

APPLICATION FORM FREDERICK BAUMANN PRIZE

Students from any department and any class interested in applying for the Frederick Baumann Prize must submit their scholarly work to the Office of Social Commitment by Monday, March 29, 2004. The \$2,500 prize is awarded to the student who writes the best essay on the general topic of "Ideas and Society," taking an interdisciplinary and historical approach. The prize is awarded each spring if, in the opinion of the judges, there is an entry of prize-winning caliber.

For the purposes of this contest, an essay may be defined as a prose discourse on a well-defined subject that presents in a stimulating, entertaining, as well as informative way the personal view of the author. Essays can be based on course work or independent study but should not be work previously submitted in connection with a course. Essays should not exceed more than 15 to 20 double-spaced pages.

Please write a short abstract of your essay on this form and attach it to your essay.

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Essay Title: The Monumental Shift: Poetry, Politics, and the New Aesthetic Order in American Memorial

ABSTRACT

Maya Lin's landmark 1981 Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (the Vietnam Wall) touched off a nationwide desire for commemoration and redefined the very aesthetic mode of monument. Her monument, though controversial through its construction, has emerged as one of the most successful architectural statements of the twentieth century. A close reading of the monument reveals the abstract ambiguity that makes possible a collective place of memory that still facilitates individual recollection. Lin's successful navigation of these conflicting desires serves as a model for public memory unmatched in recent memorial building. This essay extends the philosophy of Lin's aesthetic move to the current plans for a World Trade Center memorial and examines how that piece of city architecture might successfully capture individual possibility tempered by a contemplation of space. The belief, however optimistically, in the potential success of the WTC monument is to understand the enormous complexities and contradictions of monument-making and to reflect upon one's own experiences in the presence of public history.

When the last call comes for me to take my final rest, will the miners see that I get a resting place in the same clay that shelters the miners who gave up their lives of the hills of Virden, Illinois on the morning of October 12, 1897 [sic], for their heroic sacrifice of [sic] their fellow men. They are responsible for Illinois being the best organized labor state in America. I hope it will be my consolation when I pass away to feel I sleep under the clay with those brave boys.

- Mother Jones, statement filed in Carlinville, Illinois in 1924

Brought to a sharp awareness of such a loss, it is up to each individual to resolve or come to terms with this loss. For death, is in the end a personal and private matter, and the area contained with this memorial is a quiet place, meant for personal reflection and private reckoning ... Thus this memorial is for those who have died, and for us to remember them.

- Maya Lin, design submission statement for Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, 1981

The memorial plaza is designed to be a mediating space; it belongs both to the city and to the memorial. Located at street level to allow for its integration into the fabric of the city, the plaza encourages the use of this space by New Yorkers on a daily basis. The memorial grounds will not be isolated from the rest of the city; they will be a living part of it.

- Michael Arad and Peter Walker, design submission statement for Worth Trade Center site memorial, 2003

An Illinois Cemetery, A Memorial

On a recent road trip cutting a geographic cross-section of America (Iowa to the Bayou and back), my fellow traveler and I passed a brown road sign for the Mother Jones Monument somewhere along Interstate 55 in southern Illinois. It was late and we had already settled into the comfortable, hum-along-to-the-*Revolver*-album companionship that carries you through long nights on lonely highways. I turned to him and asked, "Who's Mother Jones?"

"It's that liberal magazine, you know," and here he began a critical analysis of the publication's journalistic merit.

"I know that, but it's named after someone. *Who* was Mother Jones? Is this like an Uncle Sam? She's got a monument here."

He admitted ignorance. Because this was a road trip based entirely upon visits to every sticky and overcrowded tourist destination within fifty miles of Interstate 55, because we needed to stop for gas and coffee anyway, and because I imagined a certain mystic weight to the words "Mother Jones," we exited. After filling the tank and procuring tall cups of mocha cappuccinos

from a push-button machine at a fluorescent-lit station directly off the highway, we followed the brown signs a few miles further into Illinois farmland. The exit became the famed Route 66 of Kerouac lore, and from 66 we turned onto a dirt road running alongside an unfenced cemetery with a simple arched entrance: The Union Miners' Cemetery. Mochas in hand, jackets zipped against the early spring air, we stepped out and walked toward a tall granite structure at the back of the cemetery. I knew we had reached some pilgrimage destination by the teddy bears and cellophane-wrapped flowers left at its base. The monument itself consisted of a granite pedestal topped by a narrow granite obelisk flanked by two bronze figures, and a long headstone marking her gravesite before the memorial. The cemetery was unlit; we squatted on the deep steps of the pedestal and squinted at the bronze plaques affixed to the tower, reading inscriptions out loud in the empty cemetery.

