buildings. To bestow the weight of legitimacy on a name is to exercise power. Monument construction goes one step further in that it also introduces visual symbolism to further solidify that legitimacy.

Iconoclasm and the Destruction of Monuments

When political power changes, so too does the legitimacy of old symbols dedicated to previous power holders. Changes in political power, such as in war, have resulted in the violent destruction of monuments throughout history. The birth of the United States was witness to one such act of destruction. On July 9, 1776, a group of New Yorkers sympathetic to the revolution tore down a statue of King George III in New York’s Bowling Green following the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. The metal from the statue was melted down and used to make musket balls to help with the American war effort. Like many monuments, this statue was

blog/2017/09/13/confederate-monuments-and-civic-values-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville

⁷¹ Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1998) 10.

modeled after the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius and similarly attempted to portray George III as permanently heroic and righteous. Yet far from permanent, this episode reveals how hegemonic monuments are susceptible to destruction when they assume the role of proxies for larger political movements. Just as the addition of monuments to public space is a political act, so are their removal. The events of 1776 show how iconoclasm, in and of itself, is not uniformly understood by the public in terms of its morality or correctness. While the removal of Confederate monuments is condemned by some people today, many of these same people view the historical destruction of the King George monument as a heroic act of patriotism.⁷²

This pattern of iconoclasm as a public proxy for political change goes back many centuries. The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius survived destruction only because it was mistakenly identified during a purge of pagan monuments by early Christians after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The monument was spared because Christians incorrectly believed that it depicted Constantine, the first Christian emperor. It was only because of this inadvertent reinvention of meaning that the monument was preserved and exists today. This lucky accident was exceptional. Widespread iconoclasm during times of political upheaval is a practice that continued throughout the Renaissance and into the modern period. In Shakespeare's Sonnet 55, we are reminded that monuments are susceptible to destruction in times of war: "When wasteful war shall statues overturn,/ And broils root out the work of masonry,/ Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall

⁷² Krystal D'Costa, "The History behind the King George III Statue Meme," *Scientific American*, August 23, 2017. <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/anthropology-in-practice/the-history-behind-the-king-george-iii-statue-meme/>

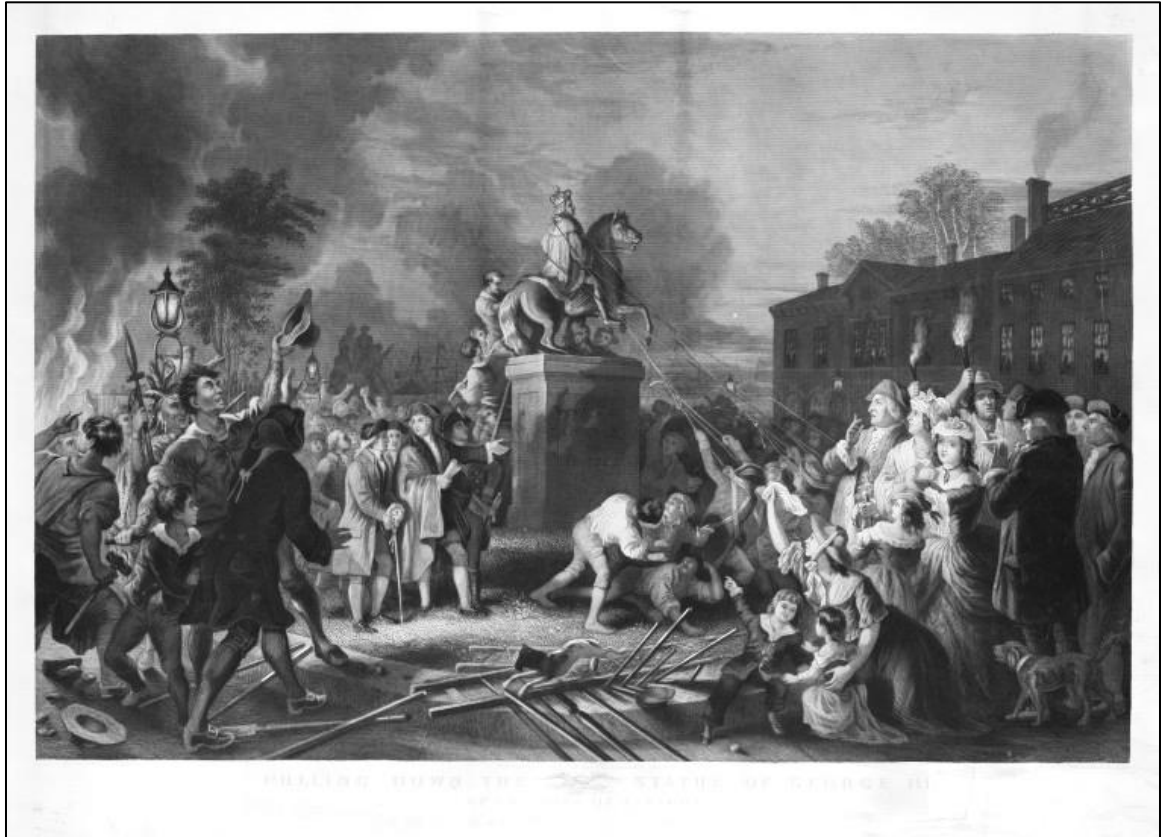


Figure 5: The birth of the United States began with the destruction of a monument. ["Pulling down the Statue of George III by the "Sons of Freedom" at the Bowling Green, City of New York July 1776" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1859.]

burn/ The living record of your memory."⁷³ By "living record," Shakespeare refers to the record created by poetry. In the poem's view, monuments might be destroyed in war, but ideas will persist in the form of writing.

In recent times, the most dramatic example of monuments shaped by political iconoclasm has been the creation and destruction of monuments dedicated to the Soviet Union. Constructed under communism, Soviet monuments were a way of mythologizing the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution—a clear exercise of political power through

⁷³ *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983).

propaganda. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these monuments were swiftly destroyed or relocated to “parks of shame” as a show of new political leadership. Naming practices in Russia followed a similar pattern, most strikingly with the city of St. Petersburg. Within a span of seventy-seven years, political leaders changed the name of the city from St. Petersburg to Petrograd to Leningrad and then back to St. Petersburg.

In most Western societies, regime change is not so dramatic as it was with the fall of the Soviet Union. More common is a gradual constant process of subtle power shifts as communities change over time either socially, economically, or culturally. Although no great political coup has yet toppled the American government since 1776, the recent removal of many Confederate monuments is indicative of ideological shifts in political power. Both the construction and destruction of these monuments remind us that public monuments are usually more about the negotiation of power in public space than about preserving history or learning about the past. Changes in that political power mean that the significance and durability of these monuments are subject to the same kind of fluctuation.

As the national debate over Confederate monuments continues, it is important to remember that there are other fates that befall monuments besides iconoclasm. On the opposite side of the spectrum there are those monuments and memorials, like the Statue of Liberty, that are well poised to maintain relevance. The primary purpose of monuments and memorials is to promote collective memory, whether it be in an ancient or modern sense. However, this understanding presumes that the collective memory symbolized by the monument is stable and that presence of the monument itself signifies the permanence of that memory. Far from permanent, collective memory is temporally

weak and ever-changing based on the needs of the present. Collective memory could be equally discussed as “collective forgetting.” Likewise, the symbolic strength of memorial meaning is subject to similar fluctuations.

Forgetting Memory and Forgetting Monuments

In an issue of *The New Yorker* magazine from November 26, 2017, author Nicholas Lemann poses the question, “what to do with the monuments whose history we’ve forgotten?”⁷⁴ Lemann raises the example of a monument in New York City dedicated to the 19th century politician Carl Schurz. Although once revered as a champion of civil rights for immigrants, Schurz’s legacy is somewhat marred by his advocacy for the premature end of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Since Schurz is neither completely morally good nor morally bad by contemporary standards, the monument to Schurz is easily forgotten as an obscure relic that suffers from a dearth of relevancy. This is not unusual for monuments and memorials. In discussing this atrophy of meaning, architectural historian Keith Eggener explains:

Like food or batteries, memorials have limited shelf lives. Their capacity to connect us to experience or events, to heal or reconcile, rarely lasts more than two or three generations. After that they become a sort of urban furniture, sparking an increasingly vague awareness of the past but little direct connection to it.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Nicholas Lemann, “What To Do With The Monuments Whose History We’ve Forgotten,” *The New Yorker*, November 26, 2017.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-to-do-with-monuments-whose-history-weve-forgotten>

⁷⁵ Keith Eggener, “The Demolition and Afterlife of Baltimore Memorial Stadium,” *Places Journal*, October 2012. Accessed 08 Dec 2015.
<https://placesjournal.org/article/the-demolition-and-afterlife-of-baltimore-memorial-stadium/>

Despite the appearance of durability, there is a fragility to the meaning of monuments and memorials. Although the original significance of a monument is outwardly displayed, subsequent generations may understand these visual signals as significant for other reasons, or not significant at all. Memorials fall to obscurity as members of the public lose direct connection to past people and events and thus lose a connection with the intended symbolic meaning.

In Western literature, the efficacy of monuments as preservers of memory has long been questioned. In 23 B.C.E, the Roman poet Horace concluded his third book of *Odes* by declaring that “I have raised a monument more permanent than bronze” (*Exegi monumentum aere perennius*).⁷⁶ In this line, Horace suggests that his poetry will preserve the collective memory of his name far better than any material monument could, demonstrating an early skepticism of material monuments as reliable in their intent. Shakespeare builds off of this theme when he acknowledges the failure of monuments in Sonnet 55. When drawing a comparison between monuments and poetry, Shakespeare states that “Not marble nor the gilded monuments/Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,/But you shall shine more bright in these contents/Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.”⁷⁷ Like Horace, Shakespeare is calling into question the true efficacy of monuments by stating how poetry will ultimately be more successful at preserving the memory of the person he addresses. This theme continues in the Western literary canon through the early modern and modern periods. About four hundred years after Shakespeare, Austrian author Robert Musil famously noted that “the most important

⁷⁶ W.E.H. Forsyth, *The Odes of Horace* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1876) 107.

⁷⁷ *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983).

[quality of monuments] is somewhat contradictory: what strikes one most about monuments is that one doesn't notice them. There is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments."⁷⁸

The Psychology of Collective Forgetting

Why is it that monuments and memorials are so often fated for obscurity when they are built to be immortal? One answer lies in that collective memory is subject to the same forgetfulness and instability as individual memory. Modern scientific research into human psychology has revealed certain characteristics of how the mind processes, retains, understands, and fabricates collective memory. This body of research, to be discussed below, indicates that memory is not only formed collectively but also forgotten collectively along predictable and measurable patterns. Moreover, in some instances, collective memory can also be fabricated by the group at large. As markers of commemoration and collective memory, monuments and memorials are reliant in their efficacy on a roughly uniform understanding of their semiotics by the public at large. When collective memory changes collectively, the commemorative usefulness of the memorial declines, causing a crisis of value.

As previously discussed, the study conducted by Brown, et. al., (2009) suggests that events of historical significance are more influential in forming memory when they have had a direct and personal effect on the lifestyle of the individual.⁷⁹ This makes sense given that, since modern times, episodic memory has been prioritized over semantic memory.⁸⁰ Those events that have not had a direct impact on our own lives play a smaller

⁷⁸ Qtd. Sanford, *Written in Stone*, 7.

⁷⁹ Brown, et. al., "Living in History," 399.

⁸⁰ Russell, "Collective Memory," 793.

role in forming our present identities and are more easily forgotten. By this measure, the semantic memory of long-passed historical events and people are not usually important enough to our present selves in order to be firmly fixed in memory. Although collectivizing memory helps to strengthen certain memories, it is by no means permanent. In some cases, collective memory is intentionally erased as the group engages in strategic forgetfulness to avoid culpability for past wrongs, such as the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide or the Japanese denial of the Nanking Massacre. In other cases, the loss of collective memory is an inevitable atrophy of information recall due to older memories ceasing to provide usefulness to contemporary needs.

The loss of collective memory through collective forgetting has been studied by psychologists and can be measured empirically. This body of research helps to provide a measurable pattern by which we can understand how people come to revalue commemorative places differently over time. In a series of studies conducted from 1974 to 2014, psychologists Henry L. Roediger, III and K. Andrew DeSoto measured the rate at which American college students collectively recalled or forgot the names of the U.S. presidents. The name of the current president was taken as a baseline piece of universal collective memory because it is known to virtually 100% of the U.S. adult population. By surveying three different groups of participants in 1974, 1991, and 2009, Roediger and DeSoto asked participants to recall, from memory, the names of all U.S. presidents. Naturally, the results showed that American students were most able to recall the names of presidents who were in office most recent to the time of the survey. From there, presidents moving backward in time gradually were recalled with less and less accuracy.

Yet this rate of recall for each president was not stable between years of survey. The researchers were able to plot the changing levels of recall over a thirty-five year period and then, charting these data into a power function, were able to assign a quantitative rate at which each president faded from memory. The plotted curve eventually reached an asymptote of about a 26% recall among students for presidents in the distant past, defined as eighty years or more. A follow-up study in 2014 among a mixed group across three generations confirmed a similar rate of collective forgetfulness across the generations that had previously participated in the study. Some of the presidents, such as John F. Kennedy or Richard Nixon, declined in collective recall at more gradual rates compared to others, such as Lyndon Johnson or Gerald Ford.

The researchers explained this by hypothesizing that “forgetting is adaptive and corresponds to environmental demands for needs of information. By this view, recall of presidents may be due to their frequency of mention in popular media, and frequency of mention may be determined by importance.” In other words, the repetition of an important name helps to slow down the rate at which it is forgotten. This helps to explain why Abraham Lincoln—a ubiquitous name in American culture—was exceptional and maintained an almost 100% recall rate across the course of the research. However, repetition did not completely forestall the process of collective forgetting, especially if that information was no longer collectively deemed important. In almost all cases, the names of the presidents were on a clear trajectory toward being forgotten by a majority of

students over time. For example, the researchers projected that about 75% of all American students will not be able recall the name Harry Truman by year 2040.⁸¹

Although this research was not specific to monuments, the study of name recall for US presidents helps to develop a working theory about monumental commemoration since the names of the presidents are recorded within the same psychological framework. In other words, this research helps us to understand not just how we forget monuments to dead presidents, but also how we forget monuments to any historical figure or event since this type of information is stored in the human brain in roughly the same way. There is an important difference, however. While failure to recall collective memory is indicative of its temporariness, memorials do not usually ask visitors to be able to recall semantic memory completely unaided. Rather, memorials provide guidance to *recognize* semantic memory that was once learned but that we can no longer recall without some prompting. Since the unaided recall of memory is more difficult than the recognition of familiar memories, how does the longevity of collective memory respond when tested for recognition, rather than recall?

As a follow-up to the study above, Roediger and DeSoto conducted a second study to test the collective memory of the presidents, based on recognition of names when participants were presented with suggested options. In this study, participants were provided a list of names, about a third of which were the names of actual U.S. presidents. The remainder were names of historical figures who were not presidents but who fit into a similar context, such as vice presidents. Participants were asked to indicate if each name was a president or not, and then self-assess their level of confidence for each

⁸¹ Henry L. Roediger, III and K. Andrew DeSoto, "Forgetting the Presidents," *Science* 346, no. 6213 (Nov 2014): 1106-1109.

answer. In general, the average participant's ability to recognize the president's names tended to be more accurate (88%) than the average ability to recall names in the previous study (50%). Not surprisingly, there was a correlation between correct answers and high levels of confidence. However, there were still some presidents, such as the 21st president Chester A. Arthur (1830-1886), who were recognized as a president less than 50% of the time. This indicated that participants still struggled with recognizing certain pieces of once-universal collective memory, even when presented with a memory prompt.

This study could be replicated in the context of monuments and memorials by presenting participants with the image of a monument instead of a name on a piece of paper. For example, there exists an 1899 bronze monument dedicated to Chester A. Arthur that stands in New York City's Madison Square Park and depicts a larger than life-sized statue of the former president on a pedestal.⁸² Although this monument was intended to enshrine Arthur in heroic immortality, we can theorize from the study above that fewer than half of the adult US population today would be capable of recollecting that Arthur was US president just from observing the monument.

In order to test this theory, I visited the Arthur Monument on April 29, 2018 and conducted an informal survey of park visitors who were walking in the vicinity. The visitors were approached at random and asked if they could identify any piece of information about it at all. Among eleven visitors surveyed, none could identify anything about the monument, despite the fact that it was inscribed: "Chester A. Arthur: Twenty-First President of the United

⁸² "Chester Alan Arthur," Madison Square Park, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/madison-square-park/monuments/55>



Figure 6: Although Chester A. Arthur was once a household name, his monument is almost entirely forgotten, even by those who visit. [Photo by author, 2018]

States of America.” While it is possible that some of these people merely did not want to be bothered with the question, at least two stopped to discuss the matter in more detail. They indicated that they had lived in the area for an extended period of time but still knew nothing about the monument. Perhaps most telling were the comments of one man who admitted that it was completely forgotten. He said, “I live here and I don’t know anything about [the monument]. Nobody looks at the statues [in the park]. If you want to learn anything about them, you should just look them up on Google.”⁸³ This comment

⁸³ Madison Square Park Pedestrian, Conversation with Author, April 28.2018.

bears direct evidence for how monuments are collectively forgotten by the public in a way consistent with Roediger and DeSoto's research. Even though this man and his neighbors see these monuments regularly, they never stop to even consider what they might symbolize or commemorate. At one time, virtually 100% of the adult US population knew that this monument commemorated a former president. Despite the monument's intended purpose of preserving the memory of Arthur, the collective memory of his life has lost enough importance that the majority of the public has almost entirely forgotten him. In the course of these changes, the monument's efficacy is almost entirely undermined by the public. For the neighbor who spoke with me, the means by which this memory is perpetuated had migrated from the physical world into the digital one. Lacking any direct meaningful experience with the monument, he and his neighbors felt the underlying message was no longer important enough to be stored within human minds. Instead, Google had come assume custodianship of this memory from living people.

Not only confined to collective forgetting, collective memory is also susceptible for outright fabrication. The most interesting outlier in Roediger and DeSoto's study was Alexander Hamilton, who was falsely identified as a president 71% of the time with participants reporting an 83% confidence level for this incorrect answer. Hamilton was falsely identified as a president more frequently and with more confidence than some actual presidents such as Chester Arthur and Franklin Pierce. Significantly, the survey was conducted before the hit musical *Hamilton* had been released. The researchers hypothesized that the high degree of confident false answers was because participants had heard Hamilton's name within a presidential context, but that they could not recall

sufficient semantic memory in order to disprove their initial impression, thus collectively conflating different memories. The researchers explained:

Familiarity leads to false fame only when it is unopposed by recollection of specific details...the high rate of false recognition of Hamilton can be interpreted within... attributional theory: Hamilton is a highly familiar name in American history, and this familiarity is so powerful that he was mistakenly recognized as president.⁸⁴

The widespread inaccuracy of the Hamilton answer, coupled with a high degree of confidence, suggests that collective memory can be collectively fabricated and reinvented. It is significant that the absence of detail results in “false fame” because monuments and memorials tend not to provide too many textual details, relying instead on visual symbolism. Again, this theory could be applied to real-world monuments. For example, an 1880 granite monument and statue dedicated to Alexander Hamilton sits in New York City’s Central Park and provides no textual inscription about Hamilton’s life other than a name and a dedication date.⁸⁵ It is reasonable to assume that, at the time of Roediger and DeSoto’s study, as much as three quarters of the US adult population would have incorrectly recognized this monument as commemorating a US president.

In addition to Hamilton, the name “Thomas Moore” was incorrectly identified as a president with a relatively high rate of occurrence (31%). Unlike Hamilton, this error cannot be attributed to contextual familiarity since there is no historical figure named “Thomas Moore” who was associated with the presidency or American politics. Instead, the researchers hypothesized that Thomas Moore was selected because the generic Anglo-Saxon structure of the name aligned with what participants thought “sounded

⁸⁴ Henry L. Roediger, III and K. Andrew DeSoto, “Recognizing the Presidents: Was Alexander Hamilton President?,” *Psychological Science* 27 no. 5 (2016): 644-650.

⁸⁵ “Alexander Hamilton,” Central Park, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/central-park/monuments/662>

right.” This suggests that collective memory is sometimes fabricated by the group based on ingrained preferences for cultural or linguistic orthodoxy. In this instance, the group compensated for its ignorance of the past by creating its own collective semantic memory ungrounded by actual evidence.⁸⁶

This study helps to explain how and why the public sometimes draws its own conclusions about the significance of monuments and memorials. This is not dissimilar to how the early Christians protected the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius under the illusion that it depicted Constantine. Without specific detailed knowledge about the origins of the monument, the group invented its own collective memory to suit prevailing beliefs. This kind of collective reinvention of memory has been seen most recently among the supporters of Confederate monuments. These supporters tend to defend the monuments on the grounds that they are important artifacts of the Civil War when, in fact, most of these monuments were constructed forty to eighty years after the war had ended as a means of reinstating cultural hegemony and propagating the mythology of the “Lost Cause.” Lacking specific knowledge about their timeline, but holding familiar associative knowledge of the monuments in a Civil War context, contemporary supporters construct a collective memory linking these monuments to a past that never truly existed.

An understanding of collective memory as an ephemeral and malleable entity helps to explain why almost all memorial meanings have limited lifespans if left unmodified. The studies described above demonstrate that, in theory, it is possible to quantitatively measure the rate of collective forgetting over time for any particular idea,

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

event, or person commemorated by a monument or memorial. Using this rate, it would be possible to estimate the exact year in which a particular monument will reach its terminal point of obscurity. Data collection for such an analysis would be time consuming and perhaps unnecessary, but is feasible. This empiricism helps to validate and explain what many scholars have already reasoned by intuition. For example, Eggener contends that memorials only usually maintain cultural relevance for about two to three generations. This duration roughly aligns with the same amount of time (eighty years) until the collective memory a president's name fades to its terminal point of obscurity, as measured by Roediger and DeSoto. Their research suggests that the original event or person enshrined in the memorial has a high probability of decline in collective memory when its name loses importance in serving contemporary needs. Since the symbolic meaning of a memorial is predicated on a perpetuation of collective memory, the eventual loss of that collective memory means a loss of symbolic relevance and public value for the memorial. While some people will continue to find meaning in the memorial, these people will eventually come to represent a minority group. In short, monolithic, semantic collective memories cannot be sustained over multiple generations by memorials alone, and even then, are difficult to sustain without continuous collective re-articulation of their own importance by the group at large.

