

RUNNING HEAD: Virtual Memorials

The Site of Memorial: Current discussions in the
negotiation of memorial forms and spaces appropriate
for the World Trade Center Memorial on the World Wide Web.

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The dialogue concerning memorial instanciations for the devastated World Trade Center site is growing more heated, problematic, and wide-ranging--leaving a solely academic sphere of argument for a much more public forum. Any memorial commemorating September 11th, 2001 is a complex and difficult undertaking: this memorial needs to meet the needs of not only the families of the victims, but it must meet the emotional and economic needs of a city, a country, multiple religious

traditions, and various political interests. Moreover, since the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the memorial form itself is expected to be unique and innovative and additive rather than preservative of the memorial tradition; this being a new requirement of “important” modern memorials as shown in the discussion created by the Oklahoma City memorial (Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998).

Thus a very difficult definition of what is “appropriate” for this memorial must be decided before a physical form can be negotiated for the World Trade Center memorial. The Pennsylvania memorial site is not under as much pressure because of the space it will occupy—it is in a field, a traditional place for memorials, while the World Trade Center is in the middle of New York City. Similarly the Pentagon memorial’s space is not as controversial because the space is clearly designated for a particular use as a military command center. As the use of the space is not up for negotiation, neither is the form of the memorial. The Pentagon has already been rebuilt, with a traditional military plaque and flag to commemorate the event.

Interestingly, in the space left by the lack of the memorial, virtual memorials are being created in virtual spaces on the web. These memorial sites include many of the traditional memorial practices, and while free from some of the “appropriate” constraints placed on the physical site at ground zero, the visual forms constructed in virtual space also contain embedded social issues of “appropriateness” present in the larger debated regarding the final form for a memorial to occupy the World Trade Center site.

In order to consider such a claim, a unique method must be generated; such a method must encompass visual images, text, and material forms. A precedent for this type of methodological construction exists within the body of literature considering commemorative rhetoric. And significantly, the critical discussion just how a monument may be “appropriately” evaluated is not only shaping the critical discourse, but will have an impact on the final form of a World Trade Center memorial; as the notion what a

memorial should do has developed by and with American culture, obviously the notion of what memorials can and should look like has also changed.

Accordingly, after a review of the development of commemorative rhetoric, I will look more closely at some of the changing memorial forms emerging on the world wide web in a close visual/textual analysis. Such an analysis is not definitive, but demonstrates where further development in memorial studies and its associative methods must be explored. I propose that an operationalization of various methodological practices in a series of steps, from a content analysis, then a semiotic close textual analysis, and next a cultural or dramatisitic analysis, may more “appropriately” evaluate commemorative practices, if only to show where more methodological development is necessary.

Developing a Commemorative Rhetoric

The fact that images and objects represent and transfer messages is undisputed. The fact that images pervade communication processes in the current global culture is conceded. As a result, images are of critical interest and importance to a wide variety of audiences, including the rhetorical critic. McKerrow (1989) does an excellent job of laying a critical foundation from Plato, Hariman, and Habermas, to Perelman and Toulmin to establish the interest of rhetorical critics in images and other nontraditional texts; in this context, he introduces discourse as material and rhetoric as nominalistic and influential.

Situated within the theoretical matrix of visual communication is the field of commemorative rhetoric. This branch of rhetorical studies looks at commemorative objects and spaces to uncover the critical cultural, performative, ethnographic, and ideological assumptions which contribute to the act of commemoration (see Bennett, 1998; Bodnar, 1992; Browne, 1995 and 1998; Kaye, 2000; Kitch, 2000; Martin, Pucci & Rizzo, 2001; and Struken 1999). As with any branch of rhetorical studies,

commemorative rhetoric did not spring Athena like, fully formed and developed, into critical discourse. It has developed over time, through a complex network of associations which has shaped and enabled the critic to examine the complex act of commemoration.

