

Flight 93: Memory to Monument

by

Laura Emmons Thorén

AN HONORS THESIS

Submitted to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of S

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY

May 2010

Memory is elusive. This characteristic of memory makes creating its physical permanence -- in the form of a memorial -- nearly an impossible task. Additionally, memory is individual. Everyone has unique perspectives of people, places, or events that they have encountered in their own past, and in the collective past of a community or a nation. Two siblings who had been seated next to each other may recollect a years-old dinner conversation completely differently based upon their relationship with the speaker. An old newspaper clipping from a presidential election might stir a variety of emotions depending on the past or present political views of the reader.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Islamic extremists hijacked four American commercial airplanes. The memory of this day – less than a decade ago – is one that is still fresh in the mind of every person who watched the events unfold minute by minute, as I did. Three of these planes reached the terrorists’ objectives: the Twin Towers at the World Trade Centers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. However, the fourth was diverted; made aware of the terrorist’s intentions through final communications with loved ones on the ground, the passengers fought back. This plane, United Airlines flight 93, crashed into a field near the rural town of Shanksville, in western Pennsylvania. The heroic efforts of the forty passengers and crew on Flight 93 undoubtedly saved the lives of countless others in the targeted building – most likely the White House or the Capitol - the terrorists had hoped to destroy.

An elaborate memorial to preserve Flight 93’s story will be unveiled in 2011, on the tenth anniversary of the attacks. The project itself, a fusion of landscape design and permanent

structure, and the process of choosing a design to represent this day, are the subject of this thesis. Remembering the events of September 11, 2001 pose unprecedented challenges that can only be understood within the longer history of American monuments and commemorations.

In the nine years since the attacks, museum professionals and educators have faced similar challenges. As early as 2002, the authors of “September 11th and the Mourning After,”¹ published in *The Public Historian*, discussed how museum curators struggled to represent September 11th in exhibits. “[They] find themselves in the unaccustomed...uncomfortable position of working in the intersection of grief and history. In addition to doing [the] usual work of collecting, interpreting, and preserving history, [they are] also filling an emotional need for the public.”² How could a public exhibit be understandable to children while also engaging the more adult issues raised by the attacks? Furthermore, a memorial to September 11th would mean something to a person who was physically close to an attack, or it may ignite an entirely different feeling for someone who had watched the day’s events on television. For a museum exhibit, or as explored in this thesis, a memorial, to represent each of these viewpoints would neither be possible, nor would it be effective.

A memorial designer, like a historian or a museum curator, has the additional difficulty of representing a memory through a structure. The focus of this thesis is to explore the way a designer can capture a memory and convey it to the visitor. This process includes an evaluation

¹ James B. Gardner and Sarah M. Henry. “September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy,” *The Public Historian* 24, no. 3 (Summer, 2002): 37-52.

² Gardner and Henry, “September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy,” 41

of the memorial design competition, and its winner, Paul Murdoch, a Los Angeles-based who received a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from the University of Virginia and a Masters in Architecture from the University of California Los Angeles. He is the architect who created a design that that includes both a living and a permanent memorial. It must be noted that there is an ongoing controversy regarding Murdoch's intentions with the symbolism he employed in the Flight 93 memorial's design.

Symbolism is one of the ways that memorial designers connect with the visitor. Well-known symbols immediately allow a person to make a distinct reference or put the memorial in context. However, many notable memorials are able to reach viewers without using a symbol, just aesthetic. To demonstrate how a memorial best reaches its viewers, I will compare the ability of memorials, including the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. to foreign memorials such as the Berlin Holocaust Memorial, in their effectiveness to convey an event's memory to a visitor. Such examples delineate design elements of a memorial that allow it to stand the test of time.

In December 2009, I interviewed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns about the importance of memorials as a place of rest and reflection.

The United Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville sort of fits right...[the] notion that a great country can acknowledge complicated aspects of its past, and by memorializing them, permit its citizens to share in the meaning, quite apart from whatever politics might attend day to day to things.³

³ Ken Burns, interview by author, December 23, 2009.

Burns' emphasizes a memorial's important role as a place for preserving a nation's collective memory – a place that 'shares the meaning' of that memory -- regardless of form or aesthetics.