The Heterotopia: Memorials as Utopias of the Mind

If original commemorative purpose is inherently ephemeral, then those memorials that adapt to accommodate new collective memories are better poised to survive crises of meaning because they do not rely exclusively on a single system of semantic hegemonic

memory. If we accept this to be true, then memorials must be allowed to accommodate multiple memories and symbolic ideas in order to stay useful. As one meaning moves toward collective obscurity, other meanings may present themselves to supplant it. Those memorials, either new or old, that can accommodate new collective memories will better serve mnemonic and social needs into the future. Yet the public may exert multiple collective memories, not all of which will be harmonious or reconcilable. To explain how these can coexist, we now turn to the postmodern concept of the “heterotopia,” a term coined and defined by philosopher Michel Foucault in 1967.⁸⁷ Memorials, and particularly contemporary memorials, are heterotopias. The characteristics of the heterotopia provide us with a theoretical framework by which memorials can begin to accommodate multiple, potentially conflicting, collective memories. The study of space within a heterotopic lens deconstructs and reveals the assignment of symbolic meaning to physical space as a fabrication of the mind, and not grounded in any physical reality.

In defining the heterotopia, Foucault took as his starting point the “utopia,” or a placeless place: a place which does not exist in the real world. Heterotopias, he argued, are spaces, both physical and mental, other than those we inhabit in our everyday lives that reveal to us utopias—like a mirror, simultaneously representing all other places, contesting them, and inverting them. He elaborates on the metaphor of the mirror to demonstrate this idea. The mirror reflects our physical image but only by the means of our own imagination. When we look at a mirror, we are constructing an image of ourselves that appears real but is actually a utopia in our mind since we are “seeing” a place that does not really exist inside the mirror. The mirror represents virtual places that

⁸⁷ Michel Foucault, trans. Jay Miskowiec, “Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics*, (16) 1 (Spring 1986): 22-27.

do not exist (“utopias”), but the mirror itself does exist in the physical world while revealing unreal spaces (“heterotopias”). Through the illusion of unreal places, the place in which we stand is made more real by the mirror, but in order to achieve this reality, we must pass through an unreal space in our mind. This concept of reality taking shape from illusion is akin to Pablo Picasso’s definition of art:

We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies...Nature and art, being two different things, cannot be the same thing. Through art we express our conception of what nature is not.⁸⁸

The paradox of art is that it is “a lie that makes us realize the truth.” Similarly, the paradox of heterotopias is that they are real places that are made more real by unreal spaces.

Foucault further identifies and describes characteristics of the heterotopia. First, their functions are specific and reflective of the society in which they exist. Second, heterotopias allow behavior that is otherwise deviant in normative social contexts, or that is necessitated by biological crisis such as adolescence or old-age. The heterotopia is linked to slices in time, separate from our current time. Time can either accumulate, such as in a museum, or time can be transitory, such as at a fairground. Heterotopias also function in relation to all the space that remains outside of them by either creating illusions that expose the real world as illusory or by creating ordered spaces that juxtapose the chaos of the remaining world. Next, there is some kind of opening or closing that exists to either permit entrance or forbid it, dependent on certain behaviors or

⁸⁸ Interview Pablo Picasso to Marius de Zayas, “Picasso Speaks,” *The Arts* (May 1923), qtd. Alfred H. Barr Jr. *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art by Arno Press, 1980).

rites of purification. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Foucault describes the heterotopia as “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.”⁸⁹ Some of the diverse examples that he provides include cemeteries, brothels, Jesuit utopian colonies, ships, Polynesian vacation resorts, gardens, Muslim baths, prisons, asylums, museums, and festivals.

Critics of the heterotopia have argued that Foucault’s criteria are too broad, contradictory, and poorly defined to be able to pinpoint a specific type of space known as the “heterotopia.”⁹⁰ Although influential in the field of architectural theory, the heterotopia might be better understood as a frame of mind, rather than a system of architectural design. Foucault scholar Peter Johnson has posited that “heterotopia is perhaps more about a point of view, or a method of using space as a tool of analysis.”⁹¹ One clue to substantiate this theory is that Foucault couches his definition of heterotopia in contrast to the medieval “hierarchy of place.”⁹² Foucault asserts that in the Middle Ages, and beyond, places were assigned fixed meanings and purposes and that each of these places was ranked in importance based on their role in the fabric of society. There were sacred places, power places, home places, profane places, among others. In the medieval social order, these places were rigidly defined and did not overlap. In contrast, the heterotopia, he argues, invites a multiplicity of meanings and spaces at any one of these places and dispels this kind of hierarchical thinking. The medieval hierarchy of

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, trans. Jay Miskowiec, “Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics*, (16) 1 (Spring 1986): 22-27.

⁹⁰ Peter Johnson, ‘Interpretations of Heterotopia’ (revised) *Heterotopian Studies*. (2016) 1-2. <http://www.heterotopiastudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Interpretations-of-Heterotopia-pdf.pdf>

⁹¹ Johnson, “Interpretations of Heterotopia,” 3.

⁹² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 1.

place is, of course, a social construct that says more about the collective value system particular to medieval societies than it does about the characteristics inherent to the design of those places. In a similar way, the heterotopia is a way of deconstructing these medieval hierarchies through the reassignment of meaning and opening them up to multiple spaces within the mind.

Foucault specifically identifies places of death and memory as heterotopias. In his view, cemeteries are heterotopias in that they create space for the dead that is real but that is intentionally “placeless,” set away from where we live and work. The dead exist in our minds out of time, and out of place, in a world that does not truly exist but that still can be identified on a map. The dead “live” in cemeteries, fixed to their moment of death but theoretically eternal, only to slowly disintegrate. Memorials function as heterotopias in ways that are similar to cemeteries. Although bodily remains are usually not stored in memorials, memorials are still reminders of death and connect the living with “death-space,” reaffirming the metaphorical immortality of those who no longer exist.

By understanding memorials as heterotopias, it is possible to understand their symbolic meaning as existing in the unreal spaces of the mind. This viewpoint helps to reconcile the fact that memorials are simultaneously real places and also abstract spaces. As we pass through memorials physically, they reveal to us symbolic and ideological spaces other than the one in which we stand. Multiple contradictory meanings are able to coexist at memorials because their associated mental spaces are utopias: revealed by the memorial, but still unreal. A memorial can be a space of nationalistic pride and militarism but also a space of remorse and shame over the innocent victims of that same militarism. From this vantage, the meanings that we attach to memorials are constructed and not

based in any objective sense. The intention of the builder is never permanent and can be appropriated and reinterpreted an infinite number of times depending on the perspective of the viewer.⁹³

As an example, Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982) is commonly seen as a watershed in memorial design. Dell Upton contends that "all subsequent monuments...stand in its shadow."⁹⁴ Intentionally or not, Lin's memorial is, in part, so successful because it is a memorial that clearly exhibits all the characteristics of the heterotopia. As visitors descend into the landscape of the memorial, they enter into a space that exists outside the world they previously inhabited, but is representative of that society. Connected to a specific slice of time—the Vietnam War era—the memorial also accumulates time as each subsequent visitor builds upon the tradition of leaving mementoes.⁹⁵ Like a mirror, the walls of the memorial are literally reflective, revealing to us the place on which we stand, but through the virtual space of our own reflection. The function of the memorial is specific but it does not confront us with any overt messages or symbolism. We are left to explore the physical space of the memorial through the space in our minds, constructing our own narratives, emotions and psychological spaces. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is mournful but still allows visitors the freedom to explore various interpretations, transporting them to realms where the dead both live forever and ceased to exist long ago. Deviant behavior is permitted in the form of emotional outpouring. For example, while standing in front of the memorial, men are socially allowed to break down and cry without judgement. If the initial descent into the

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Upton, "Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?"

⁹⁵ Foucault termed this a "heterochrony."

landscape of the memorial is a metaphor for death, then the ascent out of the memorial is akin to resurrection. Here, we find at least one incompatible juxtaposition of space. While movement out of the memorial creates a space of resurrection, for those left behind, the memorial remains a space of death.

The heterotopia is one way to understand memorials through the lens of postmodern philosophy. If memorials like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are understood as heterotopias, then this opens up the possibility of assigning them multiple meanings, significances, and value-systems. Lin's design lends itself readily to the postmodern concept of the heterotopia in part because her design was among the first memorials designed and built in the postmodern period. Yet the heterotopia is not relegated to only describe those memorials built within the last fifty years. Just as memory is constructed, edited, and revised in our minds, so too are memorials. As will be discussed in Chapter IV, the heterotopia frees memorials from the monolithic symbolism of ancient monuments and helps to correct some of their inherent flaws in regard to symbolic meaning and symbolic longevity.

CHAPTER III SIGNIFICANCE AND CHANGING VALUE SYSTEMS

Chapter Overview

When is something considered historic? Why should we preserve it? When presented with these two questions, the term “historic preservation” seems to rhetorically hint that one is equivalent to the other. However, before we can determine what to do with forgotten monuments, we must first understand that these questions do not have the same answer. When most preservationists save something that is historic, they tend to assume that there is an intangible and inherent value to the artifact as a witness of the past. This value is termed “historical significance,” and the evaluation and articulation of this concept usually drives the justification for why we preserve. Yet recent scholarship among preservationists has drawn into question how we define the value of historic places. In this chapter, the concept of significance will be analyzed. It will then be shown how the transitory nature of monument symbolism undermines a conventional understanding of significance, thus changing the reasons why monuments ought to be maintained into the future, and by extension, the ways in which they are managed.

While a complete examination of the historic preservation movement is beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to first provide a brief overview of some key concepts in order to contextualize the preservation of monuments and memorials. In the 20th century United States, it was assumed that “historical significance” was imbued into the fabric of the building material through exceptional design or the passage of time and

historical events. The material itself was held to be inherently valuable as a record of past decisions or a witness to past events. The process for defining significance, as exemplified by the National Register of Historic Places, dictated the identification of “statements of significance” specific to defined historical periods. Although place designations can frequently include different aspects of significance, or even different periods, they frequently do not encompass the full spectrum of reasons the public at large might find the property significant. Multiple statements of significance also tend not to acknowledge conflicting versions of significance for a single place. While statements of significance can be updated to be more inclusive, in practice they are not often revised—partly because significance has historically been viewed as inherent to the physical material of the resource. Periods of significance are rarely expanded or adapted to encompass more recent historical events or to suit contemporary understandings of cultural significance. Moreover, in this conventional view, statements of significance are singular, unchanging, and attempt to define immutable historical truths.

Prevailing contemporary practice is only one way of understanding the concept of significance. As early as 1903, the Austrian art historian Alois Reigl theorized that there are multiple ways we assign value to artifacts of the past, some of which may be in competition with others. As with collective memory, Reigl explained how our view of the past is guided by our own experience and therefore cannot exist in a purely objective sense. In recent years, historic preservation scholars such as Randall Mason have also questioned the objectivity of significance, and proposed examining heritage sites by their “values.” Although the concepts of “value” and “significance” are semantically similar, there is a difference in their practical uses: “value” is defined by the collective

understanding of the public at large; “significance” is defined by a limited set of structured criteria and determined by a relatively small group of experts. While these two concepts frequently overlap, significance may not fully take into account alternative values assigned by the public. Mason posits that a “values-based” approach to how we define significance is a more inclusive and democratic means of justifying preservation compared to traditional statements of significance.

More than other types of resources, such as houses or office buildings, monuments and memorials especially demonstrate the validity of these ideas since, by their nature, they project at least two simultaneous value systems: historical and commemorative. First, monuments exhibit historical significance as it is traditionally defined since they represent the values and decisions of the people in the past who constructed them. This understanding of historical significance alone is unconventional, since the National Register criteria draw into question when and how commemorative properties are defined as “historic.” In this chapter, I will show how monuments and memorials are equally worthy of historic designation. Regardless, these assignments of historical significance are still subjective and constructed since an understanding of the past exists within the contextual lens of our time.

Beyond their historical value, monuments and memorials are also valuable as symbols of collective memory, as discussed in the previous chapter. Compared to the value associated with historical significance, the value of commemorative symbolism is even more contingent on the collective acceptance by living people in the present moment. The unstable nature of collective memory in the present means that assignments of commemorative value naturally change over time. By exhibiting at least two

different—and changing—value systems simultaneously, monuments and memorials validate the theories of Reigl and Mason and show how the concept of significance is neither permanent nor monolithic.

A more complete understanding of significance acknowledges that the way in which society values any given resource will change as time goes on. The condition of constant change signals that these places are not so much inherently valuable themselves, but valuable as projections of external cultural heritage in the present. In other words, the condition of being historic alone is not necessarily sufficient justification for the preservation of memorials. Likewise, those memorials that ought to be preserved because they are socially useful might not necessarily meet prevailing definitions of “historic.” Due to the nature of collective memory discussed in Chapter II, the extent to which a commemorative property is serving the cultural needs of living people is a more appropriate measure of how and when it ought to be preserved. Two case studies will be examined toward the end of the chapter to demonstrate how memorials display multiple versions of significance, and how differences in societal understandings of that significance result in different trajectories for memorials.

A Brief History of Preservation and Monumentality

In the canon of historic preservation literature, many reasons are offered for why it is important to preserve reminders of the past. When an architectural historian determines that a particular place has historical significance, it is this assignment of value that drives the rationale for keeping it safe from destruction. The idea of “monumentality,” or permanence for its own sake, tends to be the overriding justification

for preserving buildings. Despite this, the measures used by contemporary preservationists to evaluate historic significance tend to deemphasize or exclude monuments, to be discussed below. Yet early in the preservation movement, the definition of “historic” was closely tied to a cultural understanding of monuments and in many ways this understanding has been handed down to us in current practice. The literature and philosophy of the modern historic preservation movement is derived from the writings of several key 19th century thinkers, especially John Ruskin, Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, Victor Hugo, William Morris, Camillo Boito, and Ann Pamela Cunningham. While each of these figures had different ideas about how to treat historic buildings, the overriding theme among them was that there was value in saving artifacts of the past as didactic tools to preserve memory into the future.

Among old buildings, it was the quality of being “monumental” that, in part, inspired early preservationists to justify the cause of saving historic architecture. Italian architect Camillo Boito (1836-1914) wrote in 1893 that “the architectural monuments of the past serve not only to the study of architecture but also, as essential documents, to clarify and illustrate in all its parts the history of the various times and peoples, and thus should be respected with religious care.”⁹⁶ This idea, common among his peers, was influential in shaping the Athens Charter (1931) and the Venice Charter (1964), two important documents drafted by the international community of professionals working in the field of preservation. These charters acknowledged the need to carefully preserve historic architecture so as to guide our knowledge of past people by providing tactile

⁹⁶ Camillo Boito, “Restoration in Architecture: First Dialog,” trans. Cesare Birignani, *Future Anterior* VI no. 1 (Summer 2009) 69-83.

connections to that past. This idea remains a justification articulated by historic preservationists to this day.

The term “architectural monument” used by Boito above, and elsewhere by his contemporaries, did not primarily refer to commemorative monuments. Although English speakers today tend to draw a rhetorical distinction between historic buildings and monuments, early preservationists defined “monument” to include those buildings that had assumed monumental status through exceptional age or architecture. In 19th century Europe, medieval structures such as cathedrals and castles, were regarded as monuments because they projected a permanent image, having survived political upheaval over many centuries. In the French language especially, the word “monument” came to take on a much broader definition than in English and continues in France today, where the official state designation for any historic building is a *monument historique*.⁹⁷

The rhetorical equivalency between “historic building” and “monument” is significant because it suggested that something that had survived from the past was worth saving in perpetuity by virtue of the fact that it appeared to be fixed in time. The English art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) arrived at this conclusion in his 1849 book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. Ruskin believed that the quality of memory was essential for architecture because:

It is in becoming memorial or monumental that a true perfection is attained by civil and domestic buildings; and this partly as they are, with

⁹⁷ “Les monuments historique,” Monuments historiques & Sites patrimoniaux remarquables, Ministère de la Culture, Accessed January 30, 2018. <http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Monuments-historiques-Sites-patrimoniaux-remarquables/Presentation/Monuments-historiques>

such a view, built in a more stable manner, and partly as their decorations are consequently animated by a metaphorical or historical meaning.⁹⁸

By describing an old building as a “monument,” Ruskin and his peers were able to more easily explain how and why these buildings ought to be preserved. Since ancient times, monuments were intended to be viewed as physically and symbolically permanent, the evidence of past heroism separate from the contingencies of present-day need. In this idea springs the conclusion developed by Ruskin and his contemporaries that architecture ought to be permanent for the benefit of future generations. Ruskin wrote that “when we build, let us think that we build forever.”⁹⁹ In a sense, he believed that all architecture functionally ought to be treated as a monument after a certain period of time because architecture assumed permanent characteristics that could teach us about the past.

In the United States, Ann Pamela Cunningham (1816-1875) was an early proponent of saving architectural relics for teaching future generations. In 1853, she launched the campaign to save George Washington’s former home, Mount Vernon, after discovering that it had fallen into disrepair. Her organization, The Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) was the first national historic preservation organization in the US and successfully raised funds to purchase and maintain the house and grounds as a permanent shrine to Washington’s memory. In her 1874 farewell address to the MVLA, Cunningham described Mount Vernon as a “tribute” to “our hero” and cautioned that “the mansion and grounds around it should be religiously guarded from changes—should be

⁹⁸ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co. 1849) 164.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 177.

kept as Washington left them.”¹⁰⁰ In Cunningham’s view, the purpose of Mount Vernon was to immortalize Washington’s memory and to promote him as a hero for all time in the minds of the living. His home was to be preserved and the MVLA was to safeguard it from any changes whatsoever so as to convey a sense of what Washington experienced. In effect, Cunningham and the MVLA converted Mount Vernon from a private house into a public monument dedicated to Washington’s memory to attempt to commemorate and promote the collective memory of Washington’s heroism. In practice, however, this preclusion of change was incomplete and paradoxical. Cunningham’s attempt to convert Mount Vernon into a monument, to be discussed further in Chapter IV, was unsuccessful at preventing change because the act of preservation itself modified how the public valued the property, and thus changed how it was treated physically in contrast to when it was a private home.

Building upon the philosophy of Cunningham and others, historic preservation policy in the United States originated with a legal equivalency between historic buildings and monuments. Early justifications for the preservation of historic sites were founded upon an understanding that certain historic buildings should be exempt from change. In public policy, this justification was articulated by applying the title of “monument” to historic sites. For example, the Antiquities Act of 1906—the first piece of federal historic preservation legislation in US history—used the term “monument” to describe the special legal status of a protected site. Specifically, the law authorized the President of the United States to “declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and

¹⁰⁰ The Mount Vernon Ladies Association, *Historical sketch of Ann Pamela Cunningham, "The Southern matron," founder of "The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association,"* (New York: Marion Press, 1903) 47-49.

prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest...to be national monuments.”¹⁰¹ This law was initially intended to protect historic sites from vandalism or the pilfering of artifacts, particularly Native American archaeological sites in the American West. However, as time went on, the Antiquities Act has been applied more broadly to encompass a wide range of buildings, structures, and natural landscapes. As with the rhetoric of Ruskin and Cunningham, the Antiquities Act justified the preservation of historic sites by arguing that their age and significance imbued them with monumental characteristics, and were therefore worthy of preservation in order to teach us about the past. Since monuments were already understood as permanent reminders of immortal collective memory, calling a historic site a monument built upon a culturally established precedent for permanency in the built environment.

In the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl’s 1903 *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, he destabilizes the relationship between historic significance and monumentality by differentiating between “intentional monuments” and “unintentional monuments.” In Riegl’s view, intentional monuments were commemorative structures that were built with the express purpose of carrying memory into the future, such as statues and columns. These were entirely different, he argued, than those artworks, documents, artifacts, or buildings that became monuments through their artistic or historical value. Riegl offered multiple reasons why society might wish to value, and thus save, unintentional monuments. By classifying different types of significance, Riegl showed how the reasons for saving a monument were not monolithic and that unintentional monuments did not necessarily need to be inherently “monumental” to be considered valuable and important.

¹⁰¹ American Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 USC 431-433.
<https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/anti1906.htm>

By demonstrating multiple value systems for why unintentional monuments might be worthy of saving, Riegl observed a shift in the modern understanding of preservation.

Despite Riegl's theories, preservation policy and practice in the English-speaking world remained on the trajectory set by Ruskin, Cunningham, William Morris, and others. While their philosophy of monumentality continued to justify the work of preservationists, the rhetorical equivalency between monuments and historic buildings dissolved in the early 20th century as the historic preservation movement took on a more precise vocabulary. Compared to the Antiquities Act, the Historic Sites Act of 1935 barely used the word "monument," instead relying on other terms such as "landmarks," "sites," "buildings," and "objects."¹⁰² Despite this rhetorical shift, the close philosophical association between monumentality and historic buildings still constituted the primary justification for preservation throughout the 20th century. The reason for preserving—and the value of historic buildings—was based on the inherent value of historic materials, whether they be aesthetic, artistic, or historical. These ideas eventually made their way into American domestic policy, especially with the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The opening recitals of this law call on the nation to preserve its architectural heritage so as to "give a sense of orientation to the American People." The law goes on to list the benefits of this orientation, including "cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits."¹⁰³ Today, many of these same reasons are articulated by preservation advocates to promote ideas such as the livability

¹⁰² Historic Sites Act of 1935, 16 U.S.C. sec. 461-467. <https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/hsact35.htm>

¹⁰³ National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended through 1992, Public Law 102-575, (formerly 16 U.S.C. 470). <https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/nhpa1966.htm>

of neighborhoods, environmental sustainability, economic development, or commemoration. Through a diverse set of arguments, preservationists have succeeded in building a general consensus that historic places and buildings ought to be saved because they make us better people. From this perspective, historic places change people, rather than being changed by people. In order for this to be true, historic places must be “monumental” or inherently permanent. As we shall see, this assumption is problematic when the public changes assignments of significance.

When are Monuments “Historic”?

In broadening the rationale for preservation, the preservation movement changed in the 1960s to draw a sharper distinction between historic buildings and monuments. In an attempt to more precisely define what is historic, the National Historic Preservation Act established the “National Register of Historic Places,” (NRHP). This official inventory is maintained by the Keeper of the National Register within the National Park Service (NPS). The NRHP created an influential codified system to measure and evaluate the significance of historic places so as to define their historicity. It is important to note that inclusion in the NRHP is mostly honorary and does not confirm any special protection on historic places, except in a few specific circumstances. However, the philosophies and process outlined in NRHP have been highly influential across the historic preservation discipline in the United States. For example, processes for landmark designation at many local jurisdictions, which do carry regulatory authority, are modeled after the NRHP. Government management practices for historic sites are also guided by the NRHP at the federal, state, and local levels. For this reason, the NRHP will be

analyzed below with the understanding that, in very broad strokes, it serves as a proxy for how historic places are evaluated generally across the United States.