Furthermore, in addition to the critical environment, current events in Western culture also have contributed to the field of commemorative rhetoric. One of these events occurred in 1982 with the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VNVN); the construction and dedication of this memorial marks a significant entry point into the discourse of commemorative and material rhetoric (Blair, 1999). From the vantage point provided by this event, we can view commemorative rhetoric as a branch of the complex discipline emerging through material rhetoric, facilitated in the transformation and reconfiguration of a “text’s” definition.

The history of commemorative rhetoric can be divided into three distinct phases. Before 1982 the definition and practice of commemorative studies was advanced in aesthetic and a semiotic mode developed out of visual studies. After 1982, commemorative studies adopted a critical and rhetorical mode and subsequently introduced elements of critical cultural, ethnographic, performative, ideological, and generative methods into the discourse. As a result, commemorative rhetoric in the 1990’s, after the VNVN’s contextualization, has expanded its critical stances, introduced particular methodologies, framed ethnographic performance, considered the tourist gaze, and as a consequence of these associations, called for new developments of method and theory in application to material texts. Thus rather than moving toward a unified or centered methodological practice, the history of material rhetoric itself provides a case study which confirms the validity and necessity of generative and ever changing methodologies in this mode of rhetorical discourse. This ever evolving methodology allows commemorative rhetoric to establish and explore the crucial link between a culture and the memorials that culture creates; however this “loose

generative method” is critiqued as too sloppy or disorganized. I argue that an operationalization of a series of methodological approaches may provide some necessary organization for the commemorative rhetoric discipline.

Commemorative Studies--Pre 1980

Commemorative studies prior to 1980 belongs in the realm of architectural and aesthetic disciplines. This contextualization equates memorials with a conventional museum setting and introduces semiotic and cultural modes of evaluation as a standard critical practice in commemorative studies. These initial practices create an environment which facilitates the eventual development of commemorative studies into several different branches of the rhetorical tradition, such as critical cultural, performative, ethnographic, ideological, etc.

Barber (1949) lays out the traditional groundwork associated with the process of memorial commemoration. He asserts that the place and the meaning associated with that space is culturally derived and communicated through a standard, formalized set of symbols--Classical aesthetic principles of architectural design comprising the majority of these elements. The more traditional and formal a monument's design, the stronger the recognition of meaning for the audience, and hence the “better” memorial.

Barber also introduces the claim that these symbols derive their meaning from associations embedded in the culture and the formalized function of the monument itself; and consequently in such an approach, semiotics becomes an inherent mode of analysis. Thus Barber contextualizes his argument with a grounding in semiotic theory, demonstrating that a social or public recognition of the memorials signified is paramount to its functions as a signifier. As a result of this early association, most commemorative criticism will either address and rely upon semiotics as a key unit of analysis, justify the omission of a semiotic element, or tacitly assume a semiotic mode. Moreover, the cultural component inherent in semiotic theory itself further strengthens the association

between commemorative criticism and semiotics. As demonstrated by Barber, any commemorative study must address issues of public space, audience, and a collective cultural recognition.

Jencks (1972) extends the associations of commemorative studies beyond semiotics by combining the element of language in context with visual architectural signifiers; he claims that a monument's ability to signify a particular signified is strengthened when language is introduced to guide and frame the monument's particular signified content. For example, in Jencks' view, the inscriptions placed on the Lincoln memorial "guide" the viewer to experience the memorial as a place of loss and sadness and "motivate" the viewer to emulate the "moral" behavior of Lincoln for the betterment of society. Thus, Jencks considers a "better" memorial will leave the viewer with a concrete impression of what that memorial represents.

Moreover, Jencks identifies this interaction of visual and linguistic signifiers as rhetorical, situating commemorative studies in the rhetorical field of criticism. This contextualization conjoins commemorative studies with critical and material rhetorical traditions and is strengthened by Merlau-Ponty (1973), Nimmo (1974), and Preziosi (1979a & b). Once this association is established, memorial rhetoric can develop in several different critical areas of study--critical cultural, performative, ethnographic, ideological, etc.