I translate this “sharing” as *interactivity*. Not only is a memorial designed and constructed as a physical representation – it is a place for visitors to direct their emotions. It is a place to stand, or sit, or pray – to remember.

The 3 Variables of Interactivity

In this thesis, the three variables of interactivity in memorialization discussed include relevance the original collective memory, the ability for the design to convey this memory, and the emotional attachment and interaction of the visitors. The Flight 93 memorial design will serve as the primary example. However, because this memorial will not be opened to the public until September 11, 2011, examples of other memorials that succeed (or fail) in this interactivity will be discussed.

Examples of memorials that accomplish this interactivity in the nation's capital include the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial. Carnegie Mellon historian Scott A. Sandage has written about how the Lincoln Memorial's permanence and interaction in American memory and contemporary society owe as much to the protests and demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement as they do to design elements or the intentions of its architect. While originally built between 1909 and 1922 to emphasize that President Lincoln saved the Union during the Civil War and to deemphasize his

role in ending slavery, in collective memory the Lincoln Memorial is now indelibly associated with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and the “I Have A Dream” speech he delivered on its steps in August 1963. The Lincoln Memorial has remained relevant because this evolution and interactivity has continued. It is a space for public assembly and a platform for free speech. (Sandage) Like these examples, the design of the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania will be analyzed as a case study of how interactivity will be – and must be – continuously redefined, as individual and national memories of the 2001 attacks evolve.

In immediate aftermath, the crash sites in New York City, Washington D.C., and Shanksville became unambiguous reminders of the evil that had penetrated American borders, but inevitable question of what to *do* with these spaces was not easily settled. In Manhattan, the former site of the towers was quickly dubbed “Ground Zero,” but conflict arose quickly between those who vowed to rebuild a financial center and those who envisioned a permanently empty, sacred space. For both symbolic and functional reasons, the federal government and Department of Defense moved quickly to restore the Pentagon to its former appearance with only subtle alterations to accommodate a memorial within the impact zone of the crash.

In Shanksville, what was once “a common field...is a field of honor forever,” in the words of Los Angeles Fire Chief Stephen Rudaupon when he visited the crash site. The design includes an entry portal with a stone walkway, and gateway tower that can be seen from the highway to welcome visitors to the park. The focal point of the memorial will be the crescent shaped, tree-lined walkway that surrounds the place where Flight 93 made impact with the Pennsylvania field – the Sacred Ground. Murdoch hopes that the crescent walkway will help

direct the visitor's gaze to where the plane crashed. Only family members of the victims and authorized personnel will be allowed onto the actual crash site.



Design of the memorial⁴

⁴ Murdoch, Paul. *Flight 93 Memorial Design*. 2005. National Park Service, Shanksville, Pennsylvania. *Official Flight 93 Memorial Website*. Web. 5 Nov. 2009.

However, this crescent shape has been a major source of controversy, because it is a symbol often associated with Islam. Islam does not have a symbol associated with it the way Christianity is represented by the cross or Judaism by the Star of David.⁵ However, the crescent has become recognized with the Islamic religion because of it is featured on the flags of Muslim countries, and mosques are often decorated with the crescent symbol.

No matter the memorial design to Flight 93 will undoubtedly appeal to some and be rejected by others. Memories of September 11th are very emotionally charged. However, the original intent of a memorial is to be accepted by all. It must acknowledge this passion and anger associated with the collective memory of this day, and strive to encapsulate this memory in an interactive and unique way that will be understood and preserved through time.

Spontaneous Memorialization

In the days after Tuesday, September 11th, 2001 the impulse to spontaneously “memorialize” was immediately apparent. In lower Manhattan, wire and board fences, bus stops, and other public spaces were quickly wallpapered with missing persons flyers and eventually, as hope dimmed, homemade commemorative displays. Photographs of lost loved ones, growing piles and blankets of flowers, and poignant songs on the radio brought home the pain and suffering of the attacks to people scattered nationwide and worldwide. For those in

⁵ Thomas Arnold. “Symbolism and Islam,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 53, no. 307 (October, 1928): 155-156.