Whereas commemorative monuments were once closely tied to the preservation movement, the criteria created by NPS for the NRHP disadvantaged commemorative monuments from historic designation. One of the most important factors within the criteria for inclusion is age, since properties generally must be at least fifty years old to qualify, although not always. Following age, two concepts take primary importance in defining and guiding historic preservation decisions: *significance* and *integrity*. Broadly defined, significance is based on the property having association with important events or people, exhibiting outstanding architectural or artistic merit, or yielding important archeological information. These criteria are all derived from the ideas set forth by Ruskin and other 19th century writers. The NRHP requires that historic places have defined “periods of significance,” or periods in its history that best exemplify the events, people, or qualities that make the resource significant.

Integrity is a slightly more abstract idea. In its most general sense, integrity represents the physical qualities that make something meaningful and complete. In applying the NRHP criteria guidance, integrity is generally defined as the degree to which a historic place conveys an accurate sense of its appearance from its period of significance. Integrity is closely bound to the authenticity of the building materials as a genuine artifact. Based on the NRHP standards, buildings that have been heavily modified since their period of significance are deemed to have “insufficient integrity” to be considered historic. This definition of integrity attempts to freeze the significance of the resource by tying its physical appearance to a particular moment in time.

Notably for monuments, the NRHP criteria also exclude several property types as ineligible for listing, including “properties primarily commemorative in nature.”¹⁰⁴ By generally excluding monuments and memorials from the NRHP, the NPS guidelines draw into question the circumstances in which these places can be considered “historic.” NRHP Criteria Consideration F allows for some exceptions to this rule, stating that a commemorative property can be considered historic if “design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.”¹⁰⁵ The reason for this exclusion is that commemorative properties do not tend to be witnesses to historically significant events or people, and therefore do not aid in the historian’s attempt to construct an objective truth as it relates to the past.

Even with the exceptions in Consideration F, the NRHP criteria have had ramifications for the preservation of monuments and memorials by warping how we define commemorative properties as historic and how we understand their significance. As an instrument of official historic preservation policy, the NRHP attempts to dismiss monuments as unworthy of historic designation because they are not “witnesses to history.” Under this system, it is the exceptional monument that makes the cut. This is ironic since 19th century preservationists—on whose theories modern preservation policies rest—understood a close relationship between monuments and historic buildings, even defining the latter by the former. Criteria Consideration F demonstrates how the NRHP criteria can lack self-awareness.

¹⁰⁴ How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, last modified 2002.
<http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

As with historic buildings generally, monuments and memorials are distinct documents of their time and place, not as a categorized document of a single historical “truth.” Architectural historian Dell Upton contends that “monuments always say more about the people, times, and places of their creation than they do about the people, times, and places they honor.”¹⁰⁶ As expressions of collective memory, monuments and memorials are indicators of the value systems and identity of groups in the past. They indicate which types of collective memories were important to our predecessors. These monuments also indicate what type of society past groups aspired to create. Monuments are significant as documents of past decisions, whether they be political or cultural, but not past historical events. Upton argues that the monument is not so much inherently valuable in itself, but in what it can tell us.

With spatial memorials in particular, the collective experience of visitors shapes the memorial as a place of episodic collective memory recall, further strengthening its mnemonic value. To borrow Riegl’s terminology, an “intentional monument” can become an “unintentional monument” over time. In the process, the public can dismantle monolithic projections of hegemonic memory by assigning their own value through the episodic memory of their own collective experience. By this logic, all monuments and memorials should be weighed no differently than any other property when evaluating them for historical significance. They are all conceivably eligible for designation under the NRHP Criterion C for design and Criterion A for historic associations and social history. This understanding renders Criteria Consideration F unnecessary. Yet even with

¹⁰⁶ Dell Upton, “Why do contemporary monuments talk so much?” *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory*, ed. David Gobel and Daves Rossell. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

NRHP designation, official designation for memorials is not so important to justify their preservation when compared to how valuable they are deemed by the community that uses them. As expressions of collective memory, the second kind of significance for memorials—commemorative or symbolic significance—drives its *raison d'être*, and therefore its future use and value is dictated by the public's widespread acceptance of the memorial as a symbol relevant to the public.

A Values-Centered Theory for Memorials

If it is understood that the public changes the valuation of monuments and memorials, it is necessary to understand how and when this occurs, compared with how historians usually assign significance. The historic preservation movement in the United States has tended to focus on the physical conservation of historic building material. In so doing, preservation practice has generally defined significance by the intrinsic value of the building material as artifact, with preservation professionals making these determinations. The NRHP builds off of this idea by requiring “periods of significance” to be identified based on strict criteria. Although significance can be updated, this rarely occurs because current practice assumes that significance is a static concept that will remain the same into the future. The NRHP system also attempts to privilege historic resources that have been minimally altered over time, in terms of both significance and physical form. The need to retain integrity of appearance from a specific period means that the character-defining features of the property are less likely to adapt to changes in collective memory or current need, whether they be social, political, or economic.

Since significance is presumed to be intrinsic, the common assumption in preservation practice is that significance can be evaluated by a small number of experts who study the object divorced from the public who use that object. Understanding memorials as resources with transitory value brings into question the viability of this practice. First, the public changes the symbolic meaning of memorials as collective memory changes or is recontextualized to suit contemporary experience. In addition, memorials are often artifacts that speak to us about the values of the people who built them, rather than as artifacts of the events they commemorate. By existing as both documents of the past and symbols of present collective memory, monuments and memorials project at least two different, and changing, values for contemporary people at any given time. Attributing “value” to a memorial is different from attributing significance because values are determined by the public, whereas significance is the opinion of a select group of self-stylized experts. These experts, mostly architectural historians, rely on a methodical study of documentary evidence to arrive at statements of significance. While these statements are usually accurate, they do run the risk of being incomplete. By not typically engaging in direct consultation with the public, architectural historians risk excluding some types of public value from statements of significance.

Riegl theorized that any one particular historic resource might simultaneously exhibit multiple value systems for different people. For example, a historic site might be valued for its age, its history, or its artistry. However, that same site might also be valued religiously, economically, politically, or socially. The NRHP nomination process already allows for the designation of multiple “areas of significance,” yet various assignments of value might compete for primacy, and some might be excluded based on the discretion of

whoever is completing the nomination. A complete understanding of public value cannot be determined in a single instance by a single individual since value systems change over time as new people assign value through the lens of their own experience. Artifacts exhibit, what Reigl termed, “relative-art value,” or the value that contemporary society places on older works of art as evidence of past creative choices particular to their time. Crucial to an understanding of relative-art value is Riegl’s concept of “*Kunstwollen*” or the “will to create art,” which is philosophically tied to Freud’s concept of the collective unconscious.¹⁰⁷ In Riegl’s view, the relative-art value of any monument shifts from age to age because it is always viewed through the lens of the contemporary *Kunstwollen*, and the *Kunstwollen* is never permanent. Our view of the past is never objective, therefore our assignment of value to relics of the past is fluid. This means that how the public assigns value to an object can change regardless of what preservationists do. This implies that preservationists must respond to these changes, rather than try to prevent them.

More recently, historic preservation scholar Randall Mason has echoed Riegl’s ideas of how and when the public attributes value to historic places. He questions the usefulness of evaluating historic sites based on an unchanging assignment of significance separate from public values.¹⁰⁸ Mason posits that, rather than assigning fixed statements of significance to a particular place, it is more realistic to recognize that significance is a human construct that is ever-fluctuating. Instead of an unchanging version of significance determined by historians, he advocates for a “values-centered theory” in which preservationists recognize sites based on both traditional documentation and public

¹⁰⁷ “Alois Riegl and the Modern Cult of the Monument,” ERA Architects blog, January 9, 2011. <http://www.eraarch.ca/2011/aloes-riegl-and-the-modern-cult-of-the-monument/>

¹⁰⁸ Randall Mason, “Fixing historic preservation: A constructivist critique of ‘significance,’” *Places*, 16(1) 2004.

assignment of multiple and simultaneous systems of value. Many of these value systems might be incompatible due to the complexity of public evaluation, but they are nonetheless truthful. Mason explains that this philosophy “does not assume the primacy of traditional heritage values over others that have gained recognition more recently.”¹⁰⁹ Mason borrows this theory from the practice of heritage conservation in Australia, where the heritage landscape includes a complex overlay of aboriginal sites, vernacular architecture, and ecological resources in addition to traditional European-style architecture. The nature of this landscape is such that Australians found the European and American framework for preservation insufficient to meet their needs.

The result of the Australian heritage conservation philosophy is the Burra Charter, a guiding document created in 1979 and maintained by the Australian Chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).¹¹⁰ According to Mason, the Australian system—as codified in the Burra Charter—is particularly useful for the recognition and management of cultural landscapes because it allows for the adaptation of changing needs, lifestyles, and stakeholders. In this model, it is the role of historic preservationists to recognize all value systems associated with a particular place and then, through transparent community participation, prioritize some over others for the purposes of interpretation, treatment, and preservation. The key challenge with this approach is that, compared to typical significance-based preservation, it requires more frequent and varied efforts to periodically renegotiate value priority through public participation.

¹⁰⁹ Randall Mason, “Management for Cultural Landscape Preservation,” *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) 184.

¹¹⁰ The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, As Amended 2013. <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

While traditional records and research methods are employed, such as archaeological or archival documentation, a values-based approach also places a strong emphasis on person-to-person consultation with different stakeholder groups.¹¹¹ These consultations can vary in their execution, but might look something like the survey conducted at the Chester A. Arthur monument described in Chapter II, only on a larger scale and with more scientific methods.

In practice, the process of evaluating heritage sites through a values-based system is difficult in part because it requires more time and effort to collect public input for an individual researcher to work alone in a library. Consultation with the public sounds good in theory, but it can prove to be a time consuming and challenging endeavor. Often these consultations are facilitated by community meetings, public hearings, and surveys. This kind of information collection is voluntary—and frequently sporadic—among groups of participants who tend to be already interested in conventional assignments of significance. For this reason, researchers cannot always be certain that their participants are truly representative of the public writ large. Moreover, the periodic updating of records to reflect current value systems requires additional resources beyond what most communities are capable of providing. After all, it is already possible in theory to update NRHP listings, but this usually does not occur because the Keeper of the National Register within the National Park Service does not have enough staff to periodically review the tens of thousands of nomination forms that have accrued over the past five decades since the NRHP was created.

¹¹¹ Mason, “Management For Cultural Landscape Preservation,” 185.

While the NRHP is mostly honorary, its role in shaping how we define and evaluate significance plays an important part in how heritage sites are regulated and managed. In the United States, preservation regulation at the local level usually relies on enforcing concepts of significance and integrity that are indirectly guided by the NRHP. For example, regulating the integrity of a local historic district is based on retaining character-defining features from a particular era in history that ties back to the district's significance, as determined by a historian; this mechanism is a result of the NRHP framework. Moreover, site management practice based on the NRHP usually relies on static understandings of significance for the purpose of guiding maintenance, modifications, and interpretation of the site. The advantage of this system is that the property steward retains character-defining features. However, this practice risks losing the interest of the public if and when the property steward fails to take alternative value systems into consideration. It is for this reason that the added effort and expense is justifiable for preservationists to periodically update existing statements of significance to recognize public value systems as legitimate and enforceable.

Values-Centered Theory and Site Management

The field of site management especially benefits from a values-centered theory. To demonstrate how this approach can work for the purposes of heritage site management, Mason points to the example of Port Arthur, a heritage site in Tasmania, Australia, associated with the country's history of convict labor. The site's management style is to integrate input across multiple departments, including business operations, customer service, interpretation, and archeology. Management seeks to govern by

consensus and build coalitions between site employees and, crucially, local residents. Mason explains that “decisions are made not through hierarchical process according to codified rules but through avid consultation and full staff involvement.”¹¹² The process of managing the site is seen as an ongoing effort in recognizing that historic sites change over time—both physically and in “the ways they are perceived.” Management choices about interpretation, development, and programming are guided by how the staff jointly prioritize the various value-systems at any given time. The result has been the creation of a heritage institution that can nimbly respond to the educational goals of the public and the management realities of local economies and national politics.

Heritage conservation theory in Australia recognizes that places change and are fluid in their meaning and form. Similarly, monuments and memorials exhibit multiple values through shifting collective memories and the reinterpretation of symbolic meanings. This theory has particular relevance for the preservation of spatial memorials because these places enable visitors to promote multiple meanings and collective memories through their experiences. Although most traditional monuments project a single hegemonic meaning, spatial memorials create social value through group identity, experience, and collective memory as defined by the philosopher Maurice Halbwachs.¹¹³ Therefore, spatial memorials invite the public to explore, define, and redefine their meanings by providing space that is occupiable. Depending on the individual or group that is using the space, these people might change their interpretations of how the memorial ought to be viewed, thereby creating varied symbolic meanings. Over time, the

¹¹² *Ibid.* 193.

¹¹³ Maurice Halbwachs, “Space and the Collective Memory,” *The Collective Memory* (1950).

public has the opportunity to assign different meanings than those originally intended as groups and individuals build new episodic collective memories. This process can be salutary for the memorial as it prevents the stagnation of relevancy that is commonly associated with traditional monuments.¹¹⁴ However, these changes in meaning present a challenge for how these places are evaluated and managed because new meanings create potentially new and divergent value systems from established statements of significance.

One Place, Multiple Values: The Case of the Lincoln Memorial

A prime example of the phenomenon of value system change is the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. On its surface, the memorial is clearly valued as a commemorative symbol of Abraham Lincoln's presidency. More subtly, the memorial is equally valued by historians as emblematic of urban planning practices in the early 20th century. Together, these two value systems comprise the officially recognized statement of significance. According to the 1981 NRHP nomination form, the Lincoln Memorial is significant "as America's foremost memorial to her 16th president, as a totally original example of neoclassical architecture, and as the formal terminus to the extended Mall in accordance with the McMillan Commission plan for the monumental core of Washington."¹¹⁵ This assertion seems plausible, even self-evident. However, it belies a much more complex reality. Since it is under the assumption that memorials project permanent meaning, this official statement of significance has not been updated since 1981 and fails to include other important public value systems.

¹¹⁴ Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) 6-7.

¹¹⁵ Donald C. Pfanz, "Lincoln Memorial," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination - Inventory Form* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service 1981) 4.

In addition to the values listed above, the Lincoln Memorial is equally valued by many people for its association with the Civil Rights Movement, in particular as the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech during the March on Washington in 1963. Arguably, the collective memory of King's speech is far stronger than the collective memory of the McMillan Commission, yet King is entirely omitted from the NRHP statement of significance. This association with the Civil Rights Movement is the most obvious alternative value system for the Lincoln Memorial, but there are others. For example, the memorial is recognizable and valued for its appearance on the reverse of the US penny. It is also economically valued by local residents as a major tourist attraction that helps generate revenue for hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops. To the average visitor, the memorial is perhaps most valued as an iconic backdrop for vacation photos and social media posts. To be fair, at the time the nomination form was completed, MLK's speech was only eighteen years in the past, and its long-term importance may not have been as clear as it is today. However, the fact that this version of significance has not been updated since 1981 is indicative of a broader issue with preservation practice in the US. The NRHP is only one of many preservation evaluation tools that fail to reevaluate significance over time. In the case of the Lincoln Memorial, the management decisions for the site have been guided by the same static understanding of significance that is seen in the NRHP nomination.

Of these various value systems, there is only one that is officially presented by the National Park Service: the value of the memorial as an architectural commemoration of Lincoln's heroism. However, it is not difficult to imagine alternative realities in which other values might be given exposure. In a values-based management system, it would be

the responsibility of NPS to consult with each of the aforementioned stakeholder groups and then evaluate and accommodate other value systems in a logical and balanced way. In fact, this already partially occurred in 2003 when a concerned citizen wrote to Congresswoman Anne M. Northup (R-KY) asking that visitors be aided in identifying the spot on which King stood in 1963 so as to imagine themselves in his place. In response, Rep. Northup sponsored legislation that compelled NPS to inscribe a small engraving into the terrace of the Lincoln Memorial indicating the location where King delivered his speech.¹¹⁶ While an important step in acknowledging public values, this inscription is modest and clearly subordinate to the glorification of Lincoln. In a true values-based approach, one could imagine additional interpretation relative in size to how much the public associates King with the memorial. Not only limited to one or two value systems, the presentation of other values could be explored through creative management decisions. For example, if the value of the memorial as a photo-op were fully exploited, then the NPS might give out selfie-sticks to tourists.

Naturally, not all value systems can be accommodated at once. Some are clearly incompatible with others. Putting a billboard above the statue of Lincoln would fully take advantage of its economic value but would probably be seen as an indecorous commodification of national sanctity. Putting up billboards would not be acceptable because these changes would unreasonably deny other groups their values on a permanent basis. On the other hand, holding a coin collectors convention inside the memorial, while perhaps disruptive to some visitors, would be a temporary and reversible modification that could be scheduled so as to both mitigate disruption and accommodate

¹¹⁶ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 189.

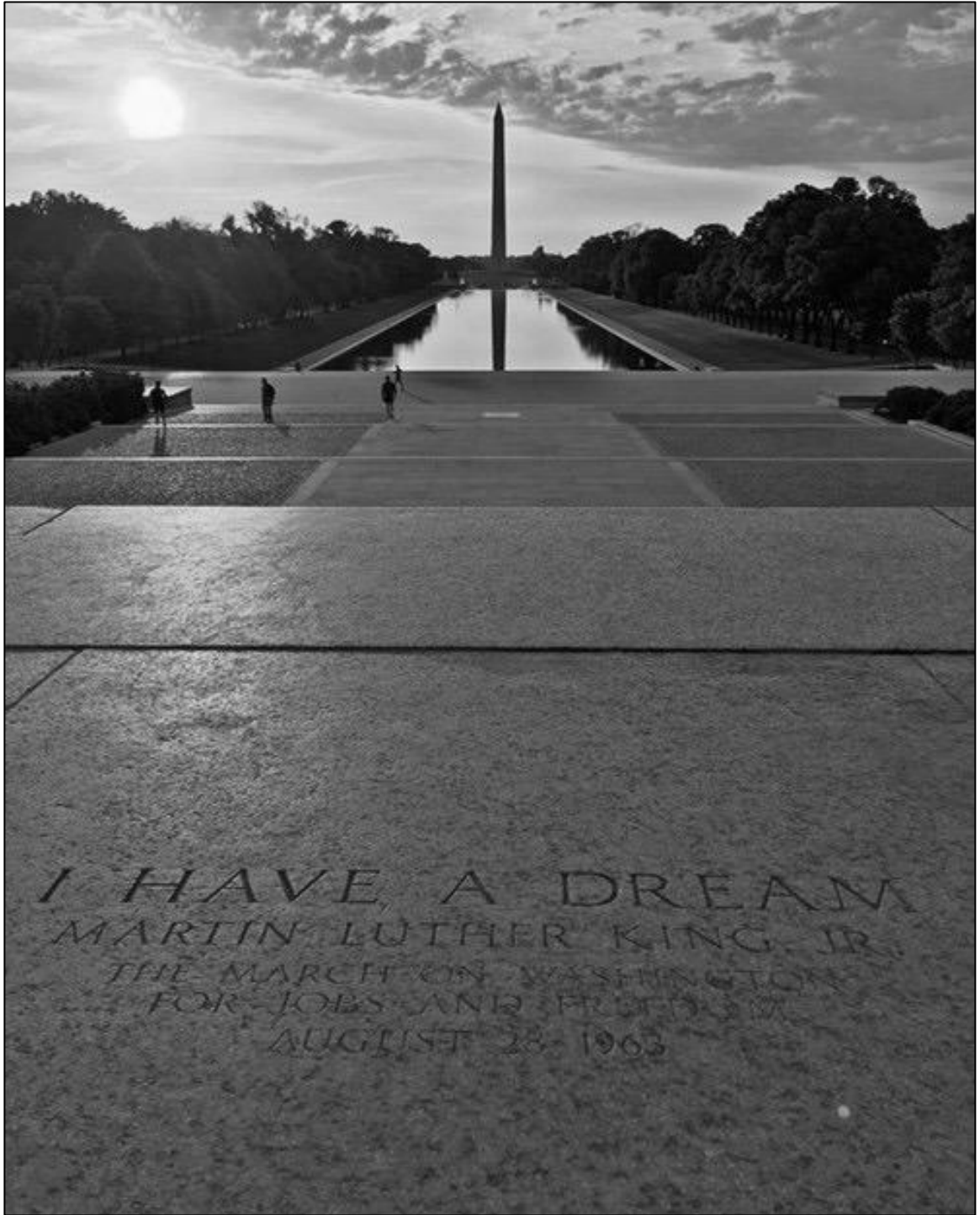


Figure 7: This small inscription is the only marker at the Lincoln Memorial to indicate the close public association between the memorial and the Civil Rights Movement. [Photo by Paul Ollig, National Park Service, c. 2005]

the memorial's value as a currency icon. Options to accommodate alternative value systems should be negotiated to reach a compromise between stakeholders. In some cases, it may not be possible to completely reconcile conflicting value systems. Nevertheless, the values-based approach suggests that various stakeholders be *consulted* and that their values be *considered* periodically, rather than dismissed out of hand.

As societies change over time, certain value systems that were once considered unimportant may gain importance for contemporary people. Ultimately, Mason argues that assignments of significance for heritage resources are always subjectively constructed the same way as the public assignment of values. By embracing the peripateticism of a values-based theory, we do not risk losing some objective sense of truth. What we gain is the inclusivity of new and different values that help us arrive at a more complete sense of truth by considering those viewpoints different from the orthodox. We must remember that the values assigned to places by the public can be even more personal, subjective, and transitory than any expertly crafted statement of historical significance. Yet it is precisely the fleeting nature of these values that makes them representative of a heterogeneous public composed of living people. As we have seen, the impermanent nature of collective memory is such that monuments and memorials are particularly susceptible to changing meaning. Compared to the old system of evaluating significance based exclusively on archival documents, memorials demand that their value be determined through consultation with the public. A values-based theory of historic preservation is a more appropriate way of understanding the significance of monuments and memorials than conventional means.