Yet this inclusion and later coalescence into the critical rhetorical tradition transforms the recognized form and function of commemorative memorial sites; by the middle of the 1980's, Barber (1949), Jencks (1972), and Preziosi's (1979a & b) definitions and categorizations of memorials primarily as aesthetic and semiotic architectural structures are obsolete as this field expands into the critical cultural sphere of rhetorical studies. However, the semiotic mode remains as a unifying and useful way of looking at the monuments as commemorative rhetoric associates itself into more

complex rhetorical tradition. I argue that it becomes a methodological step in the analytical process of commemorative rhetoric.

Transition--the 1980's and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The dedication of the Vietnam Veteran Memorial (VNVM) in 1982 occurred amid a flurry of political and public controversy. Ayers (1981) and Halloran (1980 a & b) explain that the “design contest” to generative the ultimate form of the memorial was almost as controversial as the winning design--which design was initially deemed as antiwar or antimemorial. Carhat (1981), a West Point graduate and Vietnam vet, thus concludes that Lin’s design for the memorial is insulting to all veterans; he asks “why can’t we have something white and above ground?” (23). One prominent issue to surface in this debate was the “appropriateness” of the VNVM inclusion into the Mall among the Washington and Lincoln memorials. As critics examined this furor, the necessary question of how the methods based in textual analysis can apply to a material text surfaced. The work of Hattenhauer (1984), Foss (1986), Ehernhaus (1988a & b), and Carlson & Hocking (1988) demonstrate that a separation between the designation of text and material is artificial. Moreover, the work of these critics illustrates that a necessary methodology is not prescribed by commemorative practices; rather, in a generative fashion, commemorative rhetoric is best produced in a wide association with other theories and methods. Though different, each of these critics situates their choice of theory and method in an appropriate amalgamation generated--rather than prescribed--by the chosen commemorative text and the theoretical goals of the critic.

Hattenhauer (1984) determines monuments and architecture are rhetorical--and subsequently must be studied critically in the rhetorical tradition--because the resulting monument influences social and cultural behavior. Foss (1986) points out that individuals with varying political opinions on the war come to the VNVM and each have

a “meaningful” experience--thus a dramatistic approach is most useful to her. Ehernhaus (1988b) takes a phenomenological perspective to examine the rhetorical “silence” in the text--concluding the meanings individuals find at the memorial can be distinguished in terms of various public signs of understanding that characterize an interplay with the memorial. Carlson & Hocking (1988) seek to explain the phenomena of redemption that seems to occur for visitors of the VNVM--looking specifically at the items such as letters, poems, flowers, and stuffed animals left behind in personal acts of commemoration at the memorial.

Clearly then, this shift--enable by a new cultural era in memorial studies--in what is looked at as semiotic signifiers within the rhetorical tradition of commemorative studies allows a more cultural and “present” debate concerning the appropriate form of a memorial; such a critical focus allows commemorative studies to engage social and public as well as private considerations of space into an analysis that functions more as a dialogue than simply an objective textual analysis. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the tradition of memorial studies is inherently bound up in cultural considerations. This further association with public and social issues is yet another step the commemorative critic must incorporate into any contemporary analysis of a memorial. This association post-VNVM has generated various approaches, however most of these approaches have included a dramatistic frame in order to encompass the public and social issues now vital in any consideration of a commemorative practice or object.

Post-Vietnam Veterans Memorial--the 1990's.

With the foundation before the 1980's and transformation in the 1980's, the generative model is now established as yet another inherent assumption regarding commemorative rhetoric. The assumption of a nonuniform and perpetually evolving method has led to core concerns regarding the legitimacy of commemorative rhetoric. Such concerns are met with expanding theoretical stances such as Blair, Jeepeson, &

Pucci (1991) and Griswold (1986) who designate memorials as rhetorical for the recognized purpose of a memorial is to advise and instruct. Moreover, Blair, Jeepeson, & Pucci (1991) recognize that memorial forms reflect the culture which creates them which expands the sphere of commemorative rhetorical into post-modernist discourse.

Foss (1994) meets the “loose generative method” criticism by highlighting the “function” of the memorial and extracting from the function an operationalized methodology. In much the same manner, Gallagher (1995) examines the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial through aspects of form, function, symbolism, and location concluding they provide space, motivation, and intentional resources for continued engagement in meaning making.