“So what I’m getting is that she had something to do with miner unions. Making these guys,” and here I gestured at the bronze men standing a step above me, “coal miners.” A round bronze plaque at the front of the obelisk carried a relief portrait of an old woman, just barely visible in the night. “And here she is.”

We spent a few more minutes reading the names of miners lost in a nineteenth-century riot stemming from a union strike, wandering the dark cemetery and stretching against the cool night before the long drive back into Iowa. What to make of a one hundred year-old woman buried among all these men? Mother Jones, Mother Jones. Granite tower and work-roughened men standing sentinel over her grave. Why this quiet monument deep in Illinois? For others, this represented something heroic; that much we could discern from the evidence of followers—the flowers, the cards—scattered at the site. We puzzled over it, intermittently, all the way home. The following week, I searched the Internet for history and found scattered documents that

briefly chronicled Mary Jones' life as an eccentric champion of laborers' rights in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Our physical journey, then, led to a place that incited an intellectual journey, which revealed at its end a nearly forgotten piece of history.

Memorial.

The Meaning of Monument

I grew up near Washington, D.C., where monuments flank the wide, grassy mall. My parents, both service people in the United States Army, took me and my siblings through the war memorials (Korean, Vietnam) several times as children. As a teenager, I got into the habit of wandering the monuments and memorials after summer mornings in the Smithsonian museums. At first, I didn't know the appropriate reaction in these vast spaces, each loaded with the acquired significance of immediate recognition: there is the unmistakable Washington Monument, there is the Lincoln Memorial as it appears on the back of every penny since 1959. On my first visit to the Vietnam Wall without my parents, I nearly cried for the hands seeking names along the low, black walls that seemed to have swallowed me into the sunny hillside. How many times since have I stood in the Lincoln Memorial, mouthing the lines of the Gettysburg Address (slowly unremembered since fourth grade) while touristing families mill around Lincoln's immense legs? What I realized, increasingly, was that the appropriate reaction in these near-sacred spaces is largely left to the individual. Union laborers drop teddy bears at Mother Jones' gravesite, children climb over Lincoln's feet and veterans leave flowers at the base of the Vietnam Wall. I observe, I write, I puzzle out the relationships between myself and these near-mythical moments of historical significance.

A friend recently asked me the difference between a memorial and a monument. His father, a man who came of age during the military state terrorism leveled against intellectuals

and liberals in late 1970's Argentina, noted that no monuments have been built to memorialize the dead of that era. However, the 12,000 young people who went missing are remembered through a literal occupation of Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo by a society of their mothers, who march on the plaza every Thursday afternoon. Similarly, many cultural commentators noted the transformation of lower Manhattan into an *ad hoc* memorial in the weeks following the September 11, 2001 attacks, when posters of the missing and flowers to the dead covered telephone poles and shop windows. *Memorial* is the broad term, the commemorative effort that takes the form of sculpture, music, poetry, procession. Memorial is the conscious act of remembrance. *Monument* is the built memorial, the architectural and sculptural embodiment of commemoration. Both acts—that of memorial and that of monument—are hugely intentional and both have the ability to elicit the individual response I so worried about as a teenager standing at the apex of the Vietnam Wall. Monument, however, implies a more directed, more political, more permanent effort at commemoration. Monuments purport to represent a collective memory or experience, and monuments placed at very public sites of conflict or loss often must encompass an impossibly wide range of views. The entire operation of creating a built structure in memorial thus becomes highly politically charged, as has been the case with most national monument projects in the past twenty-five years. This should not be surprising; after all, collective memory is nothing but the public consciousness of an idea or event. To render that idea aesthetically introduces a whole series of identity and symbolic concerns.

In academic and public realms alike, the notions of memorial and individuation are reaching greater and greater importance. This much is clear in the memoir craze of the past decade and in recent pushes for public monuments to historic events. The desire for monument literally spans America, from actor Tom Hanks' crusade for a World War II memorial on the

National Mall, to the twin beams of light projection at the World Trade Center site late in 2001, to the recent completion of a monument in remembrance of a lynching that occurred in Duluth, Minnesota during the Jim Crow era. Certainly memorial and monument carry political and aesthetic implications internationally (the Arch de Triumph, ancient Egyptian pyramids, obelisks and military men on horseback) but the case of contemporary American monument presents a more easily contextualized history of this architectural movement.