Changing Value as a Means of Preserving - Two Case Studies

A values-based approach allows the symbolic meaning of a memorial to adapt to changes in collective memory. While conventional historic preservation practice emphasizes keeping things fixed in time without change, a values-based theory recognizes that places change and are fluid in their meaning and form. At the Lincoln Memorial, a new historical value (the Civil Rights Movement) has already eclipsed an older one (the McMillan Commission) since 1981. When the public assigns new values to monuments and memorials that are not recognized as legitimate by authoritative bodies, the *raison d'être* of the memorial becomes more precarious. When the original commemorative significance loses relevance through the atrophy of collective memory, recognizing and promoting different value systems restores social usefulness for the public. Conversely, failure to adapt to changing value systems increases the likelihood that the memorial will slip into obscurity. In some extreme cases, this can lead to destruction. The following case studies present examples of living memorials that followed two different trajectories. The first is an example of a memorial that was destroyed because changes in its public value were not adequately understood by preservationists. The second case study reveals how a reevaluation of significance by preservationists resulted in the successful preservation of usefulness for the memorial.

Memorial Stadium, Baltimore, MD

Memorial Stadium (Baltimore, MD) was constructed from 1949 to 1953 to commemorate those Americans who had died in both world wars. Prior to construction,

the design for the stadium was extolled nationally as a paragon of memorial design.¹¹⁷

For over fifty years, the stadium served as a gathering place for Baltimore residents and was much beloved by the community for football and baseball games. Unfortunately, the building facility was poorly maintained and physically decayed. By the mid-1980s, plans were underway to construct another stadium, which eventually became Camden Yards.

Throughout the 1990s, a public debate was waged over the fate of the old stadium. In 2000, the Maryland SHPO found that Memorial Stadium did not exhibit sufficient significance or integrity for official designation as a historic building or for protection.¹¹⁸ Local preservation organizations, Baltimore Heritage and Preservation Maryland, countered this claim on the grounds that local residents felt a deep kinship with the memorial. They advocated that the stadium could be preserved, adaptively reused, and made economically viable. They estimated that the stadium could be converted into over three hundred thousand square feet of economically valuable residential, office, or retail space.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the city government rejected proposals to reuse the building and chose to demolish the memorial in 2001 and construct a retirement facility on the site. Some of the commemorative elements of the stadium, such as the cornerstone and dedication plaques, were moved for display in a museum setting.¹²⁰ Memorial Stadium's

¹¹⁷ Robey Parks, "Memorials that Live: Useful War Shrines Urged," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 17, 1945.

¹¹⁸ Keith Eggener, "The Demolition and Afterlife of Baltimore Memorial Stadium," *Places Journal*, October 2012. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-demolition-and-afterlife-of-baltimore-memorial-stadium/>

¹¹⁹ Tyler Gearhart and Jamie Hunt. *The Sun*, November 9, 2000. "Save Memorial Stadium."

¹²⁰ Eggener, "The Demolition and Afterlife of Baltimore Memorial Stadium."



Figure 8: Memorial Stadium (1953) under demolition. [Photo by Marylandstater, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, 2001]

primary commemorative feature was a one-hundred-sixteen-foot-tall brick and cast-stone exterior façade and memorial wall. As a compromise to preservationists, the wall was left standing in an empty field following the demolition of the stadium. The lone monolithic

wall soon became an eyesore to the members of the Baltimore City Council, however, who authorized its demolition five months later.¹²¹

The case of Memorial Stadium demonstrates how the official criteria to evaluate properties for historic significance fail to adequately take into account the ways in which the public might value a place for reasons outside of these criteria. The response of the Maryland SHPO shows how conventional means of evaluating historic significance overlooks places that might otherwise be valuable to the public. The longevity of the stadium was first thrown into question when the city constructed a new stadium, causing the recreational and economic values of the property to decline. As a memorial, the stadium also held value as a commemorative symbol and a place of collective memory of the world wars. This collective memory was semantic and therefore weak and susceptible to atrophy. Yet as the semantic memory of the memorial declined, the episodic memory of visitors remained strong because it was based on the personal experiences of stadium visitors over fifty years. Community members recalled pleasant summer nights relaxing at the ballpark, spending time there as children and then later with children of their own.

By the 1990s, the stadium had become a different kind of memorial dedicated to the episodic collective memory of the community. Indeed, it was this memory value system that motivated the effort to preserve the stadium by local advocacy groups. Since this value system was more recent and did not fit the conventional criteria for defining the property as “historic,” the appeal for preservation was rejected by the Maryland SHPO, which took a narrow view when defining significance. A professional architectural historian would have been hard pressed to satisfactorily nominate Memorial

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Stadium to the NRHP not because the stadium was unworthy of preservation, but rather because the evaluation tools were not equipped to accommodate public values. If the Maryland SHPO had used an evaluation tool that prioritized public consultation, such as in a values-centered process, then it might have arrived at the conclusion that the stadium was worth protection and repurposing.

Kimball War Memorial, McDowell County, West Virginia

In contrast to Memorial Stadium, the Kimball War Memorial in West Virginia is a World War I memorial that presents a case study in how Mason's approach to significance is valid. It shows that the public's definition of significance is fluid and exists in multiple truthful versions, even though some of these versions might not be officially accepted at any given time. This case study also shows how value systems are contested over time, and how official acceptance of alternate value systems by preservationists can be successful at rejuvenating memorials and putting them to re-use serving the public.

The Kimball War Memorial, in the town of Kimball, West Virginia, was the first and only surviving memorial in the US dedicated to African Americans who served in the US military during World War I. Constructed in 1928 by the McDowell County government with public funds, the Kimball War Memorial is a testament to the political clout wielded by the black population of southern West Virginia in the 1920s, particularly those affiliated with the coal mining industry. The neoclassical building can be classified as a "living memorial" in that it commemorates war by providing facilities for community activities. The building originally housed an auditorium, library, meeting

rooms, kitchen facilities, and trophy room with plaques dedicated to black veterans. By providing these facilities for public use, the memorial served for decades as a community center for American Legion meetings, high school dances, and musical performances.¹²²

The Kimball War Memorial was a typical living memorial for its time. Clothed in a neoclassical architectural language, the memorial conjured associations with traditional monument design, which signified its commemorative and nationalistic meaning to visitors. More than a traditional monument, however, the Kimball War Memorial facilitated the production of collective memory in a very modern sense. Through the everyday experiences of visitors, living memorials like the Kimball War Memorial attempted to psychologically connect the military sacrifices of community members to the ongoing work of building a better society at home.¹²³ As with Memorial Stadium, the public came to value the memorial as much for their personal memories, such as attending dances and recreation events, rather than a close association with war.

The Kimball War Memorial was also a highly unusual memorial in that it attempted to glorify the moral righteousness of the nation while simultaneously trying to honor veterans who continued to suffer discrimination at the hands of that same nation. It has been documented that, for black West Virginians, the Kimball War Memorial was originally seen as a symbol of hope for the end of social injustices including racism and

¹²² “About the Memorial,” Soldiers of the Coalfield website, Accessed November 19, 2017. <http://forgottenlegacywwi.org/about-the-memorial/>

¹²³ Andrew, Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II.” *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002).



Figure 9: Kimball War Memorial, McDowell County, West Virginia (1928). This memorial is highly representative of living memorials in its form but unusual in how the public has historically understood its symbolic meaning. [Photo by Brian M. Powell, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0, 2007]

discrimination.¹²⁴ Despite this symbolism, the Kimball War Memorial did not seem to hold such meaning for white West Virginians. Although used by both blacks and whites from the beginning, the facilities were originally segregated, demonstrating that in many ways the memorial reaffirmed racist social conventions.¹²⁵ In fact, white hegemony in West Virginia at the time meant that the memorial was almost never built; the McDowell

¹²⁴ Stacy Sone, "Kimball War Memorial Building," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form*, (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1992) 12.

¹²⁵ Nadine Goldberg, "Memorial Preserves More Than The Past," *The Daily Yonder*, July 3, 2013. Accessed November 19, 2017. <http://www.dailyyonder.com/more-memorial/2013/07/03/6368/#>

County commissioners had originally intended to build a memorial dedicated to white veterans. The commissioners only changed their decision after a successful petition by local black residents, who held some political sway due to their work in the thriving coal mining industry at the time.¹²⁶ For these reasons, in its first few decades, the Kimball War Memorial was still primarily seen by whites through the lens of hegemonic and patriotic nationalism rather than racial diversity or civil rights. The conflict between these two systems of symbolic value meant that the Kimball War Memorial held multiple meanings for different groups from the start. It also meant that the Kimball War Memorial showed characteristics of the “heterotopia,” by exhibiting multiple conflicting meanings.¹²⁷

Primary records show that, early on, African Americans who used the Kimball War Memorial felt it necessary to actively combat racial discrimination. In addition to its use as a community center, the Kimball War Memorial was also home to the American Legion, Luther Patterson Post, No. 36. In the 1930s, this post boasted the largest membership of any black Legion post in the US.¹²⁸ In 1932, the members of Post No. 36 corresponded with civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois and requested information as part of “a study of the Negro soldier, in peace as well as in war times.” Specifically, the Kimball veterans requested that DuBois provide them with literature about the number of African Americans who had historically served in the US military. They stated that the purpose of their research was to gather “information that might be used in an argument to show that the American Negro has always been loyal even though privileges of service in peace

¹²⁶ Bill Archer, “World War I Memorial: Commissioner Fountain Visits Kimball,” *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, November 12, 2014.
http://www.bdtonline.com/news/world-war-i-memorial-commissioner-fountain-visits-kimball/article_6c878ed4-6a17-11e4-88fe-6f16c0926d47.html

¹²⁷ See discussion in Chapter II.

¹²⁸ “VA. Legion Post Doubles Roll,” *The Baltimore Afro-American*, May 6, 1931.

times are not as extensive.”¹²⁹ About a week later, DuBois responded with a reading list which, presumably, the Legionnaires used to make their case.¹³⁰ This initiative suggests that even within a memorial dedicated to their heroism, the black veterans of McDowell County still felt that their loyalty to the United States was challenged by the white establishment. Less is known about how white McDowell County residents interpreted the value of the memorial, however, based on the aforementioned correspondence and the racial segregation of the facility, it can be inferred that the memorial did not initially symbolize aspirations of racial equality among white residents. Nevertheless, the white community did use the memorial regularly for social functions, creating what must have been a place of cognitive dissonance.

Beginning in the 1950s, the coal mining industry began to decline in southern West Virginia, causing a population loss in McDowell County. At the same time, the State of West Virginia began to financially incentivize the removal of black residents by choosing to pay black students to attend universities out of state, rather than provide them with higher educational opportunities at home.¹³¹ This decline in population meant that by the 1970s the Kimball War Memorial had fallen into critical disrepair at the same time that the World War I generation was disappearing. Based on its state of decay at this

¹²⁹ American Legion . Luther Patterson Post, No.36 (Kimball, W. Va.). Letter from American Legion, Luther Patterson Post, No. 36, to W. E. B. Du Bois, July 4, 1932. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Permalink: <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b061-i334>

¹³⁰ Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963. Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to American Legion, Luther Patterson Post, No. 36, July 13, 1932. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b061-i335>

¹³¹ Goldberg, “Memorial Preserves More,” July 3, 2013.

time, the memorial failed to project a public purpose meaningful enough to justify its continued existence to the McDowell County government. Through the passage of time, and the decline of collective memory associated with World War I, the original symbolic meaning of nationalist glory had lost resonance among officials and the public. The Kimball War Memorial was effectively abandoned by the county government in the 1980s, and suffered a destructive fire in 1991 that left only the exterior walls of the building intact.¹³²

After the fire, a grassroots movement took shape with an interest in restoring the ruined memorial. In 1993, the property was deemed significant enough to be added to the National Register of Historic Places, specifically because of its association with African American history.¹³³ Efforts to restore the building were led by local black WWII veterans Ellis Ray Williams and James Eubanks, among others.¹³⁴ These efforts were successful in obtaining state and federal capital dollars. In 1999, petitions to Senator Robert C. Byrd resulted in two congressional appropriations for the project. Between 2000 and 2002, the McDowell County Museum Commission received \$1.2 million in federal aid for the restoration and reconstruction of the Kimball War Memorial.¹³⁵

Restoration and reconstruction of the interior was completed in 2006. The new design included many facilities similar to the original, including meeting rooms, offices, a reception area, auditorium, kitchen, and an exhibit area for World War I artifacts.

¹³² Sone, "Kimball War Memorial Building," 8; 12.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Archer, "World War I Memorial," 2014.

¹³⁵ Jody Brumage, "Saving West Virginia's African American Heritage," *The Robert C. Byrd Center For Congressional History and Education Blog*, July 30, 2013. Accessed November 19, 2017. <https://www.byrdcenter.org/byrd-center-blog/saving-west-virginias-african-american-heritage>

Beginning in 2009, students and faculty at West Virginia University undertook a research project to develop exhibits that would interpret the Kimball War Memorial as a historic site associated with African American history in West Virginia. As of 2013, the project had produced physical as well as online digital exhibits through documentary research and oral history collection.¹³⁶ One of the stated goals of the project was economic development through increased heritage tourism to the county, which is currently one of the poorest in the state.¹³⁷ No longer just a community center, the building has taken on additional value as a center for oral history, a museum, a historic site, and a potential economic driver.

According to the opening remarks at the building's dedication, the Kimball War Memorial had always been valued by the black community as a symbol of socio-political advancement.¹³⁸ However, for most of its history this symbolic meaning was not officially recognized by powerful and predominantly white institutions. The depopulation of African Americans from McDowell County left the Kimball War Memorial without the sufficient group members to maintain the memorial as a space of collective memory and identity for that community. It was only after two powerful, mostly white institutions—the National Park Service and the US Congress—officially recognized the memorial as significant for its association with black history that these same institutions bestowed sufficient legitimacy and financial support to make preservation possible.

It is important to note that the primary benefactor for the rehabilitation of the Kimball War Memorial was Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV). It is well known that in the

¹³⁶ "About the Project," Soldier's of the Coalfields website, Accessed November 19, 2017. <http://forgottenlegacywwi.org/about/>

¹³⁷ Goldberg, "Memorials Preserve More."

¹³⁸ Sone, "Kimball War Memorial Building," 12.

1930s and 1940s, the young Robert Byrd was an active member and recruiter for the Ku Klux Klan.¹³⁹ He left the organization after launching his political career but continued to criticize integration of the military and publicly defended the KKK as late as 1958. Notably, Byrd also filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Criticism of his past racist beliefs dogged his career later in life to the point that Byrd eventually denounced his former prejudicial views and worked hard to politically compensate for this grave error.¹⁴⁰ In this context, it is reasonable to understand Byrd's political support for the Kimball War Memorial as an attempt to mitigate his reputation as a segregationist and to give the appearance of political reform.

Senator Byrd was representative of larger shifts in social and political thinking among the white majority in the second half of the twentieth century as outward racism gradually became politically untenable. Likewise, among preservationists in the 1990s, a dearth of formally recognized historic sites associated with black history prompted greater national interest in surveying and registering these places.

The registration and rehabilitation of the Kimball War Memorial should be understood as one gesture in a larger attempt to correct past social injustices. In so doing, the National Park Service, the University of West Virginia, the US Congress, and McDowell County residents collectively assigned a new official version of significance that emphasized the memorial as a symbol of civil rights advancement for African Americans. While this version of significance was always held among the black

¹³⁹ Eric Pianin, "A Senator's Shame," *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2005. Accessed online November 21, 2017. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/18/AR2005061801105.html>

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

population of McDowell County, it was not officially accepted by these institutions and groups before 1992.

This case study shows how official assignments of significance are not always representative of a complete version of historical events, nor are these assignments static from era to era. The process involved in assigning this new official version of significance resulted in the rehabilitation of the Kimball War Memorial because a new value system was more politically acceptable by those in power than what had previously been the dominant symbolic meaning. However, it took more than seventy years before the official version of significance reflected the value system ascribed to the memorial by Kimball's black population. The Kimball War Memorial teaches us that we should be skeptical of official versions of significance for heritage sites, as they may omit multiple, equally valid, values. In addition, the transitory nature of these assignments suggests that significance can, and should, be reevaluated as time goes on to ensure it is completely truthful and reflective of new historical events and contemporary value systems.

Conclusion

Although memorials are thought to carry a single symbolic idea permanently into the future, the reality is that the public frequently interprets complicated meanings and changes those meanings organically over time.¹⁴¹ Within his values-centered theory of preservation, Mason explains that "heritage values are acknowledged to be constructed and situational, not inherent. The assessment of values depends to a great extent on who is assessing them, and on the historical-geographical moment in which the value is

¹⁴¹ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 209.

articulated.”¹⁴² Mason’s view contrasts with how significance is determined by the NRHP process, in which it is accepted that significance is inherent to the object and essentially remains the same over time, separate from how the public might change its evaluation. In contrast, West Virginian elected officials changed the official significance of the Kimball War Memorial in the 1990s. The research conducted by the University of West Virginia, the interpretive exhibits, and the community activities are all indicative of how the memorial has come to be seen as socially valuable in ways that differ from what was originally understood by establishment institutions.

The rebirth of the Kimball War Memorial would not have been possible without this change in symbolic meaning from one of hegemonic nationalism to several valid versions of significance. While multiple versions of significance are possible within the existing NRHP framework, in practice these assignments lack the kind of public input that ultimately made the Kimball War Memorial successful. Mason goes on to state that “events will continue to push preservationists to revise traditional notions of value and significance. Otherwise, their work will become irrelevant to the daily challenges and long-term concerns of ordinary citizens.”¹⁴³ By shifting value systems, West Virginians ensured that the Kimball War Memorial interpreted a more complete version of significance and therefore allowed the site to adjust to prevailing socio-political norms and continue to maintain relevancy.

The measure of importance for a place like the Kimball War Memorial or the Lincoln Memorial is not solely based on the significance assigned by any particular authoritative body such as the NRHP, the NPS, or the US Congress. Instead, the

¹⁴² Mason, “Fixing Historic Preservation,” 68.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 70.

importance of these places is measured by the extent to which they perpetuate collective memory among a plurality of people who can derive some personal meaning from the memorial. As collective memory in contemporary times is built upon the experience of individuals and their episodic memory, the values-centered theory of preservation is a far more appropriate way of preserving memorials as both historic artifacts and vibrant public spaces. Negotiating and re-evaluating importance through open community dialogue ensures that the episodic memory of individuals is respected, thus developing a more complete and accurate collective memory for the memorial. When the public changes symbolic meaning as part of this process, more people are further inclined to use the memorial because it can accommodate episodic memory and fill contemporary needs. In the next chapter, it will be shown how new understandings of meaning through a values-centered approach results in the adaptive reuse of memorials to return old memorials to vibrancy.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

Chapter Overview

The instability of collective memory means that the public reevaluates, questions, and contests monument meaning as time passes. Since the public changes its assignment of value systems, how should preservationists respond to these changes? As with other types of historic resources, monuments of the past cannot be kept in proverbial formaldehyde. Lowenthal explains:

While preservation formally espouses a fixed and segregated past, it cannot help revealing a past all along being altered to conform to present expectations. What is preserved, like what is remembered, is neither a true nor a stable likeness of past reality.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, there are limits to preservation as a means of fixing the physical world in time. Like all historic relics, monuments and memorials often need to be mediated with the present by being repurposed and adaptively reused. Doing so ensures that monuments efficaciously serve the needs of living people.

The memorial itself is not as important as how well it reflects our current value systems and collective memory. Although the historical value of a memorial never truly goes away, it does become less important as the public loses direct connection to the semantic memory of the original commemorative elements. This is because a memorial

¹⁴⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 410.

needs to accurately reflect the episodic collective memory of the public—in all its diversity—to be serving its intended purpose. Even those monuments that have historically projected a hegemonic symbolism must adapt to accommodate the collective memory systems of the current time. This chapter will discuss how to ensure that memorials reflect our present societal needs through repurposing, while striking a balance with historical value. We will begin by broadly examining the rationale behind adaptive reuse and then apply these methods to memorials.

As with other historic resources, the goal of adaptively reusing memorials is not to completely destroy vestiges of the past but to layer new meaning and purpose on top of old, providing a functional purpose for future preservation of both material historical artifact and present cultural relevance. The challenge is to reconcile multiple, sometimes contradictory, symbolic ideas so that each serves its intended audience in an equitable way. We will return to Foucault’s concept of the “heterotopia” to help guide the process of introducing multiple conflicting systems of symbolic meaning and value in a single space. This process is needed when reconciling assignments of historical value with the external cultural value of what the object might come to represent through change.

Using the principles of adaptive reuse and the philosophical underpinnings of the heterotopia, this chapter will then explore what interventions are available to effectively repurpose old memorials so that they reflect current value systems and current collective memories. In order to arrive at a procedural blueprint, this chapter will identify the elemental ways in which it is possible to change memorials—namely, visual changes, textual changes, spatial changes, and temporal changes. These types of changes will be used to examine more complex treatment options. By combining these elements in

different permutations, it is possible to arrive at programmatic and physical modifications that are both reflective of shifting value systems and appropriate for some historic preservation standards. In particular, the site-specific art installation will be examined as one useful means by which memorials can excite the public, build episodic memory, and strengthen the association between old memorials and contemporary values. The ultimate goal in making these changes is to fully utilize the resource of monuments and memorials for the present needs of a plurality of living people.

An Examination of Adaptive Reuse

What do you do with something that has ceased to be useful? Increasingly, the answer is to throw it away. In industrialized societies, the predominant consumer culture is driven by planned obsolescence, or the intentional creation of objects that quickly become useless and disposable. Smartphones exemplify the principles of planned obsolescence. They are built with a lifespan of maybe two or three years, after which they are quickly supplanted by a new model and are discarded by millions of people. The American economy is driven by the perennial consumption and destruction of consumer goods like smartphones.

In contrast to the disposability of every-day consumer goods, the practice of adaptive reuse seeks to find new uses for items when they cease to serve their original purpose. In the field of historic preservation, this model is applied to historic resources as a way of giving them contemporary use beyond pure historical value. The prevailing preservation theory in the US understands the value of a historic building to be intrinsic to the material object, and is therefore poorly suited to allow changes in historical use.

This stands in contrast to preservation systems elsewhere in the world that take a more flexible view of significance and its relationship to adaptive reuse. The Australian government, for example, defines adaptive reuse as “a process that changes a disused or ineffective item into a new item that can be used for a different purpose...Where a building can no longer function with its original use, a new use through adaptation may be the only way to preserve its heritage significance.”¹⁴⁵ In this definition, the value of a historical object can be more easily articulated when it is adapted to serve some purpose appropriate for the current time.