In yet another approach in answering the “loose generative” critique, Conquergood (1991) generates a unique commemorative analysis using established ethnographic methods. This shift privileges the body of the viewer rather than the body or structure of the monument itself as the locus of analysis. Trujillo (1993) also privileges space and time and location of the viewer as the locus for his analysis, relying on a performative frame. Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti (1998) examine at the “appropriate” spaces for the public performance of grief as they look at the struggle between public and private, official and informal. Anderson (2001), Demo, (2000), McDaniel (2000), and Peterson (1988) each also generate a method which allows subject and object, viewer and viewed, signifier and signified to be considered in an ethnographic frame. Such an approach deftly illustrates how necessary the generative method is in elaborating commemorative rhetoric. Moreover for Armada (1998), such a methodological frame demonstrates how memorials have the power to shape “our” view of reality--and are therefore of interest to scholars of rhetoric.

Of further rhetorical and social interest, Blame (1998), Lloyd (2000), Mayo (1991), Moriarty (1999), Trumpner (2000), and Winter (1995) trace the notion of a commemorative visit as not only a socially evolving act, but as an economic practice of

the tourist. Each of these scholars in their further associations of commemorative rhetoric with broader rhetorical traditions and social concerns allows commemorative rhetoric to expand to meet the culture it seeks to inform. With these widening concerns, approaches, and critical associations Blair (1999), Nichols (1999), and Tomaselli (1996) warn that appropriating a methodology for images is a critical minefield. Their concerns underscore Blair's (1999) proposal that the development or generation of new methods key to establishing the legitimacy of commemorative and material rhetoric. Such a call is even more appropriate as the the space of the internet becomes appropriated for memorial observance; the present memorial tradition and its current methods of analysis are insufficient to encompass these new associations--such as the virtual memorials now occupying the World Wide Web. Thus, another step in the analytic process needs to be instantiated to further associate the commemorative rhetorical discipline with the culture it seeks to describe.

Preliminary Memorial Sites: Implications for the future of the World Trade Center site.

The debate regarding the form for a memorial in the space once occupied by the World Trade Center is growing heated and divisive; major media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The New Yorker*, CNN, and MSNBC each have documented the discordant debate regarding the "appropriate" form of the memorial for this site and the "appropriate" form of discourse required to arrive that form.

However despite this debate the mourning process and the memorial process is occurring in various forms and sites. The family or communal process of mourning including a participatory memorial like the AIDS quilt and leaving flowers and objects at the site of violence is common in "the spontaneous" creation of memorials (Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998). The "appropriate" behaviors regarding spontaneous memorial

are much more elastic and negotiable. A content analysis demonstrates how they incorporate the basic visual principals of memorials:

- Flowers and now stuffed animals.
- Flags.
- Photos of the victims of violence.
- Lists of names concerning the victims of violence
- Poems and letters left to the lost loved ones
- The demarkation of a place, or site to “visit” meaning to go with deliberate intent or purpose.

As most of these ritual practices occur at ground zero, there is still a void left in the memorial process for those who can not visit the preliminary memorial at this site. In this physical absence, mourners have begun to create virtual memorials where they can participate in each of these memorial practices.

The internet presents an intriguing memorial space. As anyone can create a site, the space has the ability to be flexible and individual, incorporating many of the elements too controversial or too disputed to make it into the dialogue concerning the ground zero site. In these sites the dissenting family members have the ability to create the memorial they would envision. People who can not visit the physical ground zero can visit a virtual ground zero and leave a note as a personal memento in a ritual similar to that of visiting a temporary memorial site. Photos, poems and Flags are posted, as mourners “visit” a place of grief. These memorial web-sites seem to fall into three purposive categories: Discussion, Commerce, and Commemoration.

Types of memorial web-sites.