If my hunch as a teenager was correct, that an individual experience at the site of remembrance is the end goal of memorial, then one must turn an eye toward the aesthetic gesture of monument. What makes a monument “successful” and how might one gauge that success? More importantly, how can a monument exist as a singular artistic response and still appropriately elicit an individual experience? An exploration of the conflict between public memory and individual experience seems particularly relevant when read through the lens of the current planning for a permanent monument at the site of the September 11 attacks in Manhattan. The Vietnam War Memorial, arguably the most successful monument in America (and inarguably a highly-influential work in the field of sculptural monument), provides a hopeful model for aesthetic possibility. It also marks the aesthetic turn in memorial, from the classically inspired, classically signified to the non-representational and physically inhabitable. A pattern of inverse relationships emerges from consideration of contemporary monument: Firstly, a process of *defamiliarization*, by bringing the monument visitor to space and shape unfamiliar, actually paves the way toward familiar and collective remembrance. Secondly, the rejection of familiar symbols and Saussurean signifier-signified relationships in the visual representation itself denies narrative closure to the remembered event and, in this moment of abstract ambiguity, makes space for individual conclusions. In short, the less a memorial tries to realistically or

symbolically re-create memory, the more likely it is to succeed in tapping an accurate collective sentiment. (That collective sentiment, of course, must be understood to be one of plurality—plurality of experience, plurality of memory, and plurality of politics.)

The Abstract Aesthetic Mode

Success in monument, then, lies in the making-of-space, the aesthetic creation of place of reflection. This reflection might take the form of a letter left to a victim of war or a college student who scours the Internet for a history momentarily encountered in an Illinois cemetery. Significant literary precedent exists for this sort of ambiguity-leading-to-individuation. Early feminist author Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* ends with a disgraced New Orleans woman abandoning her family obligations and swimming out into the Gulf of Mexico, amidst the imagined sounds and as smells of her childhood. This highly ambiguous ending, generally considered a suicide, but without clear agency, has fueled consistent scholarly debate since the novel's publication in 1899. More tellingly, the critical responses to the novel appear strikingly relevant to their time of publication: condemnation of the main character's action in early reviews leading to 1960's feminist readings of the character's social predicament. Such readings of ambiguity present themselves readily throughout literary interpretation and theory. More, the function of ambiguity in literature finds explanation in cultural philosophy, such as that of German philosopher Martin Heidegger. With the understanding that architecture is often deeply textual (think of the all the possible "readings" of Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie houses or Frank Gehry's titanium-wrapped museums), one might apply cultural philosophy to the problem of monument as a means of attaining cultural and interpretive understanding of the devices at play when a physical space bears visual abstraction.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (the Vietnam Wall), dedicated in 1982, stands in somber contrast to the tall, white monuments built before it on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. “Stands” is not even an appropriate word to describe the structure’s stance; the Wall (actually two conjoined walls) is low-lying, horizontal, and black. It embodies no classical architecture and cannot be perceived from any real distance. Unlike the Washington Monument, which soars above the placid hills of Washington, the Vietnam Wall is fitted into a low hillside and stands no more than ten feet high. Offering neither religious solace nor condemnation, the walls present no representational form aside from the reflections of viewers’ faces in the polished black surface.

In two essays (both published in 1951), Heidegger expounds upon the roles of language and poetry as they relate to the world of mankind. Heidegger’s philosophy calls for a loosening of linguistic meaning (especially through poetry) that would undo the determinate signifier-signified relationships modeled by Saussure. Though the Vietnam Wall is obviously an architectural project, Heidegger’s relevance to architectural production arises in his highly spatial conception of poetry as a dwelling-house of meaning:

Man does not dwell in that he merely establishes his stay on the earth beneath the sky, by raising growing things and simultaneously raising buildings. Man is capable of such building only if he already builds in the sense of the poetic taking of measure. (PMD 227)

For Heidegger, poems are “a kind of building” (PMD 215) that at once guide definition and also make space for an expanded sense of meaning. A “poetic taking of measure” is the process by which man responds to the world and, in doing so, creates the very space in which his meaning dwells. Man is limited to language in shaping the dwelling-place, but language itself avoids

certain limitations when situated with poetic constructions. To take this a step further: If one were to couch in physical terms the Heideggerian poetic sense, one might imagine particular architectural shapes.