Adaptive reuse is not a new concept; for thousands of years the survival of buildings was predicated on their ability to provide for immediate practical use.

Lowenthal explains that:

Without adaptive reuse most old artifacts would soon perish. Had the Parthenon not served variously as a mosque, a harem, even as a powder magazine, it would have succumbed to plunder and decay. Prolonged survival usually requires subsequent uses utterly unlike the original one, for things normally become less and less suited to initial uses themselves often extinguished by time.¹⁴⁶

In addition to the Parthenon, other historic buildings have survived because of adaptive reuse. The Pantheon in Rome (126 C.E.), originally a pagan temple, is among the best preserved ancient Roman buildings in the world because of its conversion into a Christian church in the 7th Century C.E. In addition, some memorials have historically undergone adaptive reuse. Perhaps the best example from antiquity is Hadrian’s Mausoleum (139 C.E.), the burial place of at least six Roman emperors and their families. This tomb and

¹⁴⁵ Australian Department of Environment and Heritage “Adaptive Reuse,” 2004, 3.
<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/3845f27a-ad2c-4d40-8827-18c643c7adcd/files/adaptive-reuse.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 288.

memorial, later renamed the Castel Sant'Angelo, was converted to a military fortress in 401 C.E. and served as a fortress and secret prison for the papacy up until 1901.

Modifications and adaptation of old buildings and monuments have continued from the ancient world up through the modern period. Although those who employ adaptive reuse seek to end traditional use, it is actually a very traditional practice.

In the United States, adaptive reuse of historic buildings has only been accepted relatively recently by preservationists.¹⁴⁷ The historic preservation philosophy of Ann Pamela Cunningham, as discussed in Chapter III, set the tone for American preservationists and promoted the idea that historic places ought to be kept fixed in time, with as little change as possible. However, preservationist William Murtagh points out that even house museums, like Cunningham's Mount Vernon, are examples of adaptive reuse—albeit subtle ones—since they convert a residential use into one that is educational and commercial. Unlike most house museums, however, adaptive reuse usually requires that the resource undergo more drastic physical and programmatic change. The National Trust for Historic Preservation acknowledges that “such conversions are accomplished with varying alterations to the building.”¹⁴⁸ In order to guide these alterations, preservationists utilize the treatment of “rehabilitation” as defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation* (“SOI Standards”), codified in 36 CFR 67 for use in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program. This law defines rehabilitation as “the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or

¹⁴⁷ William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005) 99.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use.”¹⁴⁹ Although historic preservation scholar Norman Tyler defines rehabilitation synonymously with adaptive reuse, the two terms have slightly different meanings.¹⁵⁰ While rehabilitation seeks to make historic buildings functionally usable by modern standards, it tends to presume that the type of use will stay the same and focuses on utility upgrades such as mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Adaptive reuse draws upon the techniques of rehabilitation but goes a step further by proposing a new type of use altogether, giving us not just the means of using a building, but also a reason why.

When making these alterations, the challenge is deciding what aspects of the original object ought to be kept and what can be sacrificed in order to change use. The currently prevailing preservation policy is to emphasize the careful retention of those elements that make the resource “significant,” known as “character-defining features.” There are several guiding philosophies for how to do this. In the US, the SOI Standards provide a set of codified principles for undertaking a rehabilitation project that emphasize retaining original use. The first sentence of these standards declares that “a property will be used as it was historically.” The standards only allow for adaptive reuse if the new use results in “minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships” otherwise known as the character-defining features of the property.¹⁵¹ Further, the legal definition of rehabilitation cautions to carefully preserve those “portions

¹⁴⁹ “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation,” National Park Service website, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>

¹⁵⁰ Norman Tyler, et.al, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1999) 197-199; Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 99-106

¹⁵¹ “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>

and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."¹⁵²

Although widely adopted—and in some cases, legally mandated—this definition of rehabilitation can present inherent contradiction if historic, architectural, and cultural values do not align. As we have seen, the public changes the values associated with historic places over time. If values change, then those building elements that we define as representative of those values will also change. The SOI Standards present a logical fallacy in that they emphasize retaining original use, while only allowing modifications that are subordinate to physical elements reflective of the building's original value. In other words, the standards equate *how* to preserve a building with the reason *why* to preserve a building. In doing so, the SOI Standards fail to adequately consider what happens if a building's present cultural value is incompatible with its historical use. The only way to reconcile this contradiction is to assume that historical, architectural and cultural values stay the same and that significance is permanent, which, as we've seen in Chapters II and III, is a false assumption. By not providing a mechanism to adequately adjust for changes in value systems, the SOI Standards do not provide adequate guidance to make preservation decisions for those monuments and memorials that are subject to impermanent meaning.

The SOI Standards are constrained in how they approach the process of adaptive reuse compared with other guiding preservation philosophies elsewhere in the world. The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter) is a set of preservation principles created in 1964 by the international community

¹⁵² "Introduction to the Standards," National Park Service.
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>

of preservationists and is maintained by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Compared to the SOI Standards, the Venice Charter more explicitly acknowledges that historic resources must serve contemporary needs. Article 5 of the Venice Charter states that:

The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but it must not change the layout or decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modifications demanded by a change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted.¹⁵³

It is interesting that, unlike the SOI Standards, the Venice Charter acknowledges that preservation is *always* predicated on keeping historic resources “socially useful.” It is also important to note that the term “monument” encompasses the broader definition discussed in the previous chapter, which includes commemorative monuments as well as any historic building, place, or setting. The Venice Charter is more realistic than the SOI Standards in that it does not explicitly privilege historical use. Despite its emphasis on social utility, however, the Venice Charter still does not allow for any changes to spatial frameworks or ornament and thereby constrains modifications that might better reflect contemporary need. For example, it discourages the removal of sculptural or artistic elements as well as complete relocation of the resource. We run into the same problem as before: identifying character-defining features can vary widely depending on how—and especially *when*—one defines significance. Although the Venice Charter acknowledges the need for new purposes and uses, it still restricts the process of adaptive reuse in order

¹⁵³ “The Venice Charter”: The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964. Article 5.

to conform to original “layout or decoration,” regardless of how that layout and decoration is valued in the present moment.

Compared to the SOI Standards or the Venice Charter, the Burra Charter is much more flexible in its approach and better suited to guide adaptive reuse projects for memorials. Although new uses should be compatible with the place’s cultural significance, the Burra Charter does not *ipso facto* preclude changes if a new use—and its associated physical alterations—will better protect the cultural significance of the place.

Article 15.1 of the Burra Charter states that:

Change may be necessary to retain cultural significance, but is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance. The amount of change to a place and its use should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation.¹⁵⁴

The explanatory notes for this article go on to state that “it may be appropriate to change a place where this reflects a change in cultural meanings or practices at the place.”¹⁵⁵

These changes can include physical alteration of the object, or even relocation in extreme circumstances. That said, it would be incorrect to assume that the Burra Charter allows for free range alterations of historic resources. The charter cautions against change, advocating to “change as much as necessary but as little as possible” so as to protect the resource’s cultural significance. However, in places where change will protect that significance, change is permissible. In essence, protection of cultural significance, as defined by the people who make up that culture, is prioritized over protection of the object. The Burra Charter teaches us that the preservation of the object is not an end unto itself, but rather a means to protect external cultural values.

¹⁵⁴ The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013. Article 15.1

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Explanatory notes for Article 15.1

The philosophy and process outlined in the Burra Charter is not perfect. However, this charter does provide a more appropriate philosophy for the preservation of monuments and memorials because it begins with the premise that the public changes value systems over time and that cultural significance is defined by the group at large and not exclusively by the qualities of physical objects. Since memorials are reflective of collective action and collective memory, it is particularly necessary to understand their value through consultation with the public. Through consultation and updated assignments of significance, the Burra Charter outlines a process to begin to adaptively reuse those memorials that have been forgotten or contested.

The High Line: A Case Study in Adaptive Reuse

The High Line, an adaptive reuse project in New York City, illustrates how the Burra Charter process can work effectively. Although not a monument, the way the High Line was repurposed provides a blueprint for future projects on monuments and memorials, as well as adaptive reuse generally. The High Line is an elevated park and urban trail built from 1999 to 2009 from a converted 1930s railroad viaduct in Manhattan. The project has been widely hailed as a successful example of adaptive reuse and attracts over five million visitors each year. In his essay “Lessons from the High Line,” co-founder of the project Robert Hammond attributes the success of the High Line to the fact that the viaduct underwent repurposing based on community input, divorced from typical preservation standards. Hammond’s organization The Friends of the High Line set out to physically preserve the viaduct but intentionally did not seek official historic designation for the project because they felt that the SOI Standards did not permit the alterations



Figure 10: The High Line in New York City converted a railroad viaduct into an urban park. This project embodies the philosophy of adaptive reuse by changing a historical use to fill contemporary need. [Photo by Beyond My Ken, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0, 2010]

necessary to meet community needs. Instead, the design of the repurposed structure, and its associated value systems, was guided by a transparent process that collected community ideas through an open dialogue that put members' needs first.¹⁵⁶

To put this in terms of the Burra Charter process, the High Line's cultural value was determined through consultation with diverse cultural groups, i.e. the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods and communities. This dialogue concluded that, although the viaduct retained some historical value, the community did not so much value it purely as

¹⁵⁶ Robert Hammond, "Lessons From the High Line," *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation*, eds. Max Page and Marla R. Miller (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press 2016) 102-105.

a historical artifact, but as a potential infrastructural improvement to the city's network of urban parks. With this primary value system as a starting point, the project's leaders were able to make informed decisions about what original building material to keep, and what needed to be changed. Hammond acknowledges that not all of the community's input was accepted. If an idea was rejected, a justification was brought back to the community. Through this dialectic process, the community felt engaged and ultimately supported the project as stakeholders, ensuring its success.

From there, necessary alterations and modifications were guided by a desire to meet the needs of the community while also respecting the historical past of the viaduct. Hammond argues that it was this, and not the preservation of the viaduct itself, that explains why New Yorkers have made the High Line an integral part of the city's future. The project was a success due to community engagement and a willingness to break from merely preserving history. In other words, the project was not about the historical value of the viaduct, but its present value as an urban park. Hammond explains that "by *repurposing* instead of just *preserving*, we would be able to honor the structure and maintain its essence, with the freedom to modify it for today's world."¹⁵⁷

The Myths of Permanence and Transience

Unlike the High Line, the presumed permanence of monuments has largely precluded adaptive reuse, particularly in the US. Viewing historical resources like monuments as immutable is indicative of broader trends in American culture. Compared to Europe, adaptive reuse has been slower to take hold in the United States, in part

¹⁵⁷ Hammond, "Lessons From the High Line," 104.

because of what architectural historian Mitchell Schwarzer has termed the “myths of permanence and transience” in American culture. Schwarzer outlines how preservation in the US partially developed as a reaction against early 20th century cultural changes—such as industrialization, immigration, women’s suffrage, and the Great Migration—by seeking to keep historic places “permanent.” This phenomenon is exemplified by Colonial Williamsburg, which portrayed a nostalgic view of a simple and pastoral national past. In the early 20th century, preservation in the style of Colonial Williamsburg “was widely viewed as an antidote to the ills of industrial society and as a tool for the Americanization of immigrants.”¹⁵⁸ This manner of interpreting history fixes the past in time and sets it apart from the day-to-day life of regular people. It is not coincidental that the movement to create places like Colonial Williamsburg was borne out of the same motivations that created the reactionary and culturally conservative monuments discussed in Chapter II.

In contrast to the myth of permanence exists the the myth of the American frontier, as exemplified by John Wayne movies or Jack Kerouac’s novel *On the Road*. The idea of rugged individualism and geographical freedom pervasive in American culture fostered a distrust of urban environments and built a national myth of transience. This myth fetishized the act of heroic exploration and vilified settling down in any one particular place for too long. It also led to the practice of constant destruction and redevelopment of urban cores, and the belief that these places were disposable. According to Schwarzer, the myths of permanence and transience served as two sides of

¹⁵⁸ Mitchell Schwarzer. 1994. “Myths of permanence and transience in the discourse on historic preservation in the United States.” *Journal of Architectural Education* 48(1). 3.

the same escapist coin, cast in opposition to industrialization, and neither truly reflective of reality. The myth of permanence isolated that which was historic from “that which is unhistoric.” These two myths created the perception that places which were not preserved had no historical merits, thus constructing a false dichotomy between preservation and destruction. Schwarzer concludes that historic preservation practice presumes a level of permanence in historic places that precludes adapting these places for the future. In his view, a more realistic approach would be to reconcile the myths of permanence and transience into a practice that takes some elements of each.

Adaptive reuse seeks to reconcile these two mythologies by modifying the unchangeable and recycling the disposable. The reconciliation of permanence and transience is particularly relevant to monuments because it is here that we find the polarity between these myths existing simultaneously. Monuments project the image of permanence and are created with the express intent of lasting forever; their meaning, however, is almost inevitably transient as collective memory changes. While not unique to American culture, the myths of transience and permanence exist inherently in Western-style monuments. It is for this reason that the principles of adaptive reuse—i.e. finding new uses to protect cultural significance, and modifying accordingly—are logical for instilling a sense of contemporary relevance to monuments and memorials.

Adaptive Reuse of Monuments and Memorials

While adaptive reuse is commonly seen as an appropriate way to preserve historic buildings, the idea is somewhat foreign to the discussion of monuments, memorials, and commemorative properties generally due to their historical status as “permanent.”

Monument builders attempt to create symbolic immortality, and so to change use would be antithetical to the builder's intent. Understanding the fallacy of permanency when it comes to monumental meaning should encourage a new look at adaptive reuse as an effective treatment option for monuments and memorials. Beyond the intentions of builders, the idea of adaptive reuse for monuments sounds a little strange because we do not tend to consider the commemorative in terms of the utilitarian. Commemoration primarily exists in the world of the mind, and not in any physical or corporeal sense. Yet for monuments and memorials, commemoration is a type of use that can be changed like any other. Finally, opportunities to adaptively reuse monuments are sometimes limited for the reason that they often do not provide functional space. Yet this limitation is not universal since occupiable space is sometimes an integral part of commemorative properties, like living memorials.

When discussing changing memorial use, one must ask, what is the use of a memorial in the first place? As we have seen, the historical use of the monument was commemorative, but also symbolically practical. Monuments projected an immortal image of collective memory, thereby reflecting the value systems of the group or individual who erected that monument. The projection of these value systems promoted an idea of cultural hegemony, and was therefore a political tool for dominant individuals or groups who held socio-economic power. In these terms, the purpose of monuments begins to appear more utilitarian. The signaling of underlying meaning through visual, textual, or spatial clues is a use of memorials, albeit a symbolic one. As we will see, symbolic use is still capable of adaptive reuse without the wholesale destruction of the original symbolic signifier. Yet symbolic use is not the only functionality of memorials.

In the modern era, as monuments transformed into memorials and took on spatial characteristics, memorials began to assume other use-types so as to promote the episodic memory of visitors. These uses could be termed “spatial uses.” They include the pure experience of visitation, such as at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or the utilitarian functions of daily life such as at living memorials like the Kimball War Memorial. Living memorials present a special challenge—and opportunity—for adaptive reuse projects because they provide space to accommodate programmatic changes beyond mere ornament or decoration.

Whether it be the repurposing of symbolic use or spatial use, some people might question whether or not it is appropriate at all to be changing the meaning of something that was intended to resist change. Iconoclasm of monuments and memorials is frequently viewed as an attempt to suppress public representations of historical truth, regardless of whether or not the monument was ever really representative of history or was instead created as propaganda. Removing or altering politically unpopular statues can seem reminiscent of an Orwellian purge of the past, akin to Stalin’s doctoring of photos to create a fabricated version of events. Yet the ethical integrity of adaptive reuse is measured by the intentions of the people who are seeking the change. If the intent is to secretly punish political adversaries, then alterations made during adaptive reuse are ethically dubious. But if changes in use are guided by a transparent and participatory democratic process—such as the one used for the High Line—then the act of adaptive reuse resists accusations of “erasing the past.” Further, the guidelines of the Burra Charter caution against radical changes, advocating a cautious and measured approach guided by the need to respect multiple value systems. Article 13 of the Burra Charter states that “co-

existence of cultural values should always be recognized, respected, and encouraged. This is especially important in cases where they conflict.” In this view, it is the job of preservationists to integrate new value systems with the old in a logical way that layers existing meanings with the past, depending on the cultural value systems at play.

Recognizing, respecting, and encouraging conflicting value systems requires careful mediation between those distinctive features of the resource that signify the various assigned values. Based on the recommendations of the SOI Standards, the Venice Charter, and the Burra Charter, it is far better to alter historic resources through an *additive* process than by a *subtractive* one. For example, new imagery, text, or spatial relationships can be added to represent the coexistence of different cultural values, to be discussed shortly. Only those cases in which it is impossible to protect the prevailing cultural value of a place should a subtractive process be considered. Despite any given memorial’s inevitable loss of widespread relevance, there will always continue to be some people who attempt to assign intrinsic historical value to the object. Subtractive or non-reversible treatment methods risk infringing on their right to understand the memorial using their own subjective value system. That said, overwhelming conflicting values might result in more radical alterations in favor of the dominant value system, up to and including removal or relocation of the resource. For the majority of cases, while an additive process sounds good hypothetically, presenting two different symbolisms that contradict one another can be dissonant. Architectural historian Dell Upton points to the fact that widespread practice of adding African American monuments to public spaces where there are Confederate monuments has resulted in a confusing and problematic

symbolic landscape in the American South.¹⁵⁹ The problem here, and with other so-called “counter-monuments,” stems from the fact that nothing is done to modify, mediate, or alter the original Confederate monument, thereby perpetuating its original symbolic use. This alteration need not be physical modification. Contextual changes, to be discussed further below, can sometimes thoughtfully address how the public understands the symbolism of the original monument. However, to introduce neither physical modification nor contextual modification implicitly legitimizes a white supremacist mythology that specifically seeks to undermine the legitimacy of adjacent African American monuments. In this case, the addition of new monuments in the vicinity of the old is not adaptive reuse at all and creates untenable contradiction. In a true adaptive reuse based on prevailing public value systems, the Confederate monument would need to be evaluated and altered accordingly rather than placing a separate monument nearby that does nothing to truly engage with the first monument in a meaningful way.

Adaptive Reuse of Monuments - Historical Precedents

While altering monuments and memorials to suit contemporary values might sound radical, this layering of new symbolism on top of old has occurred for thousands of years. The continuous reinvention of monument meaning is almost as old as the practice of building monuments. Trajan’s Column and the St. Peter’s Square Obelisk, both in Rome, are two examples of monuments from antiquity that were adaptively reused in the Renaissance. It is important to note that the following examples do not, by themselves,

¹⁵⁹ Dell Upton, “What Can and Can’t Be Said: Commemorating African-American History in the Shadow of the Confederacy.” Lecture presented at Goucher College, Baltimore, MD. March 6, 2018.

demonstrate the open and democratic process advanced by the Burra Charter. However, these examples do provide a visualization for how physical change can occur in such a way as to reconcile historical value with contemporary use value.

Trajan's Column in Rome was first built in 113 C.E. to commemorate and memorialize the Emperor Trajan and his life's exploits. In order to communicate the semantic memory of his life, the column is famously wrapped in a strip of marble relief sculptures depicting one hundred fifty-five scenes from Trajan's military campaign against the ancient kingdom of Dacia. The scenes are largely apocryphal and focus on the mythologizing of Trajan rather than a truthful historical record of events. Although originally valued as a symbol of Trajan's heroism—and the glory of Rome—the column has undergone at least two major transitions in value and purpose since its construction. In 1587 C.E., Pope Sixtus V partially reoriented the meaning of the column by restoring it and placing a bronze statue of Saint Peter on top, symbolically appropriating the monument to extol the dominance of Christianity and papal authority. Sixtus's legacy in Rome was his extensive rebuilding of urban infrastructure: clearing streets, constructing public buildings, and restoring aqueducts back to functionality. The restoration and reinvention of Trajan's Column was indicative of a broader effort to equate the civic order of ancient Rome with the sacred institution of the Vatican during the Renaissance.

By placing a Christian icon on top of a monument dedicated to a pagan emperor Sixtus effectively repurposed the monument from one that celebrated the might of the



Figure 11: Trajan's Column in Rome (113 C.E.) depicts both the pagan emporer Trajan and St. Peter simultaneously. [Photo by Alvesgaspar, Wikimedia Commons, 2015]

Roman military into a monument that reaffirmed both the sacred and secular authority of the papacy in response to the growing Protestant reformation.¹⁶⁰ Although we cannot be completely sure of Sixtus's intentions, the result of this adaptation bears witness to more thoughtful decision making than the mere recycling of existing material. The physical evidence of the existing monument suggests that Sixtus did not just obliterate one symbolic use for another. His decisions logically folded the symbolism of one into the other, preserving the essence of the original through the simple addition of new visual icons. Although modern scholars tend not to pay the statue of St. Peter much attention, the addition of this statue was important in its own time as a means of justifying the preservation of the original monument. Sixtus accomplished this repurposing through additive alterations without removing the original sculpture or inscriptions. This decision left a physical record of the monument's older value system, essentially creating a monument that projected two different, parallel values without sacrificing one for the other.

In modern times, the column again underwent changes in value as it served as the artistic inspiration for the construction of copies like the Vendôme Column (1810) in Paris or the Washington Monument (1829) in Baltimore, Maryland. Today, the column is valued by classical historians as an artifact of ancient Rome but also by the Romanian people as a historical record of ancient Dacia—the ancestor to the modern Romanian state. The visual depictions on the relief sculptures provide the only surviving images of ancient Dacians, and are thus valued by Romanians as a rare glimpse into how their

¹⁶⁰ William D. Montalbano, "Sixtus V: Dynamic Rebuilder of Rome," *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1993. http://articles.latimes.com/1993-03-02/entertainment/ca-49_1_urban-vision

ancestors looked and dressed.¹⁶¹ While Trajan's Column once celebrated the death and subjugation of the Dacians, their descendants now celebrate that same column as a nationalist symbol. The Romanian value system is a dramatic inversion of original symbolism, showing how the symbolic use of monuments can completely change over time.