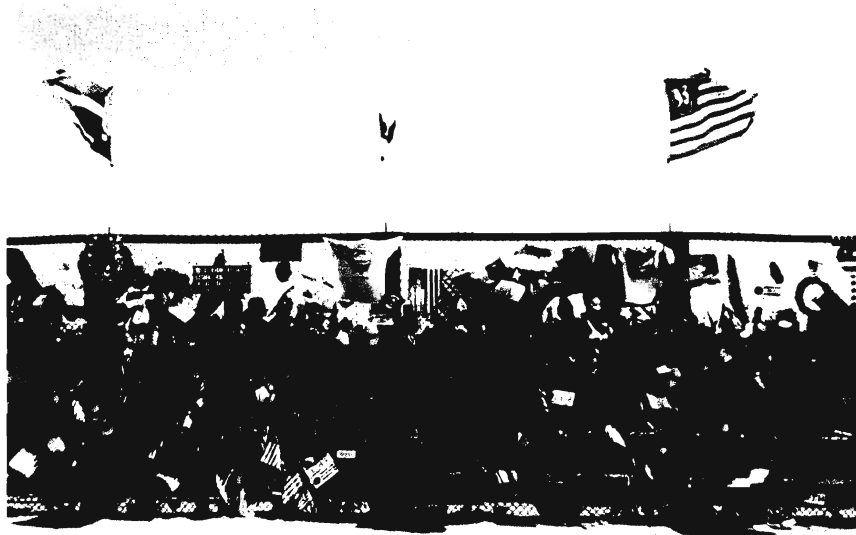
New York City, the scent of smoldering fire and the haze of the ash lingered for weeks afterwards. These tangible elements made it impossible to imagine a day when the terrorist attacks would no longer be at the forefront of everyone's mind, let alone forgotten.

Museum curators immediately perceived the importance of preserving spontaneous memorials for history, even as they struggled with the inherent contradictions in taking down what others put up or making permanent things that were profoundly ephemeral. A few months after the tragedy, Brooklyn Museum of Art director Arnold Lehmann pondered: "These posters and great collections of flowers and candles are the real thing. This is made up of tears. What happens if...you put a box of Plexiglas over it?"⁶ The "sanitized environment" of a museum may blunt the raw emotion such displays carried in their original locations and contexts. Similarly, the scale, design, and permanence of an architectural monument might also "sanitize," homogenize, or simply paralyze living memories. How could museums or memorials adhere to their respective protocols in preserving or creating physical memory while also maintaining meaning and allowing it to evolve? How can a memorial keep visitors emotionally connected to unchanging structures?

For those in western Pennsylvania, the crater in the earth where Flight 93 crashed into the countryside will remain overgrown, but the crescent walkway will be designed. Groves of trees and benches will allow visitors to sit and reflect. A groomed path will allow for easy walking. In the days after September 11, hand written notes, flowers, teddy bears, and photographs were

⁶ Gardner and Henry, "September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy," 41.

brought to the site. A chain link fence put up to bar public access to the crash site became covered with these items.⁷ The fence spontaneously became a “memorial fence”.



Spontaneous Memorialization: The Fence at Flight 93 Temporary Memorial⁸

Thirty-five thousand tributes have been left at the temporary memorial fence.⁹ There is also a temporary nondenominational chapel at the site.

⁷ Levine, Samantha. “One year after 9/11: Shanksville, Pennsylvania” *US News & World Report* - *USNews.com*. http://www.usnews.com/usnews/9_11/articles/911shanksville.htm

⁸ Thorén, Laura. "Spontaneous Memorialization." 2010. JPG file.

⁹ Marylynne Pitz, "Flight 93 memorial visitors creating 'collective memory'" *Post-Gazette.com*.



Tour Group and The Chapel at the Flight 93 Temporary Memorial¹⁰

Paul Murdoch's design was chosen from over one thousand submissions. This vision was designated as the one to shift this spontaneity into permanence. The use of the natural landscape of The Sacred Ground will keep the spontaneity of the Pennsylvania landscape; however, the emotion of those spontaneous notes, photographs, and flowers must also be represented. The

¹⁰ Thorén, Laura. "Flight 93 Memorial Chapel." 2010. JPG file.

way that the original visitors, the original family members *interacted* with the crash site should be represented in the permanent memorial.

The Idea of Interactivity

An effective memorial must be interactive. It must direct all visitors toward a shared or collective memory while simultaneously permitting each individual to explore unique or personal memories and emotions. Even as the design and message shape the visitor's experience, each visitor must also feel that, in turn, his or her presence shapes the monument and adds something new to its power and permanence. Whether colossal or intimate, public or private, dedicated a famous leader or simply to a loved one, those memorials that remain relevant over time are those that can evolve despite their permanence, resonating at both the individual and community level, even after immediate or living memory fades.