In this spirit of poetic-architectural conflation, the Vietnam Wall presents itself as a palatable text. Heidegger explicitly mentions death as an un-reckonable force that confronts mankind. War, in its basest sense, is death; one nation inflicts mortality on another. A war memorial, then, must somehow evoke this basic aspect of its commemoration of the dead. Many war monuments consist of a statue of a soldier or group of soldiers and listing of the names of the dead. These are Saussurean models; they do not engage in poetics, but present a straightforward relationship: the proud soldier standing above signifies the name below. Heidegger expects poems to perform a “calling” that “calls into nearness” (Language 198). Calling, as opposed to *fetching*, suggests meaning without explicit definition. Thus a Heideggerian war memorial must somehow evoke the soldier and the war without presenting these things in the form of realism. Lin’s memorial is strikingly non-representational. It calls into nearness the end result of war in its very resistance to representational form. Smooth, black walls do not clearly symbolize war, but evoke the darkness and loss inherent to its necessary end. The contextual placement of the memorial, set into a low hillside, suggests grounding aesthetic. Poetry is not fantasy, says Heidegger, but instead “brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling” (PMD 218). The Vietnam Wall similarly draws visitors into its own poetic dwelling: one experiences a sense of *entering* the site as the ground slopes downward and the walls become higher. The Wall furthermore brings visitors into its dwelling by being relatively low, close to the sidewalk, and accessible to touch.

Despite the success of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, other Washington monuments seem unable to fully enter a Heideggerian realm of loosened meaning. In response to widespread protest over Lin's design, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund commissioned a representational statue of three male soldiers to be added to the Vietnam Wall site two years after the initial dedication. The National Mall still grows: a statue commemorating women in Vietnam was added recently to Lin's monument and the Korean War Memorial appeared opposite the Wall in the mid-nineties. Long-term efforts to establish a monument to commemorate World War II veterans (crusaded by actor Tom Hanks and financially backed by commerce giant Wal-Mart) have finally succeeded. The National World War II Memorial will occupy former green space in the middle of the Mall (Frisbee enthusiasts and others who used the space as parkland were among the most vocal opposition to the project). Furthermore, this memorial returns to the aesthetic mode set by the original monuments. The 7.4-acre complex, built of white stone, rests squarely between the Lincoln and Washington monuments and consists of a walk-through fountain plaza and 43-foot arches, among other neoclassical design elements. The memorial fails to capture Heidegger's sense of poetics because it abstracts to the already-present monuments, rather than abstracting to the unknowable. The Korean War Memorial is an even more telling example of poetic failure. Built by the same architectural firm that oversaw the implementation of Lin's design, this memorial takes all of its aesthetic cues from the Vietnam Wall. Among its many design elements is a reflective black wall into which are carved human faces. (The polished walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are also reflective, but not representational.) One might read into these architectural slips toward representation and realism a too-literal attempt at *measuring*. Heidegger discusses measuring in the context of abstraction. Poetry 'takes measure' in that it takes form against the alien. The poet cannot quantifiably locate or describe

the alien; rather, he gestures toward it and, in doing so, “calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is—unknown” (PMD 225). In short, there is virtually no sense of the unknown (i.e., no sense of defamiliarization) in a monument constructed in the imitation of a known aesthetic.

Moving away from a purely formalist critique of Lin’s monument, one might extrapolate to the political. The design contest guidelines for the Vietnam Wall mandated that the memorial be apolitical. Lin’s solution, which contains virtually no strong signifiers beyond the names of the dead, obviously pleased the panel of war veterans well enough to garner the commission. By successfully bringing the visitor toward an encounter with the unknowable (in this case, death as an essential element of war), Lin does not commemorate a war or war hero, but instead marks a tragedy. Anyone who has visited the Vietnam Wall has seen veterans and tourists cry somewhere along the indeterminable black walls. If a structure can elicit such reactions twenty years after its construction in an allegedly media-saturated, desensitized society, there might be possibility for a poetic ambiguity. Lin’s chronology of names might itself serve the role of defamiliarization enough to resist narrative closure.