Sites like www.thewtcmemorial.com are dedicated to discussing the form of the eventual ground zero monument, the voices are not individual or coming from the families. They are optional designs presented accredited, famous architects such as

Fred Bernstein. In regards to visual design, most of the web sites with this purpose are designed to resemble the national on-line newspapers like *USA Today* and *The New York Times*. Text is presented in article like column format, with images set to the sides with captions. Buttons regarding links and additional pages are placed to the left.

Another category of web site regarding the World Trade Center disaster are the commercial sites that allow you purchase memorial items regarding the disaster. Sites like wtcmemorialsculpture.com and hometown.aol.com/drummer7b/memorial.html provide the opportunity for mourners to purchase, often with a portion going to charity, a memento. These sites have more in common with the virtual memorials, with more stylized images, messages of tribute and e-mail comment buttons. Interestingly, these sites are not well regarded by the discussion sites; the discussion sites having disclaimers that they are not for commercial use--although they do have a donation button for charities such as the Red Cross or the United Way.

A third category of web-sites label themselves virtual memorials. They differ from the discussion sites in that they are not concerned with the final form of the memorial at the ground zero location, rather they function as immediate memorials "filling the void" left by the attacks, by lost loved one, and the lack of a physical memorial (www.remember.worldatwar.org).

These web sites are designed incorporating the visual elements of other popular memorials, most notably the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and subsequently are not innovative, creative or very different from one another; what viewers might expect considering the growing controversy over the final formal construction for the physical site at ground zero. However, much of the visual imagery used in conjunction with linguistic elements of these web sites highlights the basic tenets and values which undergird the contentious discussion regarding a final form of the memorial. The appropriate use of space, what constitutes appropriateness, and who should participate in memorial building.

In a content analysis of these virtual memorial sites, several interesting conventions appear almost universally:

- Visual and textual elements are placed on top of one another in a striking contrast to the discussion of form on the web site. The mingling of text and image being a recognized memorial technique, again most notably from the Vietnam Veteran Memorial.
- These sites include a picture or image of the World Trade Center burning, falling, or with specific religious--Christian--imagery imposed into the frame to mark this as a site of tragedy with religious or moral significance.
- The sites carry the colors red, white, blue, and black.
- They picture an American flag.
- The images of the World Trade Center are "collaged" or "stylized" into additional images, or the image of the trade center is represented by other techniques such as two-tone digital designs, collage, etc.
- The same photos repeat themselves throughout the different sites.
- Music is available. Country music such as "God Bless the USA" or classical music such as Chopin are most common.
- A slide show or "film" is available of images of the trade center and other events of September 11th set to music again such as "God Bless The USA."
- They bear emblems of Civil and Military authority
- Names of the victims and poems are available in additional links.
- They have an e-mail or comment button to allow the viewer to participate in the mourning community.
- They provide links to charitable sites working for "relief," "remembrance," and "reconstruction" of the tragic "site."
- They separate the victims from the Fire fighter and Police "heroes." into separate honor rolls, or other type of listing.

Proposed Method: Implications in considering memorial forms.

Clearly the previous stipulations came from a content analysis of memorial web sites visual and textual elements. This is the first step I propose in a series of methodological operations. A second and complimentary method to further scrutinize these virtual memorials must be designed to not only consider both categories, but to consider how both visual and textual elements associate to further develop the memorial experience. Thus, in a close visual textual analysis--looking for ideological semiotic components, I will look at four of the most visited sites (based on number of hits). Each is representative of these commonalities, and yet carries uniquely embedded messages that are inherent in the debate regarding the "appropriate" final form of a permanent memorial at ground zero. While this method is not yet definitive, it does illustrate where further consideration should be directed; it is yet another step in the analytic process of unpacking memorial forms.

www.worldtradecentermemorial.com

figure 1

This image greets the viewer at this memorial site, centered, bordered, and placed on a background made up of stylized, collaged images put together with a red, white, blue and black. This is one of the few images used in memorial representations that contains an intact World Trade Center. However, the shadow of the cross and the skewed angle of the photo, represent the space as clearly "holy." This particular image was also reproduced often by the media coverage in conjunction with the "holy" war President Bush declared on Al-Qaeda terrorists (www.Time.com, www.Newsweek.com, and www.USNEWSANDWORLDREPORT.com).