Perhaps more than any other type of monument, the Egyptian obelisk best exemplifies the historical practice of monument adaptive reuse. The history of ancient Egyptian obelisks shows a complex legacy of frequent change and reinvention over the past four millennia, as obelisks were relocated, reinscribed, and redefined. In her account, *The Emperors' Needles*, historian Susan Sorek chronicles how and why Egyptian obelisks were built and then moved and repurposed over at least four different historical periods. By tracing the history of these obelisks, it is possible to see that these monuments survived destruction because their symbolic meaning was periodically adapted to suit contemporary values.

Originating as early as 2,000 B.C.E., ancient Egyptians obelisks were initially powerful religious symbols. Closely tied to representations of Ra, the sun god, obelisks symbolized stability and permanence, as inspired by the eternal qualities of the sun and the solid granite of the monument. To the Egyptians, the pyramidal point of the obelisk, known as a pyramidion, symbolized the sun's rays and a transitory state between the earth and the heavens. The Egyptians also believed that obelisks literally contained the spirit of a deity, and were therefore associated with funerary traditions and ritualized sacrifice. The task of carving, transporting, and erecting obelisks took hundreds, if not

¹⁶¹ Andrew Curry, "A War Diary Soars Over Rome," National Geographic Magazine website, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/article.html>

thousands, of workers many years to complete. The effort involved in constructing an obelisk was an almost superhuman undertaking that helped imbue them with a sense of awe associated with the divine. Over time, the obelisks also took on significance as instruments of political power. Through inscriptions and visual symbolism, the pharaohs built obelisks to promote narratives about their own divinity, immortality, and divine right to rule Egypt. For example, inscriptions on the obelisk at Karnak, built by Queen Hatshepsut around the year 1473 B.C.E., describe the queen as the literal daughter of the god Amun. Through hieroglyphs and vignettes carved into the face of the obelisks, it is clear that pharaohs built them to “obtain eternal life from the gods.”¹⁶²

Although originating in Egypt, ancient obelisks can be found throughout the world. Of the twenty-eight ancient Egyptian obelisks extant today, only eight are located in modern Egypt. The majority of these obelisks—fourteen total—are located in Italy. Sometime between 13 and 10 B.C.E., the Roman emperor Augustus began to relocate obelisks from Egypt and erected them in public squares in Rome. This gesture was in part a symbol of Roman conquest over Egypt but it was also an attempt to strengthen Augustus’s right to rule by validating a recent fascination with Egyptian religion in Rome. When relocated to Rome, obelisks were no longer the literal embodiment of a deity as they had been in Egypt and they were not used as sites to perform sacrificial ceremonies. The new use of the obelisks did build upon their original divine associations, though, and applied it to the political landscape of the empire. Augustus’s reinvention of the obelisk logically connected its original meaning with the important symbols of his own time. The gesture was successful in its intent and subsequent emperors employed the

¹⁶² Susan Sorek, *The Emperors’ Needles: Egyptian Obelisks and Rome* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010) 14.

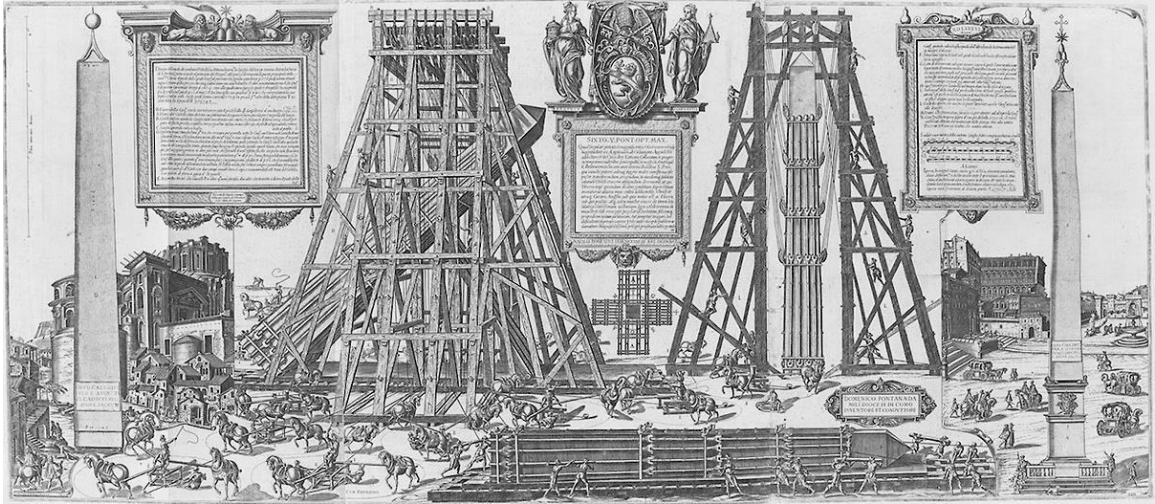


Figure 12: 16th century depiction of how Caligula's obelisk was relocated to become St. Peter's obelisk. "Plate related to the erection of St. Peter's obelisk in the Piazza san Pietro in Rome," 1586, Natale Bonifacio. Etching and engraving, The Getty Research Institute, 2012.PR.35

same practice over the following two centuries. To the Romans, "obelisks presented a visual symbol of authority sanctioned by divine right."¹⁶³

This appropriation and reinvention of symbolic meaning preserved obelisks during the height of the Roman Empire; however, during the Middle Ages, most of the obelisks in Rome fell over and were lost to obscurity. It was not until Pope Sixtus V reinvented the meaning of these obelisks during the Renaissance that they were excavated and preserved "for the honor of Christ and His Cross."¹⁶⁴ Similar to his reuse of Trajan's Column, Sixtus placed Christian crosses on the top of the Egyptian obelisks. In so doing, he reclaimed an ancient pagan monument as a way of symbolically asserting the primacy of Christianity in his own time.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* 104.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 64-65.

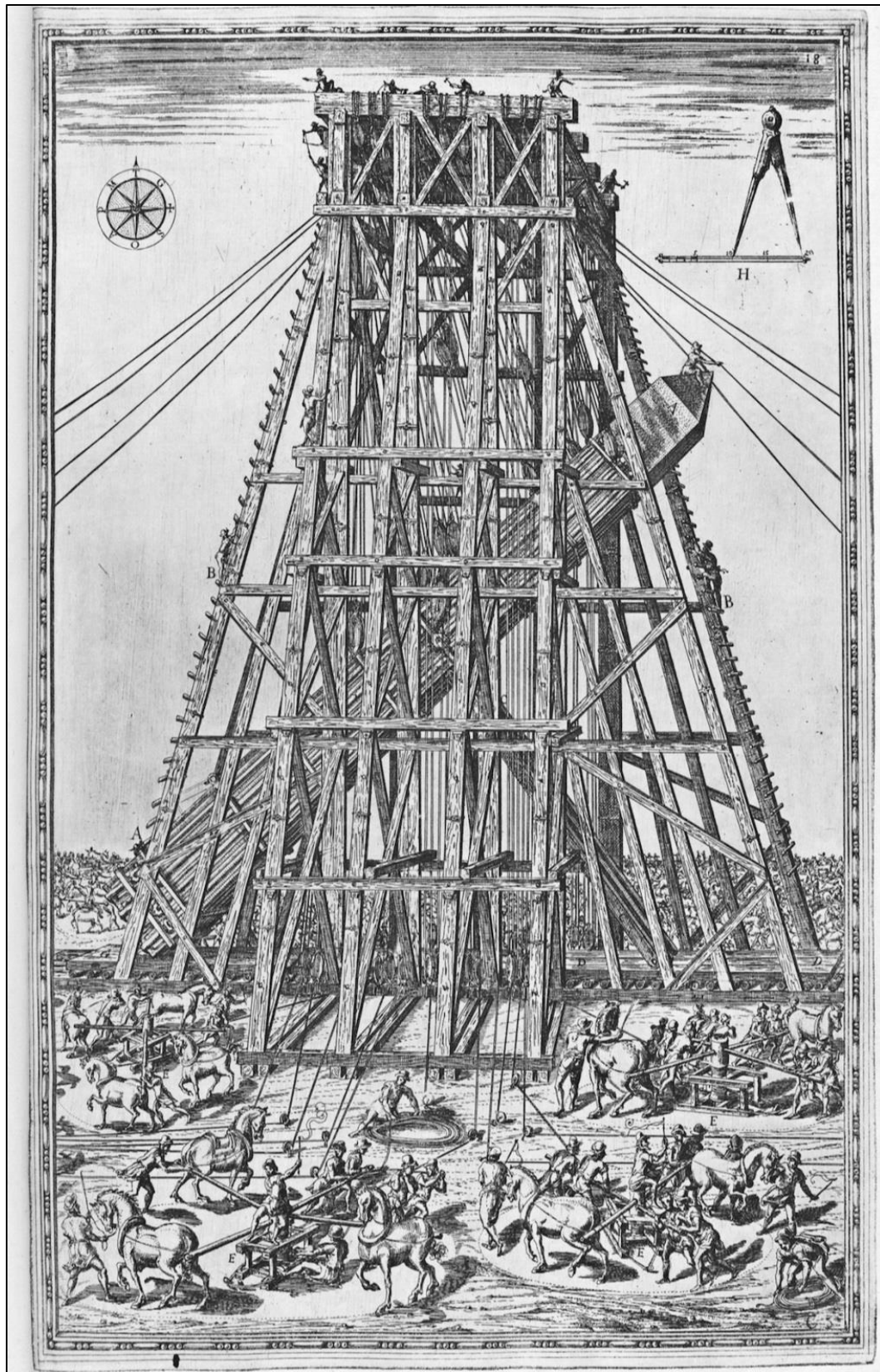


Figure 13: Relocating monuments is a practice that is millennia old. “Side view of the Vatican obelisk being lowered,” 1590. Engraving in *Della trasportatione dell’obelisco...* (Rome: Appresso Domenico Basa). The Getty Research Institute, 87-B7401

The most famous of these obelisks is the one that sits at the center of St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. The largest obelisk ever brought out of Egypt, this eighty-three foot high piece of stone weighs almost three hundred sixty tons. The obelisk was originally brought to Rome in 37 C.E. by the emperor Caligula, who rededicated it to his ancestors. By Sixtus' time it was the only obelisk in Rome that had not fallen over. Sixtus ordered that Caligula's obelisk be moved about three hundred meters to the center of St. Peter's square because it was believed that the obelisk had witnessed the martyrdom of St. Peter, who had been crucified near its original site. In addition to reusing ancient symbolism to legitimize papal authority, this demonstrates how relocation could accommodate a new value system. Sixtus's inscription on the pedestal reads that at the time the obelisk was moved, it had previously been "dedicated to the wicked cult of heathen gods, [and] with great toil and labor [moved] into the precincts of the Apostles."¹⁶⁵ In effect, its relocation to a sacred space redeemed the essence of the monument for the Roman public in the 16th century, who celebrated its relocation. This change in location-based meaning turned the obelisk into an icon of Christianity, thus ensuring its symbolic usefulness and its survival up to the present day.

New Meanings for Monuments: Creating the Heterotopia

The obelisks of Rome show us a common fate in the life cycle of monuments. Although these monuments were created as immortal symbols of power, they were largely forgotten and abandoned by the medieval period. Let us return now to the question posed in Chapter II: "what to do with the monuments whose history we've

¹⁶⁵ Qtd., *Ibid.*, 68.

forgotten?” A more precise way to phrase this question is: “what to do with the monuments that the public has re-valued?” As we have seen, historical value is only one of many potential value systems, while others are often based on the highly unstable and ephemeral nature of collective semantic memory. To address this question, treatment options should take into account the nature of monuments and collective memory and then follow a procedure similar to what is recommended by the Burra Charter. First, the *present* significance of the place must be determined through documentary research as well as consultation with living people. Then, based on the value systems identified in this consultation process, important elements of the monument or memorial can be identified to convey this significance. A new use can be applied based on a logical assessment of the predominant value systems and then integrated into the existing building fabric in a manner proportional to the extent with which societal value systems have changed. It is important to remember that adaptive reuse and its associated alterations should be reflective of those cultural values already held by community groups. As with the High Line, interventions will be more successful when they are guided by consultation with stakeholders. From here, it can be decided what modifications to make to accommodate a new use—whether that be a commemorative and symbolic use, a utilitarian one, or both.

In this process, one of the most challenging objectives is contained in Article 13 of the Burra Charter, which mandates the difficult task of facilitating the coexistence of conflicting cultural values. When memorials are forgotten, their primary value lies in what the memorial *might become* as opposed to the value of *what it was*. However, this does not mean that the historical value simply goes away since a minority of people will

still continue to assign intrinsic historical value onto the memorial. This creates a potential point of conflict as a few people continue to value the memorial's permanence while the majority reinforce its transience through revaluation. As challenging as this might seem, it is not impossible to reconcile these two opposing viewpoints. While modern monument construction has emphasized single hegemonic meanings, the historical practice of reusing monuments, like Trajan's Column or St. Peter's obelisk, reveals a far more nuanced approach than the mere recycling of materials. These ancient examples show that there is an established human tendency to logically fold new ideas into old symbolism without sacrificing the essence of the original. Viewing monuments and memorials through a postmodern lens also shows us that multiple ideas can coexist in a single space. As we saw in Chapter II, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is successful at engaging the public in part because it allows for the freedom of thought and individual interpretation associated with Foucault's heterotopia. The characteristics of the heterotopia give us a way of thinking about space so that it can accommodate new symbolism and new ideas without forsaking the old. As a philosophical concept, the heterotopia is tremendously useful for understanding the recommendations of Article 13 of the Burra Charter.

In creating the heterotopia, the goal is not to create multiple overt contradictory political messages. Rather, the goal should be to create a space in which the people who hold contradictory interpretations could reasonably coexist. This is necessary because our collective memory is formed through individual experience and manifested as episodic memory. Since this episodic memory is non-transferrable between individuals, it is inevitable that there will never be complete consensus of meaning among the viewers of

any given memorial. The lack of consensus is why contemporary memorial builders attempt—unsuccessfully—to force a common understanding through lengthy texts and inscriptions.¹⁶⁶ If we accept that there will never be complete consensus of interpretation, then the memorial has the potential to engage more people and stay “socially useful,” to borrow a term from the Venice Charter. As with the heterotopia of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, this kind of space does not advance one particular message or way to view the memorial. Instead, the VVM provides a spatial framework in which many spaces of the mind can take shape. Another example of this is Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Visitors explore the *stelae* in ways intended by the architect, but also in completely different ways, such as climbing, photography, or even playing cards.¹⁶⁷ Each group is able to take away their own value system from the memorial without substantially infringing on the value systems of the other.

The creation of heterotopias is possible because the conceptualization of symbolic meaning occurs within the unreal space of the mind, and not in any concrete external sense. After all, a symbol is only powerful because we have artificially assigned it that particular meaning. Multiple meanings—including historical significance—can coexist in a single space because each meaning is a utopia of the mind. Historical value is one of many potential meanings. The challenge in creating these spaces exists in the careful mediation between these various meanings and their symbolic uses. The adaptive reuse of a monument or memorial involves interventions and alterations that can let viewers understand the monument’s pre-existing form within the framework of contemporary values. The nature of these interventions will vary greatly depending on the individual

¹⁶⁶ Upton, “Why Do Contemporary Monuments Talk So Much?”

¹⁶⁷ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 110-138.

circumstances of each case. In all cases, however, interventions must symbolically remake the original in a way that fulfills some social need based proportionally on the difference in prevailing value systems.

The alterations necessary to adaptively reuse monuments and memorials can take an infinite number of forms depending on which use-type is being changed. If programmatic use is changed, then this might be accomplished with little to no physical alteration to the memorial. In this instance, occupants begin to perform different activities at the memorial, *in situ*. Some monuments, such as living memorials, naturally lend themselves to new programmatic uses because they have facilities that allow for spatial occupation. A gymnasium, for example, has broad potential for new uses: public assembly, entertainment, dining, or the arts. However, the principles of adaptive reuse are not exclusively applicable to programmatic use. Adaptive reuse can also be applied to monuments that have no program other than “symbolic use,” or commemoration through symbolic figuration.

Repurposing these resources requires a broader treatment philosophy than what the term “adaptive reuse” generally conveys. For example, effective treatment should be able to assign a new use to a statue on a plinth as much as it would a plaza or recreation center. Preservation architect Jorge Otero-Pailos provides some guidance on how to do this by condensing the definition of preservation into a more fundamental philosophy that encompasses a variety of preservation treatments. In Otero-Pailos’ view, it is the role of preservationists to ensure that old forms continue to supply cultural significance to contemporary people. In contrast to new architectural design, preservation’s interventions are “formless” in that they are subsidiary to existing form. Yet these interventions must

still manage to reflect new value systems and project renewed relevance. The way to accomplish this task is not prescriptive, but dictated by the individual circumstances, and value systems, of the particular resource. He explains:

Preservation's mode of creativity is not based on the production of new forms but rather on the installation of formless aesthetics to mediate between the viewer and the building....As mediation, preservation can operate through the medium of building, electric light, sound, recorded lectures, manufactured smells, video, websites, journals, legal frameworks, and a host of other media.¹⁶⁸

Otero-Pailos' view of preservation shows that the adaptive reuse of monuments and memorials could potentially encompass not only changes in utilitarian function, but also symbolic function as well. In defining "formless aesthetics," Otero-Pailos explains that while these installations are not necessarily without physical shape, they do not introduce entirely new forms at the expense of the original. In a sense, these formless aesthetic installations are intended to enhance or interact with the existing form. The use of formless aesthetics to mediate between old symbolism and new values is a logical intervention for a resource like a memorial, which relies on spatial or visual symbolism. This ultimately should be the means of creating heterotopias: the introduction of formless aesthetics to mediate the varying value systems of the memorial, both past and present, based on guidance from public consultation.

What do these formless aesthetic interventions look like when applied to monuments and memorials? In his examination of Confederate monuments in the United States, legal scholar Sanford Levinson proposes a list of nine potential treatment options, ranging from doing nothing on one end of the spectrum to outright destruction on the

¹⁶⁸ Jorge Otero-Pailos, "Supplement to OMA's Preservation Manifesto," *Preservation is Overtaking Us* (New York: GSAPP Books, 2014) 97-98.

other.¹⁶⁹ In the middle are possible treatments such as new signage, new statuary, or relocation to a museum setting. Since these treatment options were proposed for traditional statue-based monuments, they predominantly address changes in symbolic use, as opposed to the programmatic use found at living memorials. Changing programmatic use at a living memorial also begins with a reinvention of its symbolic meaning as a way of determining contemporary value systems and what activities are socially useful. Levinson's nine options are similar enough in their methodology that they can be condensed into the following four elemental classifications:

1. *Textual Changes*: One of the easiest ways to alter a monument or memorial is to change the text inscribed on or near the memorial. This could be the addition of a new sign or the removal of old inscriptions in favor of new ones.
2. *Visual Changes*: Visual changes involve altering symbolic iconography through either an additive or subtractive process. This includes the addition of new statuary, murals or other artwork, either abstract or figurative.
3. *Spatial Changes*: Spatial changes deal with how visitors move in and around the memorial and can be broken into two sub-categories. The first is contextual spatial change. Relocating the monument or memorial into a new setting or context changes how visitors move around the monument. Mechanical spatial change more directly alters how people move through the memorial, such as the moving of walls and entrances.
4. *Temporal changes*: Temporal changes alter how we perceive the passing of time in and around the memorial. These are more difficult to achieve and define, but might

¹⁶⁹ Levinson, *Written in Stone*, 114-122.

include changes to indicators of time, such as the perception of light and sound. Temporal changes can also include how the memorial indirectly influences the behavioral choices of visitors. For example, we are more likely to perceive time moving more quickly if there is a specific activity that the memorial prescribes for us.

Using these four elemental types of change as building blocks, preservationists can customize treatment options that focus on creating a heterotopic space. These change types also guide more complex forms of adaptive reuse such as new programming, events, and planned activity, whether permanent or temporary. The elemental change types can be either additive or subtractive depending on the circumstances of each case. Concurrent to these changes, visitors will usually bring their own set of values and understandings to the memorial.¹⁷⁰ This is why it is important to consult with other groups to make decisions that reflect the changes the public is already making through their actions.

For living memorials, the options for adaptive reuse are more varied because these buildings have a greater number of potential uses based on the individual characteristics of each facility. A memorial swimming pool is going to have a different potential use than a memorial auditorium. A distinction must be made between the commemorative function of the memorial and its utilitarian function. Although the two frequently work together, it is helpful to prioritize redefining different commemorative functions before embarking on the modifications necessary to accommodate a new utilitarian purpose. Historically, the practical designs of memorial buildings were

¹⁷⁰ Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 110-138.

frequently guided by the type of collective memory enshrined there. Gymnasiums and recreation centers were a preferred building type for World War II memorials because they emphasized the kind of physical fitness necessary to defend the nation, thereby symbolically folding the sacrifices of past soldiers into the sacrifices of their future replacements.¹⁷¹ So, too, should new symbolic value systems help guide future function.

The economic or practical functionality of the memorial will follow if the symbolic strength is present. Further, adaptive reuse for utilitarian facilities is more easily accomplished than the adaptive reuse of symbolism. It is for this reason that the following case studies will focus primarily on artistic or symbolic modifications rather than utilitarian ones. In the order of operations for adaptive reuse, artistic modifications come first as a crucial starting point for other subsequent potential changes in practical use. For living memorials, the challenge is to adaptively reuse the building for a new utilitarian function other than what was originally intended, but that is also compatible with representations of symbolic value systems. In the case of Baltimore's Memorial Stadium discussed in Chapter III, the building no longer served its purpose as a stadium, but could have been converted to commercial retail space if the community and government had the will to do so. To create that will, it is first necessary that the symbolic value of the memorial as a place of collective memory be enhanced through representations of prevailing cultural significance. Artistry and artistic expression are an effective means of reinventing symbolism and will be the main focus of the remainder of this study. However, for living memorials, these artistic interventions are not necessarily

¹⁷¹ Andrew Shanken, "Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II." *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002).

an end unto themselves but rather the beginning of long-term programmatic changes once contemporary symbolism has been absorbed into the visitor experience.