The linking of literature with architecture fits easily into the Heideggerian scheme because Heidegger himself mobilizes a poem in order to present his version of poetics as a dwelling-place of freedom. More difficult to resolve in the Heideggerian scheme is the very fact that Lin’s resistant architectural move has remained effective for such a long time (“long” by standards of global capital) without seeming to lose its ability to surprise and move the viewer. The standard war memorial architecture, like typical language, “is a forgotten and used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer” (Language 208). The challenge to the memorialist—a challenge unanswered in 9-11 and World War II monument efforts—is to loosen

the constriction of established form and to re-imagine architectural design as a literal dwelling-house of meaning.

Much of the nationwide resistance to the Vietnam War derived from the public's discomfort with fighting a war with unknown forces in a geographically, philosophically, and politically distant place. While television media created a visual wartime culture, Lin's memorial remains situated thousands of miles away from the physical site of conflict. In interviews, Lin sometimes mentions the funerary architecture of Europe as a source of inspiration for the Wall. Because of the location of the memorial, though, it is necessarily abstract in concept as well as form. In other words, the Vietnam Wall is a memorial and not a funerary site. The events of September 11, on the other hand, occurred within the physical space of the United States. As with the Alfred P. Murrah building after the Oklahoma City Bombing, the WTC complex gained status as a sacred place after the September 11 attacks. Shortly after, the city erected a viewing platform at the site, which allowed visitors to look into the excavated pit where the buildings had stood. The criteria for the WTC site competition included explicit references to the site: the memorial had to delineate the footprints of the towers and provide a site for the unidentified remains from the attack. The public interaction with the site has thus ensured a link between death (the abstract notion) and site (the physical place) that is as strong at the WTC lot as it is in a cemetery. It is as if loss is something that might be gazed upon or visited.

In his 1986 essay, "Of Other Spaces," Foucault links postmodern anxiety to the role of space in human classifications and relations. Even as technological advancement (data storage, telecommunications) shuttles space into increasingly abstract territory, space refuses to be "desanctified" (23). Foucault points to continued interest in the inner spaces of individual perception as evidence of this, but goes on to argue that external space also retains importance

and continues to influence anxiety. In the present day, this might be linked to actual shortages of physical space in the densely-inhabited world. Conflicting external relations create “sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (23). In the case of the WTC site, societal and political pressures force the site of loss to retain physical form. Like a gravesite, the city blocks that previously contained the Twin Towers becomes sacred; groups of lobbyists fought to protect the land from planned redevelopment. Because the site is both sanctified and also marked out in actual space, the memorial that will eventually rest on the site necessarily gains status as a *heterotopia*. Unlike the Vietnam Wall, which does not obsessively map or mark space, the WTC memorial gestures toward a “primitive” form of economics rooted in the acquisition of land.

Foucault describes heterotopia as “a kind of effectively enacted utopia” (24), similar to a mirror that exists in actual space but reflects a non-spatial ideal. He provides six principles that define the heterotopia. A formal reading of Reflecting Absence, the design chosen in January 2004 as the permanent memorial plan for the site of terrorist attacks in lower Manhattan, reveals principles that correlate well with the discourse surrounding the memorial competition and the struggle for the site. Reflecting Absence consists of an open plaza and two enormous reflecting pools in the original footprints of the Twin Towers. The reflecting pools encompass the memorial spaces, where ramps lead downward into cool spaces where sheets of continuously-falling water cascade around walls listing the names of the terrorist attack victims.

The criteria that bind the definition of heterotopia further advance the notion of memorial as a serial operation has spatially intensified since the Vietnam Wall opened in 1982. The first principle of heterotopia states simply that all cultures constitute heterotopias, though in varying forms. For primitive societies, heterotopias (*crisis heterotopias*) exist in sacred and forbidden