Not only providing a visual justification for “holy” war, this argument, that the site of the world trade center is now holy ground underlies the families argument that the World Trade Center site is no longer an appropriate place for business/commerce.

The shadow of the cross, something visual yet not tangible--inevitable yet not ironic, represents yet another issue in the debate surround the appropriateness of any tangible memorial in the first place--arguing that no one form can contain a memorial to the entire tragedy. Hence some proposals for an “appropriate” memorial are simply two beams of light, turned on a dusk in the position of the original towers.

This image of the towers and the cross is also duplicated in the stylized background that fills this memorial space.

figure 3

In background image, the red, white, blue, and black--clearly showing a bruised patriotism: the symbol of the Eagle representing “America.” The face of the eagle in the memorial’s background looks stern and resolved, the “holy” justification of this purpose squarely behind him.

Black as a memorial color stems from the popularity of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Moreover, the collaged “reflection” of images emerging from the black background recalls photos of that memorial itself--as well as Mount Rushmore which is pictured in the lower right-hand corner. The integration of text into the image further strengthen the visual parallels between this memorial site, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Figure 4

The ribbon in this collaged image (figure 3) from the memorial site is also an invocation of another memorial practice popularized by the memorial campaigns initiated by groups representing POW/MIA's, AIDS, and Breast Cancer--each of these groups also mourning "victims" of "tragedy." And yet another traditional image embedded in this collaged background is the three fire fighter raising the flag. Clearly this image is evocative of the Iwo Jima memorial.

Yet another visual element of this memorial site are the "official" seals, representing not only the official emergency agency of New York but also those of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. The presence of these official seals further aligns this memorial site with the ideologies of "American" and "patriotism."

figure 5

The image of the World Trade center "burning" or in flames embedded in the emblem of the New York City Fire Department contributed to the notions of fatality and resolve reflected by the centerpiece image.

Interestingly, these images are separated from the background image and the centerpiece image by the left-hand border, situated under the links used to navigate the links associated with this site. This seems to be common practice in all virtual memorial web sites; there is a segregation of the "victims" who worked in the towers and the emergency workers who died as "heroes" saving the "victims." Such a segregation in

the actual memorial at ground zero is also a point of contention in the dialog regarding the form.

www.9-11memorial.org

_____ This site represents a “rescuer” or “hero’s” on-line memorial. Again such a distinct memorial represents a segregation occurring in the dialog itself of what is appropriate for a final memorial form at the ground zero site. Such as schism is not usually discussed by the family members, but the rescue workers frequently talk about their “unique” sacrifice on September 11th.

Regardless of the segregation of “heroes” and “Victims” this site is designed along the same parameters as other virtual memorials.

figure 6

In the centerpiece of this memorial is a poem:
The call went out on September eleven,
How were we to know God would call our rescuers to heaven.

Police, Rescue, Ambulance, and Fire,
doing a job in which they desire.

Doing what they did best in helping others,
Our fallen heroes, our sisters, our brothers.

If they were called to do it again,
you know they would, those women and men.

They gave themselves while doing their best,
the ultimate sacrifice has laid them to rest.

The memories of those who gave their lives,
this tragic event has wetted our eyes.

Those who perished did not go alone,
our heavenly father was guiding them home.

Our brothers and sisters whom have perished,
be assured your memories will be cherished.

In our hearts and minds our heroes we love,
who now watch down from heavens above.

With God beside them as they look down,
they want us to smile, not cry and frown.

Our heroes now twinkle every night above,
blinking and twinkling to show their love.

As our angels shine bright every night,
this tragedy has made all Americans unite.

Their deaths be assured were not in vain,
justice will prevail and ease our pain.

As proud Americans we will stand tall,
to honor those who have given their all.