Envisioning New Uses for Old Memorials: Four Examples

While documents like the Burra Charter provide some philosophical guidelines, the actual process of tailoring interventions to the circumstances of each specific memorial is more of an art than a science. The creative combination of the change-types discussed above requires the kind of innovative thinking often found in artistic expression. Indeed, site-specific art and architectural installations are highly effective methods of mediating between old forms and new ideas. Through inversion and abstraction, art allows viewers to see a version of the truth that was previously closed off. Art's ability to connect us to deeper meaning explains why artistry has been employed at monuments for thousands of years. Yet contemporary art must use new craft and techniques in order to effectively communicate the spirit of our own time. Using the existing symbolism of the memorial as a starting point, site-specific art installations can take old symbolism and introduce new ideas—and new collective memories—into the symbolic fabric of the memorial. For the visitor, the experience of interacting with the artwork itself becomes a part of the episodic collective memory of the space. By metaphorically combining the existing visual symbolism of the memorial with the participatory act of experiencing the artist's vision, public art can transmute the semantic memory of a memorial into episodic memory.

This process is not confined to merely reaffirming the original value of the memorial. The artwork can challenge, contest, invert, or obscure original meaning. The

ultimate goal of the art installation should be introducing and reaffirming collective memory that is relevant to the viewer, and presenting it in such a way as to make it a personal experience. The experiential element demonstrates to the viewer the importance of the idea being presented by forming it as episodic memory. Art installations can combine different types of changes, whether they be visual, textual, spatial, or temporal. For example, Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi's body of work focuses on recontextualizing monumental sculptures by constructing elaborate domestic interiors around monuments *in situ*.

In his 2012 project, "Discovering Columbus," Nishi constructed a mock penthouse apartment around the sculpture of Christopher Columbus atop the Columbus



Figure 14: "Discovering Columbus" by Tatsu Nishi. Visitors climbed six stories of scaffolding to view the Columbus statue within a domestic interior that had been specially constructed around the monument. [Photo by Ozier Muhammad, The New York Times, 2012]

Square monument in New York City.¹⁷² Although the original sculpture was not physically touched, its symbolic meaning was dramatically altered by giving visitors an up-close view of a statue that is normally six stories in the air while enclosing it in an environment entirely different from the ordinary. The visual, spatial, and temporal changes made by Nishi's intervention undermined the literal and figurative elevation of Columbus's image. The work simultaneously used the monument to provide commentary on societal issues relevant to our own time, especially environmental pollution and the commodification/privatization of public space.¹⁷³ By varying the types and degrees of intervention elements, artists like Nishi can customize how the project interacts with the meaning of monuments and the cultural significance that is reflected in the art. The other advantage to this type of intervention is that it is often reversible and/or temporary, making the future experience of visiting the memorial flexible as value systems change. Finally, these kinds of interventions encompass a wide range of mediums such as architectural structures, sound, light, and technology.

In 2014, architect David Gissen helped to provide one visualization of the symbolic adaptive reuse of a monument when he unveiled a project called "The Mound of Vendôme," a proposal for the experimental reconstruction of a 19th century earthen mound at the base of the Vendôme Column in Paris.¹⁷⁴ To Gissen, the complex and contradictory history of this monument presented an opportunity to explore new ways of framing its symbolic form. The original column was constructed in 1810 to

¹⁷² Roberta Smith, "At His Penthouse, a Tête-à-Tête With Columbus," *The New York Times*, September 21, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/22/arts/design/tatzu-nishis-discovering-columbus-installation.html>

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ David Gissen, "New York Meeting," *Experimental Preservation*, eds. Jorge Otero-Pailos, et.al. (Zurich: Lars Muller Publishers 2016) 106-110.

commemorate the military victories of Napoleon Bonaparte. Initially Napoleon wanted to relocate Trajan's Column from Rome to Paris, but the feasibility of this undertaking proved to be too unrealistic and the Vendôme Column was built as a copy in bronze, substituting depictions of Trajan's military conquests with those of Napoleon.

From the beginning, the Vendôme Column was a reinvention of the symbolism of Trajan's Column and stood as a piece of hegemonic propaganda exalting Napoleon's heroism for sixty years. After the fall of the Second French Empire in 1870, Paris was seized by the Paris Commune, a radical and revolutionary provisional government that assumed control of the city in 1871. The Commune detested the Vendôme Column as a symbol of autocratic militarism and tore it down with ropes in one grand gesture. In preparation for the demolition, the Commune called for the construction of a large earthen mound to cushion the fall of the column so as to protect the surrounding architecture. The act of demolition itself, well documented and reproduced in images at the time, became a reassertion of a new value system for the public square. However, only a few days after the demolition, the national government entered Paris and overthrew the Commune. Immediately, the new government collected the pieces of the fallen column and reconstructed it to the condition that exists today. This reconstruction was yet another repurposing of the monument since, according to Gissen, the reconstructed column "must be understood as the first monument to the destruction of the Commune" rather than the commemorative monument to Napoleon that it once was.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 108

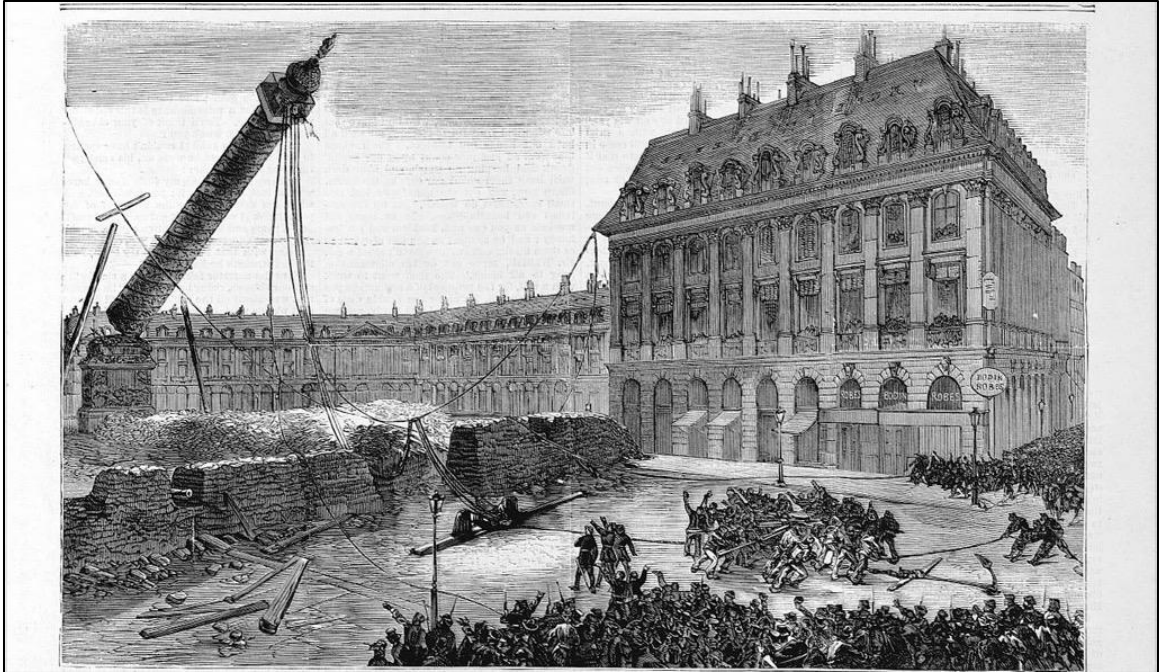


Figure 16: The Fall of the Vendome Column in May 1871. Note the original mound at the base to cushion the fall.[Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, June 24, 1871]



Figure 16: 3D model of the proposed reconstructed mound next to the column as it appears today. [Image by David Gissen, Courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2014]

Gissen's 2014 proposal called for the reconstruction of the 1871 mound at the base of the column in the modern Place de Vendôme. In so doing, Gissen attempted to "reconstruct a dialectical relationship between destruction and reconstruction that underpins the historical presentation of urban and architectural history."¹⁷⁶ In Gissen's proposal, the reconstructed mound serves not only as a means of interpreting radical historical events but also as a way of portraying historical reconstruction as a type of modern radical action in and of itself. In the process, Gissen's mound visually dialogues with the existing monument to logically reframe and re-contextualize it without physically altering the original. From a certain angle, the column continues to appear as it does now: a symbol of political establishment and historical militarism. However, when viewed next to the mound, the column's context changes radically, recalling its past destruction and inverting its intended meaning. The mound visually challenges the monument's monumentality, as if to say, "don't forget that this column was torn down once before, and could be again." Depending on the interpretation of the visitor, the juxtaposition between the mound and column could either evoke the symbolism of revolutionary protest or the symbolism of cultural conservatism, or both, or neither. Regardless, the mound undermines the column's hegemonic meaning and engages the interest of the public without resorting to direct iconoclasm. In short, Gissen's proposal would result in the adaptive reuse of the monument to suit contemporary value systems through the promotion of heterotopic qualities.

Another project that demonstrates the adaptive reuse of a monument is "*PHARES*," a large-scale public sculptural installation designed and built by French artist

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.* 118.

and engineer Milène Guermont. Unlike The Mound of Vendôme, *PHARES* received support from the French government and was constructed in October 2015. Erected in Paris's Place de la Concorde until June 2016, *PHARES* was built to visually dialogue with a three-thousand year old Egyptian obelisk that had been moved from Luxor and was erected in Paris during the 1830s. Meaning "beacon" or "headlight" in French, *PHARES* is a frame structure composed of three hundred twenty aluminum triangles stacked to form a one hundred foot tall truncated pyramid. The pyramid is covered with LED lights, intended to illuminate the adjacent obelisk "both metaphorically and physically."¹⁷⁷ The triangle frames that form the pyramid are built to the same dimensions as the peak, or pyramidion, of the obelisk. The very top piece of the pyramid is missing so that, when viewed from a certain angle, the pyramidion of the obelisk appears to fill in the missing piece of the pyramid. On the *PHARES* website, Guermont explains the precise positioning of the pyramid:

By using sophisticated surveying techniques, with accuracy down to the millimeter, we succeeded in building *PHARES* in perfect alignment with the pyramidion. This creates a new link: from the past to the present... and to the future.¹⁷⁸

These visual connections were intended by Guermont to draw attention to the obelisk and to use the two structures as symbolic proxies for a dialogue between modern French and Egyptian cultures. Another symbolic theme running through *PHARES* is the history of electricity and light. The Place de la Concorde was the location of the first public test of electric light in the world and the cap of the obelisk was originally constructed of a metal alloy called "electrum," from which the word "electricity" is derived. The nighttime

¹⁷⁷ Milène Guermont, "Description," *PHARES*, <http://sculpturephares.com/en/>

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

illumination of the pyramid with LED bulbs draws attention to contemporary issues surrounding energy sustainability and climate change. Members of the public are encouraged to interact with the lights by placing their finger in a sensor that can synchronize the flashing of the lights to the individual's heartbeat. All of these elements contribute to reframing and re-contextualizing of the historical value systems commonly associated with the obelisk and the Place de la Concorde. *PHARES* introduces a whole host of new value systems to this ancient monument, ranging from major geopolitical issues to something as fundamental and intimate as the human heartbeat.



Figure 17: *PHARES* was built to mimic the shape of the adjacent obelisk's pyramidion. The peak of *PHARES* is missing so that it is "completed" by the obelisk when viewed from certain vantage points. [Photo by Milène Guermont, 2015]



Figure 18: *PHARES* illuminated at night by LED bulbs and viewed in alignment with the obelisk [Photo by Milène Guermont, 2015]

While *PHARES* proves that art and architectural installations can repurpose and reframe monuments in a practical sense, it also shows that the success of this treatment type is limited by the extent to which it is accepted by governments and other institutions of authority. One of the problems with Gissen's proposal for The Mound of Vendôme is that it cannot be built without the official sanctioning of the French government, which, to date, has not been granted. While both *PHARES* and The Mound of Vendôme enhance the visibility of their companion monuments, it is only the latter that explicitly contests symbols of nationalist pride. Although both ideas were conceived at roughly the same time and for the same city, the French government only authorized the less radical of the two. This is indicative of how government agencies and other institutional monument managers tend to take fairly conservative stances on contested meaning out of a desire to avoid public controversy, even if those stances run counter to prevailing public value systems. The National Park Service, for example, has historically been reluctant to reshape any kind of symbolic meaning at memorials in Washington D.C., despite public value changes at places like the Lincoln Memorial, discussed in Chapter III.¹⁷⁹

New technology in recent years has opened up possibilities for altering symbolic use through digital mediation non-reliant on government support. Washington D.C.-based artist Billy Friebele uses a variety of technological methods to explore and critically examine the memorial landscape in his artwork.¹⁸⁰ Much of his work relies on the creative use of 3D scanning and printing to capture the physical form of existing architecture. He then reproduces 3D facsimiles of that architecture in new contexts and

¹⁷⁹ See discussion in Chapter III; Stevens and Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement*, 186-189.

¹⁸⁰ Billy Friebele, interview with author, February 6, 2018.

materials to reframe its symbolism. His most recent project utilizes augmented reality technology to reframe the symbolic meaning of the monuments on the National Mall. He and his collaborators are currently developing a publically accessible smartphone app that will virtually overlay new monuments onto the mall when viewed through the phone. In some cases, the new monuments will be designed by Friebele and entirely original. In others, they will be pre-existing monuments from other locations, such as the Congressional Cemetery, that are virtually “moved” by the app onto the mall. These 3D images will then be geolocated onto specific sections of the mall so that they can only be viewed when users physically visit those areas. Similar to how David Gissen’s mound would contest the meaning of the Place de Vendôme, Friebele’s augmented reality would provide a virtual visualization of new monuments aimed at reframing the meaning of existing commemorative landscape. Friebele anticipates that many of these visualizations will challenge the commonly held meaning of the existing memorials in a way that represents alternative, but truthful, viewpoints.

Friebele points to several advantages of augmented reality. Unlike Gissen’s mound, Friebele’s virtual monuments will not require any official approval for actual construction, but can still be viewed in much the same way as if they had been built. This adaptation cleverly circumvents the official stance of the US Congress and the National Capital Planning Commission, who have declared the National Mall to be a “substantially completed work of civic art” in order to effectively halt any future changes.¹⁸¹ Because they are digital, the virtual monuments can be easily adapted and modified in the future to respond to new collective memory and value systems. Another advantage is that the

¹⁸¹ Savage, *Monument Wars*, 311.

virtual monuments will only be viewed by those people who are looking for them, thus avoiding the tendency for monuments to introduce hegemony into public space. While the users of the app will take away a new symbolic meaning from the National Mall, those individuals who want a more conventional experience will not necessarily be impeded by those people who are experiencing the augmented reality. Friebele's project provides a compelling means of converting the National Mall into a heterotopic space while fulfilling the recommendations Article 13 of the Burra Charter.

Living Memorials: The Case of the Baltimore War Memorial

The methods available for the adaptive reuse of living memorials are similar to the methods employed at the more traditional monuments above. The symbolism of the living memorial must be reinvented to suit contemporary value systems before a satisfactory utilitarian function can be applied. Living memorials open up far more possibilities for creative interventions because they provide the indoor space needed for more varied activities and changes. For this reason, living memorials also show the greatest potential for the widest variety of textual, visual, spatial, and temporal changes. The success of these interventions is measured by how well they engage the minds and actions of the public. While the cases above help to form ideas for future interventions, it is difficult to gauge their true efficacy without observing directly how the public interacts with them. The following case study will show how these changes can directly impact the behavior and response of the public. The following information was partly drawn from the author's direct observation as an employee of the City of Baltimore who assisted with management of the site from 2013 to the present.

The War Memorial building in Baltimore, Maryland is a typical example of a living memorial constructed during the interwar period of 1920 to 1940. The building is a neoclassical monumental building completed in 1925 as "... a place of meeting for all patriotic and ex-service organizations, a depository for trophies of wars in which our country has engaged, and a tribute to those citizens of Maryland who gave their lives and their services in the World War."¹⁸² The War Memorial houses a one thousand seat auditorium, plus offices for veteran organizations and smaller meeting rooms. Built as a joint initiative between local and state government, the War Memorial was typical of its time in that it sought to create civic space to build the kind of society at home that the United States had fought to preserve abroad. Also typical, the War Memorial is ambiguously caught between the traditional and the modern. On the one hand, it provides a modernist abstraction of commemoration through functional space. On the other hand, the architect surrounded that space in the architectural symbols of ancient classical monuments.

The interior of the main hall and auditorium is the primary commemorative space and is dedicated to the deceased. The names of the dead are inscribed on the marble walls and an eternal flame burns at one end of the hall. A large allegorical mural depicting the various elements of the war effort adorns the other side of the hall. Classical columns and pilasters line the exterior and every surface is clad in some kind of stone, including marble terrazzo, travertine, and limestone. Like many war memorials, the classical ornament was intended to evoke the military glory of ancient Rome, and thereby

¹⁸² The War Memorial Commission, "The War Memorial - Baltimore, Maryland," brochure, 1927.



Figure 19: The Baltimore War Memorial (exterior). This living memorial is both a monument and a functional building. [Photo by author, 2017]

symbolically elevate the American soldier to the ranks of the Roman legionnaires.¹⁸³ The durability of the stone evokes the kind of permanency commonly associated with monuments, and further drives home the symbolic immortality and heroism of the dead.

¹⁸³ Judith Wasserman "To Trace the Shifting Sands: Community, Ritual and the Memorial Landscape" *Landscape Journal* Jan (2011) 15.

Like many World War I monuments and memorials, the strength of the collective memory enshrined at the Baltimore War Memorial began to decline in the 1970s as the World War I generation began to disappear.¹⁸⁴ Although the building was rededicated in 1977 to honor veterans of subsequent wars, the value of the memorial as a commemorative location continued to decline. By the early 2000s, the history of the memorial was largely forgotten by the surrounding community and visitation was minimal. As visitorship shrank, the value of the building as a civic space for local and state government also diminished. The result was a de-prioritization of the memorial and a significant decrease in the annual operating budget for the building following the Great Recession of 2008. Deferred maintenance on the physical building ensued, as the historical value of the building lost relevance among a majority of the public. By March 2012, this disinvestment had reached such an extent that the city government investigated the possibility of selling the memorial.¹⁸⁵

The Baltimore City Department of General Services assumed responsibility for operating the War Memorial in July 2012 and immediately recognized the need to find new value systems to justify the continued preservation of the building. In January 2015, the agency launched a new program known as the “War Memorial Arts Initiative” aimed at using the building for arts and cultural events as a means of increasing visitation.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Minutes of the War Memorial Commission, 1970-1979, War Memorial Building Archive.

¹⁸⁵ Luke Broadwater, “City Hall considers selling 15 historic landmarks,” *The Baltimore Sun*, March 20, 2012. <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-historic-properties-20120319-story.html>

¹⁸⁶ Mary Carole McCauley, “Baltimore’s War Memorial is home for a new concert series by mostly local artists,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 6, 2015. <http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/arts/bs-ae-war-memorial-concerts-20150506-story.html>

The building continued to serve its original function but began to intersperse its civic programming in the auditorium with arts events such as musical and theatrical performances. In practice, this program was modeled after the Park Avenue Armory in New York, which is similarly used for a variety of temporary arts and cultural activities.¹⁸⁷ Although initially slow to take off, the War Memorial Arts Initiative succeeded in doubling visitation to the building and increasing available funding over the course of the following three years.¹⁸⁸ During the initial few years of the program, the new uses were conducted parallel to—and largely separate from—the memorial’s original function of commemorating war. Gradually, the public’s assignment of cultural significance for the memorial also began to shift from military history toward wide-spread association with the arts.

The separation of these two uses finally merged in January 2018, when the War Memorial staff partnered with Baltimore-based artists Kei Ito and Andrew Paul Keiper to unveil “Afterimage Requiem,” a large scale site-specific art installation in the main hall of the building. This installation, and the reaction that it elicited from the public, signaled a moment of complete adaptive reuse for the memorial insofar as it successfully mediated the historical value of the memorial with its contemporary cultural significance. The installation probed themes of nuclear war, especially drawing on the history of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. According to the artists’ statement:

The exhibition includes 108 human-scale photograms made using sunlight, light sensitive paper and Ito’s body evoking those lost in the bombing, and a 4-channel sound work that portrays the places and processes of the

¹⁸⁷ “About the Armory,” Park Avenue Armory, http://armoryonpark.org/about_us.

¹⁸⁸ Ed Gunts, “Urban Landscape: War Memorial Building to be Restored,” *Baltimore Fishbowl*, January 24, 2017. <http://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/urban-landscape-war-memorial/>

bomb's production, and includes field recordings made at atomic heritage sites in New Mexico and Chicago.¹⁸⁹

The installation occupied the entire footprint of the main hall at the Baltimore War Memorial and introduced visual changes to the space through the images of the photographs. The photographs were arranged on the floor in a grid pattern with space for visitors to move over and between them, thereby introducing spatial changes to the hall as well. The figures in the photos appeared over-exposed and just slightly abstracted enough to give the impression of the burns and disfigurement inflicted on the residents of Hiroshima by the atom bomb. Light in the hall was carefully controlled to create a specific darkened atmosphere that matched the surreal soundscape developed by Keiper. The soundscape was created in the tradition of 1940s *musique concrète* compositions and combined industrial sounds such as the hissing of steam and airplane engines with natural sounds like birds, crickets, rain, and wind.¹⁹⁰ The sound and light of the space, as well as the general atmosphere, were successful in altering the perception of time within the hall. In total, the installation combined three of the four primary means of modifying a memorial: visual, spatial, and temporal changes.

The collaboration between Ito and Keiper was inspired by an unusual family history that they both shared. After becoming friends while living together in college, the two discovered that Ito's grandfather had survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima,

¹⁸⁹ "The Project," Afterimage Requiem website, <https://www.afterimagerequiem.com/title>.

¹⁹⁰ *Musique concrète*, or "concrete music," is an experimental style of music composition developed in the 1940s. New recording technology at the time enabled composers to assemble disparate sounds using direct tape recordings taken from the environment. By cutting and then splicing segments of these tapes together, composers could layer and sequence sounds together in ways that were previously impossible to create in a concert hall using traditional instruments.

while Keiper's grandfather had worked on the Manhattan Project developing the atom bomb. This coincidence inspired the two to explore the legacy of their own family pasts in the context of the contemporary escalation of nuclear threats between North Korea and the United States. The pair specifically sought out a building that carried with it a legacy of commemorating war as a setting for their work. Throughout the project, they considered the Baltimore War Memorial itself to be a third collaborator and took into consideration its past as well as its contemporary significance as an arts and culture venue. The public opening of the installation was held on January 19, 2018 and attracted a racially diverse crowd of about two hundred visitors of varying ages from young children to the very elderly. The show was positively reviewed in the press and attracted coverage from outlets such as the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) and the *Washington Post*.¹⁹¹

On a purely theoretical level, the interventions that Ito and Keiper introduced to the building were successful at repurposing its symbolic meaning and naturally folding that meaning into a format that was reflective of current value systems. However, the behavior and reaction of visitors on opening night indicated that this was also successful at drawing a connection between the artwork and the space it occupied. The following information was drawn from direct observation and select interviews with visitors.