places, such as churches or richly symbolic Persian gardens. Foucault finds contemporary heterotopias in spaces of deviation, such as hospitals and prisons. The second principle states that society determines the function of a particular heterotopia. This makes sense in light of an understanding of heterotopia as a place occurring in the midst of shared, external space. The concept of a collective determination furthermore provides the opportunity for a heterotopic space to be inhabited as a site of resistance. The third principle of heterotopia emphasizes the site's ability to juxtapose incompatible spaces in a single place. Here Foucault mentions sacred Persian gardens, where the center of the garden contains a birth metaphor signaled by the fountain. The WTC site designs all plan similar life/death juxtaposition, though here that incompatibility is surmounted through technological means. In the case of Reflecting Absence, The reflecting pools that fill the footprints of the two towers contain within them deeper pools, signaling hidden depths, and walkways past landscaped greenery lead to inner sanctums of contemplation. Paths lead downward and upward, allowing a physical motion through, and tangible referent to, life and death cycles. Foucault's fourth principle states that heterotopia must evoke, or even administrate, "slices in time" (26). Natural history museums effectively stop time through the accumulation and decontextualization of dated artifacts. While the thickness of any heterotopic "slice" must vary, the WTC memorial seeks to recall the events of a single morning. Nearly all commemorations of September 11 thus far ritualistically marked the timing of the attack (first plane hit, second plane hit, first tower collapse, second tower collapse). The site master plan distills the moments of collapse by leaving as a boundary the exposed slurry wall. It further highlights this particular event as a highly confused slice in time by listing the names in haphazard, random order on the name walls beneath the reflecting pools. The fifth principle recognizes entrance as an integral part of the heterotopic site, as the site must be both isolated

and penetrable (26). Indeed, the design rules for the site competition stipulated that the WTC site must contain a discernable entrance into the memorial site. The architects of Reflecting Absence themselves imagine the site as a living monument of contemplation apart from the city, but situated as an open plaza bordered by major city streets. Finally, the sixth principle requires that heterotopias “have a function in relation to all the space that remains” (27). Oftentimes this involves function in opposition. A *New York Times* opinion piece printed just after the unveiling of the eight design finalists noted how deceptively elegant and quiet the memorial sites seemed in comparison to surrounding Manhattan (Purnick). This function of opposition of course allows the memorial site to characterize its singular territory and its implicit sacredness.

Certainly one could read the Vietnam Wall and similar memorials through the lens of Foucault’s heterotopia. As a more explicitly two-dimensional form than any of the WTC designs, the Wall carries connotations of a mirror. The important difference with the WTC site, however, is just how obsessively its memorial maps location. The Vietnam Wall does exist in space, of course, but place is implicit in the WTC memorial; this is the distinction that marks an intensification of the aesthetic precedent set by Maya Lin’s work in 1981. In the WTC memorial, we encounter an open narrative and reluctance for definitive closure: as with the Vietnam War, America is utterly unprepared to narrate the enormously complicated set of events and eventual ramifications of the September 11 attacks. In the WTC memorial, we are also aware of the fact that human remains rest in the very soil of the proposed plaza. In this sense, Reflecting Absence represents a convergence of artistic response and the sort of geographic marking that makes pilgrimages out of gravesites like Mother Jones’. There is a corporal sentiment so present that Reflecting Absence architects Arad and Walker carve out a room for unidentified remains

beneath the site. Abstraction, then, becomes both physically and conceptually predicated on site-specific substance. The WTC memorial must function as a cemetery.

Foucault suggests that heterotopias of deviation increasingly replace traditional crisis heterotopias, thus enacting a psuedo-utopia through filters of recovery and reform. In *Discipline and Punish*, he traces the increasing aestheticization of imprisonment and the increasing symbolic weight of sanctioned punitive action. The aesthetic collapse of finance capital, however, signals a critical shift in the trajectory of global capital. As architecture and city planning turn increasing attention to memorial, the heterotopia of crisis reemerges as the aesthetic form that can properly denote sacredness in the urban environment of global capital. Where towers packed full of stockbrokers and analysts once stood, land is being preserved for a park-memorial. The site of two of the tallest buildings in the world will soon contain a horizontally-oriented (nay, *grounded*) monument; planning groups refuse to allow redevelopment in the premium sky space directly above the memorial. This is not to say that the collapse of the Twin Towers ended the age of finance capital, but rather to point out a turn in the economic-aesthetic mode.