Architects and memorial designers must therefore create spaces that defy time and the elements while also preserving a sense of change and interactivity. The spontaneous memorialization at Shanksville is of particular relevance Alexander T. Riley, a sociologist at Bucknell University, is currently writing a book about Flight 93's temporary memorial fence and the memorial chapel. Riley's research includes oral histories of over five hundred visitors to the memorial. Riley explained the display of collective memory in Shanksville to Marylynne Pitz of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*:

...All the objects [left at the site] show "how society makes sense of catastrophic events." ...Religion has done a very effective job of bringing order to the chaos of individual and collective death," But for others, the secular items, such as the

Spider Man doll and stuffed snake, are "designed to say 'I was here.' " People want to honor fallen heroes but how the nation ultimately achieves that goal often ignites conflict between urbanites and rural America, individuals and communities, atheists and believers, liberals and conservatives.¹¹

Spontaneous commemoration is a way to preserve a place of loss by setting it apart. A site of tragedy becomes a site of memory; a site of evil becomes a holy place. The profane is transformed into the sacred. These themes are often associated with the Romanian Philosopher and historian Mircea Eliade, whose ideas underlie much scholarship on monuments and memorials.

Background and Theory

Eliade wrote extensively on the human inclination to separate the world into the realms of the “sacred” and the “profane”. Eliade’s book *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* was published in 1957. The book explores the theory that by heightening the meaning of a place deemed “sacred”, a religious person could, in theory, be closer to The Creator. In the past two decades, scholars of “collective memory” and commemoration have focused on how public monuments serve this function. Memorials make a landscape such as The Mall in Washington, D.C., for example, sacred to our nation. In Shanksville, the crash site is already sacred, and the memorial will serve to heighten that sanctity.

¹¹ Marylynn Pitz, "Flight 93 memorial visitors creating 'collective memory'," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*. <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09249/995727-56.stm#ixzz0kpTJyyV0> (accessed April 27, 2010).

Murdoch echoes Eliade when he explains how he intentionally strove to enhance and amplify the sanctity of the Pennsylvanian field. He envisioned the path of a crescent as one that would allow the visitor to walk and reflect while enjoying the Pennsylvania countryside. The opening of the crescent Murdoch hopes would direct visitor's gaze to the crash site. By using both the specific place of the impact in addition to the landscape, Murdoch hoped to provide a framework into which visitors can fit their own memories and respect for the actions of the Flight 93 passengers and crew:

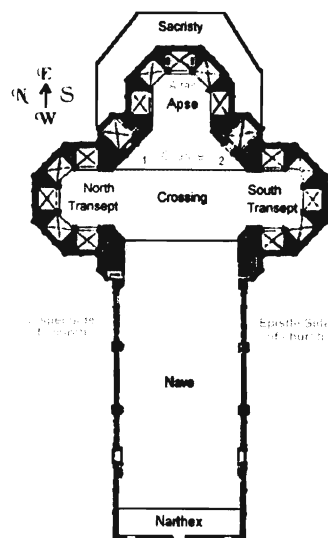
...The design has always been about working with that circular landform...and trying to heighten the sanctity of [the site]. One of the things about this place and one of the – a big part of our philosophy approaching it was that we were not creating something sacred here. It was already there. And so we really approached it as a series of spaces and elements that we could use to frame spaces rather than imposing something sort of before or in front of or at a higher priority than what was there already through the actions of what occurred.¹²

In the opening chapter of Eliade's book, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Eliade writes how "religious humans" are prone to look for religious elements in everyday space. We constantly make connections, look for signs, and search for meaning. A religious person strives, whether consciously or not, to connect his surroundings with his belief. Memorials undoubtedly facilitate Eliade's theory. As he explains, "For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others...there is, then, a sacred space, and hence a strong, significant space; there are other spaces that are not sacred so are without structure or consistency, amorphous." (Eliade, 20) One may take Eliade's theory and apply it as an analytical framework

¹² Paul Murdoch, interview by author, October 30, 2009.

to memorial design: certain spaces heighten religious experience while others do not. If there are certain variables that makes one memorial more sacred and another more profane, then arguably these variables can be isolated to make a memorial that creates a more emotional, connective experience. One of these elements is symbolism.