Beginning with entry into the hall, visitors were asked to remove their shoes. On a pragmatic level, this was done to minimize the risk of damaging the photographs on the

¹⁹¹ "The Artists Healing the Wounds of Hiroshima," *BBC Culture*, <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20180202-the-artists-healing-the-wounds-of-hiroshima>; Sheri Venema, "One worked on the A-bomb. The other was a victim. How their grandsons now create art together." *The Washington Post Magazine*, January 18, 2018.

floor. But it also recalled a sort of purification ritual typical of the ancient Shinto practice before entering a sacred shrine. The purification ritual is also one of the criteria that Foucault set in defining the heterotopia. At *Afterimage Requiem*, this ritual oriented visitors and opened them to receiving new ideas because the act of removing their shoes was humbling and signaled that they were entering space of some importance.

As visitors moved through the hall, the visual and aural experience simulated a sense of dread that was akin to the emotional response that might occur when recalling an actual episodic memory of war and the atomic bomb. This experience was a sort of highly abstracted and transcendent memory of the bomb drop, and to walk among the figures was to gain a small sense of experiencing memory of that past. Since no visitor had actually lived through the bombing, the immersive experience of the installation formed a link between the semantic memory of historical events and the experience of the artwork in the present, transmuting semantic memory into episodic memory.

At each stage in the project, the artists ensured that the installation was in dialogue with the building. This integration was so successful that at least one visitor left with the impression that the eternal flame—in place since 1925—had been specifically built as part of the installation. This visual dialogue continued with a contrast of materials. The flimsy quality of the photo paper was brought into relief through juxtaposition with the hardness and durability of the terrazzo floors. Seeing projections of human forms cast onto this frail material was emotionally powerful because it reminded visitors of the frailty of their own corporeal bodies. This theme of mortality was further emphasized by the names of the WWI American dead inscribed on the walls. It was, in part, the material of the artwork—and not just its content—that was in dialogue with its

setting. As solar exposures, the photos captured a fleeting moment in time and hinted at capturing the moment of the atom bomb's explosion. The frailty of the paper and its reminder of human mortality specifically ran counter to the idea of monumental permanency and undermined the truth of that permanency.

The installation did not prescribe a particular way of behavior and this was reflected in the diverse ways in which visitors moved through the space. Visitors chose when and where to move through the grid pattern for themselves. Some moved methodically back and forth through every path available. Others were less intentional, moving wherever they felt compelled. After a while, most visitors left the grid of photographs to sit and experience the space independent from the visual photos. They were experiencing the sound, light, and space of the hall and the general atmosphere. Some sat on benches or stood to the side.

The work succeeded in eliciting an observable emotional response from visitors. The sadness and trauma of this simulated experience of violent death seemed to draw individuals together. Couples would explore the space independently and then meet in the middle to embrace, hold hands, or lean heads on shoulders. In some cases, they would merely stand still in a single place without moving or looking at any particular spot and contemplating their own thoughts, distinct from the stimuli around them.

The most interesting observed behavior was that after experiencing the space for a while, visitors began to interact with the building itself, laying on the floor and touching the walls. While the frailty of the imagery, sound, and photo paper reminded visitors of the temporariness of their bodies, it also made the cold stone of the monument more approachable. Since we are all mortal, the perceived immortality of monuments is

actually very unrelatable. The reminder that the monument itself was also mortal made it seem more comforting and familiar. As visitors physically touched the walls of the building, they studied and touched the names of the WWI dead on the walls. Although the practice of touching these names was once common, it has grown quite rare in recent years as the public has grown more estranged from their significance. The experience of the installation seemed to reorient the public into re-engaging in this practice. This signaled that the visitors connected the “feeling” of the installation with the essence and symbolism of the existing building in which the artwork existed.

This behavior was unexpected because there was something of an intentional ideological conflict between the work and the setting. The evocation of American military triumphalism and the horror of the atomic bombing at Hiroshima are at odds. However, visitors seemed to reconcile these two ideas by connecting the human toll of American soldiers in WWI with the human toll of the victims of the atom bomb in WWII. The common thread between the two was the tragedy of violent death on either side of the conflict. The mixing of two different historical conflicts is an interesting leap, but perhaps signaled the fabrication of collective memory based on an associative contextual familiarity, as discussed in Chapter II. In this view, the “glorious dead” of WWI who were enshrined in the building were conflated with the events of WWII. Many Americans have a poor historical understanding of WWI and it is possible that these visitors used their knowledge of WWII as a substitute point of reference. On the other hand, it seems that some visitors might have known the historical error but did not really care. Keiper actually saw a direct historical link between his work and WWI since it was



Figure 20: Figure 21: Afterimage Requiem by Kei Ito and Andrew Paul Keiper, interior of the Baltimore War Memorial. [Photo by the author, 2018]

the technological advancements of WWI that ushered industrialized warfare into the 20th century, thus enabling the development of the atom bomb.¹⁹²

In either case, the reconciling theme between these two opposing ideas was the senseless and chaotic nature of death in war, regardless of the enemy. Yet the neoclassical splendor of the architecture remained in direct symbolic conflict with this message, characterizing the hall as heterotopic space. The architecture, although physically unmodified, was changed to remind visitors of the lurking power of militaristic symbolism. The public now viewed these pre-existing forms as the symbolic force behind the death and destruction embodied by the names and the artwork. If the building had a Freudian psychic apparatus, we might say that the architecture represented a kind of id. This complexity was further entangled by the most powerful symbol in the room: a thirty foot American flag hanging at the front of the hall. It was left entirely up to the viewer to interpret the symbolism of the flag, allowing each to take away his or her own sense of meaning from the artwork, and the memorial at large.

Interventions like *Afterimage Requiem* allow visitors to translate the emotional response of art into a logical new use for memorials, refreshing collective memory systems and reinstating a sense of cultural significance. Although *Afterimage Requiem* was a temporary installation, it was a crucial starting point for a new series of similar installations that will ultimately repurpose the memorial in the long-term. To those individuals who still continue to assign original historical value to the memorial, the heterotopic characteristics of this new use do not irrevocably deny these people the validity of their subjective value systems. Instead, heterotopic interventions like

¹⁹² Andrew Paul Keiper, Interview with author, January 20, 2018.

Afterimage Requiem allow a plurality of people to engage with new ideas and new collective memories that are important to them without detracting from the historical value assigned by a minority of their peers. In so doing, it is possible to create social value for memorials and return them to use as culturally significant fixtures in their communities. These case studies also help us to understand a starting point for how monuments and memorials can undergo symbolic adaptive reuse as a first step in finding better utilitarian uses. The adaptive reuse of memorials must be guided by the overarching goal of making these places helpful for living people. If given a choice between the two, the public will always put the needs of the living ahead of the desires of the dead. It is for this reason that preservationists must use tools like the ones discussed above if they want forgotten memorials to serve their communities in a meaningful and equitable way.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

And the Daughters of Memory shall become the Daughters of
Inspiration...Painters! on you I call. Sculptors! Architects! suffer not the
fashionable fools to depress your powers...We do not want either Greek or
Roman models if we are but just and true to our own Imaginations.

-William Blake, Preface to *Milton*, (1804)

We cannot rely on the semantic or hegemonic memory of the past alone to continue to justify the preservation of commemorative places. The analysis presented in this study suggests that adaptively reusing monuments and memorials is not a new phenomenon nor is it particularly radical in terms of how preservation practice has been re-envisioned in recent years. Living memorials especially can be revitalized and returned to productive use if their symbolism is mediated with the symbols of our own time and strengthened by episodic collective memory. Above all, the experience of the individual must drive new versions of collective memory at memorials. As intuitive as this idea may seem, the adaptive reuse of commemorative places is radical in that it reorients the conventional understanding of how preservationists themselves shape, and are shaped by, society. To illustrate this point, I will briefly return to the topical subject of Confederate monuments in the United States before summarizing why it is ultimately worth preserving, and adaptively reusing, forgotten monuments and memorials.

Preservation and Embracing Change

As mentioned in the Preface, I was a member of the mayoral task force that relocated Baltimore's Confederate monuments in August 2017. As a consequence, in March 2018, I was personally attacked in an article written by Baltimore radiologist Barton Cockey.¹⁹³ The article was published by *VDARE*, described by the Anti-Defamation League as a website that "posts, promotes, and archives the work of racists, anti-immigrant figures, and anti-Semites."¹⁹⁴ In his article, Cockey was critical of a public comment that I made to *The Baltimore Sun* in which I questioned the permanency of monuments.¹⁹⁵ Cockey felt that the removal of the monuments was a sign of an impending race war and that, as a white person, I had betrayed my race. This kind of ignorant and racist opinion is unfortunately common among supporters of Confederate monuments and actually strengthens the assertion that the monuments are instruments of white supremacy, historically and contemporaneously. However, it initially struck me as strange that I should be singled out for this article when there are other more influential people with greater influence in this debate.

What was more surprising than Cockey's article was a piece of hate mail sent to me shortly thereafter by a fellow preservationist, Milton Wilfred Grenfell, an

¹⁹³ Barton Cockey, "Report from Baltimore, The (Former) Monumental City: There's a War Going On, But White Americans Don't Know - Yet," *VDARE* website, March 22, 2018. <https://www.vdare.com/articles/report-from-baltimore-the-former-monumental-city-theres-a-war-going-on-but-white-americans-dont-know-yet>

¹⁹⁴ "Brenda Walker and Dan Amato inject Anti-immigrant Fervor into the Blogosphere," Anti-Defamation League, 2012. <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/civil-rights/immigration/Brenda-Walker-Dan-Amato-2-9-10-12.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Kevin Rector, "Baltimore park space where Confederate statue once stood is rededicated to Harriet Tubman," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 10, 2018. <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-harriet-tubman-grove-20180309-story.html>

accomplished preservation architect who practices out of Washington D.C. On his website, Grenfell describes himself as a “traditional architect.” His oeuvre is stylistically conservative and he works mainly in a neoclassical idiom. Among other achievements, Grenfell was the recipient of the 2013 Clem Labine Award, given annually to an individual who has done the most to foster “humane values in the built environment.”¹⁹⁶

Unfortunately, Grenfell’s humane values did not extend to his correspondence. He did not open his email with an invitation to civil discourse and instead chose to write brusquely, “shut your embarrassing mouth.”¹⁹⁷ This kind of attempt at brute censorship is common in our current political landscape, but it is surprising when directed from one preservation professional to another, no less a graduate student. Clearly, the preservation profession must rid itself of prejudice and condemn the silencing of new ideas without thoughtful debate. However, as uncivil as his email was, some of Grenfell’s comments do shed light on an interesting point. In addition to trying to silence me, he also admonished: “Do your job! You should be preserving Baltimore’s monuments, not destroying them.”¹⁹⁸ This comment reveals how Confederate monuments have exposed a rift in the field of historic preservation in terms of defining the job responsibility of a preservationist. Although his email was likely motivated by prejudice, Grenfell also understands the role of preservation differently than some of the scholars cited above such as Randall Mason or Jorge Otero-Pailos. What infuriated Grenfell, Cockey, and others was not solely that I had advocated for the monuments’ removal. There are many

¹⁹⁶ Gordon Bock, “Beyond the Call of Duty: Clem Labine Award honors architect Milton Grenfell” *Traditional Building* magazine, July 21, 2015.

<https://www.traditionalbuilding.com/features/beyond-the-call-of-duty>

¹⁹⁷ Milton Wilfred Grenfell, Email to author, March 23, 2018.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

other people far more outspoken than I on this subject. What threatened them most was that I presumed to describe myself as a “historic preservationist” while simultaneously advocating for the relocation of the monuments. My interpretation of Grenfell’s email is that he sees an inherent conflict between radicalism and preservation. I posit that this view of preservation is derived from the “myth of permanency” as defined by Mitchell Schwarzer and discussed in Chapter IV. According to this version of preservation, things must remain exactly as they are, and that which is set aside for preservation is immutable. For me to publically suggest otherwise prompted another reader to hyperbolically compare me to dictator Mao Zedong during China’s Cultural Revolution.¹⁹⁹

Grenfell’s comments are indicative of how the broader historic preservation community has lacked a unified voice on this subject. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, for example, has taken an official stance that some Confederate monuments might need removal, but has largely focused on allowing local jurisdictions to arrive at decisions for themselves, opening the door for further ambiguity.²⁰⁰ The problem with this stance is that many local jurisdictions do not have the legal authority to decide for themselves. Across the United States, supporters of Confederate monuments have weaponized state historic preservation laws to prevent the removal of monuments at the local level.²⁰¹ In light of the Confederate monument controversy, it is worth questioning

¹⁹⁹ Stephen Paul Foster, Email to author, March 23, 2018.

²⁰⁰ Stephanie K. Meeks, “After Charlottesville: How to Approach Confederate Memorials in Your Community,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 21, 2017. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/after-charlottesville-confederate-memorials#.WrpQxNTwa71>

²⁰¹ David A. Graham, “Local Officials Want to Remove Confederate Monuments—but States Won’t Let Them,” *The Atlantic*, August 25, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/when-local-officials-want-to-tear-down-confederate-monuments-but-cant/537351/>

the traditional job of the preservationist in our current time. The evidence presented in this study supports the idea that being a preservationist does not mean keeping things exactly as they are, whether in the built environment or in our worldviews. The principles of collective memory, postmodern philosophy, the Burra Charter, and new preservation scholarship suggest that if preservationists like Grenfell are not more thoughtful about what exactly it means to preserve, they will become increasingly ineffectual in their mission. Contemporary preservationists should make measured changes to the built environment that are appropriate to the needs of people who inhabit that space.

Although relocating monuments is a radical treatment method, it is not equivalent to destruction. In Baltimore, relocation was an appropriate treatment relative to the degree with which the surrounding community had come to understand the monuments as symbols of oppression and racism. The model outlined in my thesis, based on guiding documents like the Burra Charter, is consistent with the way the Confederate monuments were relocated in 2017. It is worth remembering that the removal of the monuments was a local decision made by local authorities with the majority consent of the local population. Public criticism came largely from people outside the community who had either no connection to Baltimore or, like Cockey, admitted to leaving the city many years prior.

Following a democratic and open process of public hearings in 2015—and the assessment of risk following the Charlottesville protests in 2017—city leadership weighed the value-systems of community stakeholders and made a reasoned decision to find a location for the monuments that better suited the prevailing cultural values asserted by the public majority. As is stated in Article 15.1 of the Burra Charter, “change may be

necessary to preserve cultural significance.”²⁰² In Baltimore, location-based change was implemented because the cultural significance of the monuments had been completely inverted by the community. Whereas a century ago, cultural significance for the hegemonic white establishment was embodied by the presence of the monuments, today’s prevailing, and democratic, cultural significance is defined by their absence. The preservation of this new cultural significance actually required the creation of a void, thus necessitating relocation. The empty plinths left behind are better reflective of the cultural significance of the urban landscape than if they were still occupied by statues. This new cultural significance was further strengthened when the park in which one Confederate monument previously stood was rededicated to abolitionist Harriet Tubman. While wholesale iconoclasm in the built environment is destructive and undesirable, the case of Baltimore’s Confederate monuments shows how radical change is sometimes compatible with contemporary historic preservation theory and practice. Preservationists must serve the needs of living people before they serve the needs of objects. If those needs mandate radicalism, then preservationists—with their particular skills, knowledge, and experience—are the best suited to serve as thoughtful facilitators of radical change.

The Future: Memory, History, and Creative Inspiration

Although currently in the national spotlight, Confederate monuments are a relatively small part of the broader commemorative landscape. Relocating monuments is

²⁰² While the Burra Charter is not officially sanctioned by the US government, it is widely respected internationally. For reasons discussed in Chapter IV, the Burra Charter represents a more appropriate guiding philosophy for historic buildings and memorials in particular. For this reason, individual preservationists working in the US should consider adopting the Burra Charter process until such a time as when it is reflected in official policy.

actually quite rare and reserved for extreme circumstances. For living memorials, their physical footprint precludes relocation altogether. In most cases, atrophy and neglect are society's preferred treatment methods for these places. Keeping other monuments and memorials exactly the same through time not only hastens their decline in relevance, but also misses opportunities to find new uses for the betterment of society. As Lowenthal explains, "setting apart things specially preserved from the commonplace present forecloses other uses of them. Such relics seldom become sources of creative inspiration; they are valued for their own sake, not for how we might reshape them."²⁰³ Setting historic places apart from our day-to-day lives is typical of parochial preservation and is consistent with the predominant treatment of monuments in the US. Lowenthal reveals how conventional preservation, in an attempt to stop time, deprives society of potential sources for creative inspiration. If the public ceases to value artifacts for their own sake, then there is no way to reengage the attention of the public other than through creative reshaping. That said, how we reshape artifacts of the past cannot be limited to the superficial pastiche of forms so common in postmodern architecture. The reshaping of an artifact must also reshape the meaning and message behind the form. Monuments and memorials present particularly fertile opportunities to serve as inspiration because they are themselves artificial creations springing from a human need to creatively mould signifiers of the past.

In a quixotic quest to achieve immortality, our ancestors summoned an army of stone surrogates to carry their memory into the future. Today, we need to realize that the ideas propelling this army are as temporary as the bodies that built it. We have inherited a

²⁰³ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 406.

commemorative landscape that is ever-shifting in its cultural value. To build a more meaningful built environment, living people must take priority over past monument makers. In order to preserve memorials, we need to start with the assertion that the living have more rights than the dead. In a letter to James Madison dated 1789, Thomas Jefferson succinctly laid out this philosophy:

I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, ‘*that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living*’: that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, & reverts to the society. (His emphasis)²⁰⁴

That is not to say that the living have unlimited rights to shape the earth however they please. Jefferson’s philosophy—as well as the philosophy of the modern historic preservation and environmentalism movements—teach us that living people have strong obligations to protect the interests of future generations. The “powers and rights” that society assumes from the dead should be used to leave a better world than the one inherited. When it comes to shifting sands of monument symbolism, if the living fixate on preserving the desires of the dead, there will be little to leave for the unborn. We cannot build a memorial and expect it to last forever, neither physically nor symbolically, because we cannot reasonably expect any symbol to last forever. Old monuments and memorials, although once lively, now appear tired and sad. This atrophy of meaning signals to us that memorials should respond to new semiotics that reflect the minds of living people.

The common spaces that memorials occupy are precious resources intended for the wellbeing of our society. Our public buildings, parks, plazas, and right-of-ways

²⁰⁴ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 6 September 1789, National Archives website, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-12-02-0248>

deserve to be put to use serving the people who enjoy them. We owe it to ourselves and our children to create and maintain public spaces that are engaging, interesting, and culturally relevant to our own time. We also owe it to our children to provide vestiges of the past for their educational, emotional, and intellectual benefit. Our human need for collective memory is too strong and our resources too few to abandon old memorials. It is intensely wasteful to write-off forgotten monuments as roadside detritus or vacate memorial buildings when they spring a leak. Not only is this a waste of material resources, but more importantly it is a waste of intellectual and inspirational resources.

Places of commemoration are most valuable as sources of creative inspiration because monuments are already abstractions of truth. According to Lowenthal, “[monuments and memorials] celebrate the past in later guise. And their form and features may in no way resemble what they are expressly built to recall.”²⁰⁵ If we accept Picasso’s assertion that “art is a lie that helps us see the truth,” then monuments are similarly lies that reveal a certain truth specific to their time.²⁰⁶ Their histories—distinct and separate from the histories they commemorate—are reflective of the people who built them. After all, we don’t really learn anything about George Washington when we look at the Washington Monument, but we do learn a great deal about the values and the egos of the people who built it. The people who built monuments were usually powerful and shaped the world we currently live in, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Learning about these people through their work helps us to better understand why our built environment looks the way it does today. But after generations have passed and

²⁰⁵ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 321.

²⁰⁶ See Chapter II.

names have been forgotten, we cannot rely on their pre-existing form to convey a sense of truth any longer without some assistance.

Since monuments are creations of artifice, continuing to derive meaning from them requires an act of artifice to creatively reshape meaning. Artists, architects, engineers, preservationists, site managers, and interpreters must begin to see these places as starting points for inspiration. A memorial should always be considered a “work in progress” instead of a static and sacrosanct complete opus. Artists can use the past and then expound upon it, reshaping and improving our current worldview. People enjoy learning about history if it speaks to their needs in the present. It was Friedrich Nietzsche who first wrote about the practicality of using the past for present need:

To be sure, we need history. But we need it in a manner different from the way in which the spoilt idler in the garden of knowledge uses it...That is, we need it for life and action, not for a comfortable turning away from life and action...We wish to use history only insofar as it serves living.²⁰⁷

Nietzsche teaches us that understanding the forces that shaped the world is the first step in formulating an action plan for shaping how the world *ought* to be. This is why artists draw on the past for inspiration, and use this understanding in an attempt to project their own vision of truth onto the world. Memorials have interesting stories to tell that have direct bearing on our own lives, for those patient enough to learn their metaphorical language. Preservationists should embrace the mining of the past by seeking out and encouraging artists to re-envision, question, and contest the spaces under their care. These memorials are not so valuable for what they once were as what they might become through interventions that draw from the past, but are not subservient to it.

²⁰⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life,” 1874.

The world of site-specific interactive art installations is a fast growing field that encompasses a variety of new technology including sound and light. Preservationists should be speaking with the artists who create these installations to better hone a vocabulary for what they do, and how they can benefit historic resources. The next area of future study is to better understand the symbiotic relationship between these artists and the aims of historic preservation. Artists need preservationists as much as the other way around. The mining of historic resources for artistic inspiration requires historical interpretation for many people to understand because most traces left behind by builders are not inscribed directly onto walls. Abstracting the hidden truth behind a monument requires an artist, but it requires a historic preservationist to translate the original historical figurative language. Preservationists are “interpreters” of this shifting lexicon, but successful interpretation only results from a consultation with the metaphorical vernacular. If preservationists can translate the hidden stories of old memorials into terms that speak to regular people today then our environment and our minds will be stronger for it. Instead of trying to keep monuments the same, preservationists should be asking, what can I do to gradually make them different, but alive? What can I do to breathe life into that statue’s bronze body? What can I build around that pile of stones so that it turns heads? Whose ghost can I summon to challenge monumental ghosts on the field of commemorative battle? Although difficult to answer, tackling these questions will result in engaging public spaces preserved appropriately and equitably for the benefit of the public.

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