Why does the contemporary memorial seek physical space? Significantly, the United States' other major crisis heterotopia memorial is that built at the site of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The 1995 event did not enact the collapse of capital as spectacularly as did the 2001 attacks, nor did it draw attention to the non-territorial friction between political entities. Though on a smaller scale and committed by an American, that event did signal radical dissatisfaction with the government and corporate industry of late-capitalist America. It is precisely because of the guerrilla terrorist nature of these events that their commemoration resides in a horizontal, individualistic aesthetic. Terrorists act without regard to territory. Their aim is not to conquer and

accumulate land, but to dismantle the interior and intangible structures of a system. While they may receive funding from governments, they do not act on behalf of any sovereign nation-state. The terrorist act is not one rooted in any absolutely traceable physicality, but one that disrupts vertically. (For instance, *al-Qaeda* operators infiltrated the United States for their flight training.) Perhaps most importantly, terrorists literally hijack the means provided through western capitalism (the U-Haul truck rented with a credit card, a commercial jetliner) in order to destruct the capitalist system. In light of such a complicated system of infiltration, a bigger, better capitalist aesthetic response alone no longer seems appropriate. The office space to replace the lost buildings of the World Trade Center complex will consist, at least in part, of what is expected to be the tallest building in the world. While this certainly doesn't signal the sudden self-consciousness over building an even larger totem of finance power (the initial expected response was to build clusters of smaller buildings), the decision to reserve so much of the site for memorial is a significant one. Port Authority hired bulldozers clear the rubble to plant a garden: this is nostalgia in its most radical sense. In a city with only one functioning cemetery still in place, to decide against full redevelopment of several city blocks marks a nostalgic turn toward a past version of economics. Key chains and t-shirts work within the late-capitalist culture industry, but new aesthetic visions necessitate a version of material land acquisition dating to well before industry began producing material capital.

What, finally, is the point of racing toward commemoration? At times, the process of memorialization tells as much as the physical monument itself. The Mother Jones monument in the Union Miners' Cemetery came about through the Progressive Mine Workers fundraising for the materials and building labor donated by local laborers—a microcosm of the cooperative spirit

heralded by Mary Jones herself. Maya Lin was a longhaired young woman of obvious Asian descent when chosen by Vietnam Veterans to design a monument to their fallen peers. Though Lin was not widely photographed in conjunction with the monument (she didn't even attend the opening ceremony), she didn't entirely escape gender and ethnicity-based criticisms regarding her design. In fact, the highly representational statues of soldiers placed around the Vietnam Wall in the years since its opening appear in large part to placate those enraged by Lin's project. That the project survived waves of initial criticisms is testament primarily to the governing veterans' belief in Lin's vision. As previously mentioned, the World War II memorial plans have pushed through Congress and other bodies of dissent with the moral backing of Hollywood mega-stars and the financial backing of Wal-Mart.

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, several critical voices rose from the clamor of monument imaginings to suggest waiting to memorialize the attacks. Indeed, the identity politics governing decision-making in lower Manhattan has at least stalled redevelopment efforts several times over. Victims' families, firefighters, local police stations have all claimed ownership of the attack history. In fact, the final selection jury for the WTC memorial included a victim's wife and several city public employees, along with artists and cultural critics (including Maya Lin). Certainly all these people have vested interest in the way in which New York City aesthetically marks the event, but the larger point is to create a project that doesn't incite identity bickering in the first place. Despite the short time scale and a few missteps (e.g., an entire slate of site development proposals scrapped in 2002), the WTC memorial seems to have struck a secure balance between the conflicting desires of public history and individual experience. Aside from compromises made concerning the arrangement of victims' names and amount of plaza landscaping, Arad and Walker's design has necessitated little change since the competition

winner announcement in January of this year. If the site development and memorial building proceeds as planned, their artistic accomplishment could be nearly as miraculous as Lin's: the aesthetic vision of two architects that nonetheless makes space for (but does not *speak* for) the individual responses of thousands of visitors. In the intensification of the memorial mode toward the site-sacredness of heterotopia, it might even regroup what was impossible to accomplish with a Vietnam War memorial in Washington, D.C.: an attention to the importance of physical remnants (unidentified human remains, the exposed slurry wall) that brings humans back from the utter abstraction of goods so common to finance capital in the digital age. This is not to make a case for an aesthetics of nostalgia—artists need not recreate the days of white neoclassical pillars and granite obelisks. Instead this is a call for abstract ambiguity in the historical narrative—i.e., resistance to a singular telling of history—that finds its basis in a tangible and markedly human world.

It probably won't ever be necessary to mark the WTC Memorial site with brown historic markers on an empty highway, but one might imagine its pull to some future traveler ignorant of the site's significance: a historical magnetism urging a visit, urging a reading-out-loud of the names of the deceased, urging memorial made memory.