Kris Darby

Columbia County Ambulance/Dayton Fire Department

Though the text makes reference to the “victims” it clearly distinguishes the act of the rescue workers. The implied statement of both this poem and with this memorial site is that though as a country Americans need to unite, certain behaviors need to be highlighted in the memorial process. Thus on the memorial stage, the actors become heros, victims, or villains. Consequently, the discussion regarding the memorial to the victims is disparate from the discussion regarding a memorial for the heros. Furthermore, the possibility for no memorial at all is justified by reasoning that any memorial must necessarily reference the terrorist villains, who do not deserve such recognition.

This memorial site states that its mission is to “promote tolerance, receive designs, and build a lasting memorial”; this combination uniquely distinguishes this site, as it uses the memorial techniques other virtual memorials ‘to preserve for all generations that moment in time.’ However, there are no pictures or direct links to proposed memorial forms for the final memorial at ground zero, just a place to post discussions of possible final forms. While this absence allows the discussion to operate without prescribed “forms,” it also separates this site from those discussion sponsored by The Lower Manhattan Development Company, MSNBC, and CNN.

Furthermore, with this stated mission declared in a banner which scrolls across the bottom of the site, this site distinguished itself as a virtual memorial in the familiar red, white, blue, and black color schemes. The majority of the site is text divided into specific cluster by the familiar boxes, right, left, top, and bottom, which organize most web sites. The primary images of the site are placed lower in the screen, above the moving mission banner at the very bottom.

The stylized images here are of not only the World Trade Center, but the Pentagon, and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania as well.

figure 7 figure 8

figure 9

These stylized images--particularly that of the falling Towers, recalls other stylized images of memorial such as the POW/MIA Flag. Interestingly, the combination of all three places of tragedy precludes the segregation of victims and emergency workers. Thus rather than segregation, this site seeks to find a form of integration--a common purpose in most “official” memorials. They wish to create a didactic guide to

form and familiarize memories regarding the attacks (Blair, Jeepeson, and Pucci). As a result, the site must abstain from actually suggestion memorial forms, as the possible forms and discussion regarding those forms is divisive. The question of just what will be appropriate will be discussed but not viewed at this site.

www.worldtradedisaster.com

figure 10

_____ This “stylized” and “collaged” centerpiece is very similar in composition, color, and ideological content to the aforementioned background images at other virtual memorials. This centerpiece image alternates with that of the three firefighter raising the flag, Iwo Jima like, again creating a distinct separation of between the “heroes” and “victims” of the attacks,

figure 11

This site also raises an interesting question of appropriateness as it is one of the few sites to include images of people falling and jumping from the towers.

figure 12

This picture is certainly not the centerpiece, it is only available by connecting to a link and viewing a photo gallery. This positioning shows that issues of appropriateness are not placed as the centerpiece of the dialogue regarding the forms of the memorial. Interestingly, a recent art exhibit in New York containing pictures of bodies falling from the World Trade Center was closed as people found it “inappropriate” (Associated Press

Online, 5/30/02). Such negotiation of what parts of the disaster are “appropriate” for display and remembrance are clearly linked to social and cultural concerns that any commemorative study must methodologically consider.

A third step then in this analysis would be to broaden the dramatic analysis that has begun to seep into some of the close textual analysis. However, as the frame for these images is the World Wide Web, a more appropriated generative method needs to be developed to more fully account for these images contributions to the World Trade Center Memorial dialogue. Such a method must be generated.

Further Considerations

By contextualizing these images and their accompany texts into the conversation of appropriate spaces and memorial practices gives an insight into the complex social rituals occurring as the form for the final memorial can be discussed. This would be yet a third step in operationalizing several methodological approaches. What it might entail still needs to be developed, for just as the forms of memorial observance is developed in this discussion, the field of commemorative rhetoric must itself develop to consider and respond in this dialogue.

The necessity to consider this site is a critical one as it is a pressing social one. However, there are many other ideological, cultural, functional, and formal considerations inherent in just an analysis of virtual memorials that traditional methods have yet to account. As the history of commemorative rhetoric is itself a generative study, this field is uniquely positioned to generate for itself methods that can consider the submerged pieces of the dialogue considering an appropriate final memorial to occupy the World Trade Center site.

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