Eliade attributes symbolism (in conjunction with religious belief) as ways that humans differentiate sacred space from one that is profane. His ideas have broad applicability, even though Eliade studied primitive societies. “In Bali, as in some parts of Asia, when a new village is to be built the people look for a natural intersection, where two roads cross at right angles,” he wrote. (Eliade, 45) In India...before masons lay the first stone the astronomer shows them the spot where it is to be placed, and this spot is supposed to lie above the snake that supports the world. (Eliade, 54) For Christians, the church or cathedral is a representation of Jerusalem or heaven. “The four parts of the interior of the church [nave, altar, and the flanking transepts] symbolize the four cardinal directions.”¹³



¹³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*. (New York: Harvest Books, 1968), 61.

Church Interior¹⁴

The altar represents the “Door of Paradise”, the Nave is the “Earth” and the walls around the church create the “four cardinal directions” that serve to represent a microcosm of our world.¹⁵ Although these examples from Bali, Indian, and Christian culture differ in form, they are similar in function. Whether it is a crossroad, a stone, and a church, symbols are believed to be either a physical, Earthly representation for a religious man or woman to reach the Creator.

What the controversy over Murdoch’s use of the crescent “symbol” suggests is that sometimes, the sacred can become profane. Indeed, this is an inherent disadvantage of the otherwise desirable factor of interactivity. (Below, I return to this disadvantage in discussing the conspiracy theories spawned by vocal critics of Murdoch’s design.) In other words, it is in the nature of symbols that people can attach or impose unintended significance on top of their original or dominant meanings. Intentionally or not, symbols facilitate our connecting the unfamiliar with what we already know. “History cannot...modify the structure of an archaic symbolism,” Eliade observes. “History constantly adds new meanings, but they do not destroy the structure of the symbol.”¹⁶

My thesis research indicates that *interactivity* – not merely historic symbolism or heroic architecture – is the new paradigm in memorial design. My argument thus draws on the work of numerous recent scholars who have written about how memorials engage visitors literally

¹⁴ Holy Trinity Catholic Church Renovation Project Westminster Colorado, graphic.
<http://2008remodel.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/layout.gif>

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 62.

¹⁶ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 137.

beyond the façade, by reinforcing collective memories while inviting individual ones, through the physical and emotional structures of both memory and monument.

Historian Kirk Savage of the University of Pittsburgh is one of the leading scholars of American monuments and collective memory. In his newest book, *Memorial Wars* (2009), he delves into the ways that monuments go beyond the physicality of structure to include this interactivity. Savage argues that everything about commemorative architecture – from its location, to the people who choose to visit, and the mementos they leave behind – must be considered in the definition of a memorial. Additionally, all of these factors play into how effective a particular monument will be in the future. He writes:

National memorials are now expected to be spaces of experience, journeys of emotional discovery, rather than objects to be imitated. This reorientation has succeeded in reviving the public monument as an art form and rescuing it from the early death...¹⁷

Savage connects memorials to art forms, and that connection, he argues, will “rescue [the memorial] from an early death.” Since the beginning of its existence, art has allowed humans to feel emotion ranging from elation to suffering. It is art, or the design of the memorial, to which the visitor first connects. It is the design that remains imprinted in his or her mind after leaving. It is the design that is photographed for textbooks and articles. Because of this, the memorial’s design process, from the competition stage to the unveiling, is of critical importance.

¹⁷ Kirk Savage. *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 1 ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 21.

However, art, like memory, elicits varying responses based on a person's individual perspective or background. While Savage argues that the art form will save the monument from an early death, it is also the art form that causes the most controversy. This is certainly the case in the context of the Flight 93 Memorial, with its "Crescent of Embrace" and the perception (by some) that it evokes the Crescent symbol of Islam.

The Memory of Flight 93 and Aftermath

At 7:40 a.m. the morning of September 11th, 2001, four Arab hijackers boarded a United Airlines Boeing 757 at Newark International Airport in New Jersey. Flight 93 was destined for San Francisco, but terrorists Ziad Jarrah, Ahmed al-Nami, Ahmed al-Haznawi, and Saeed al-Ghamd forcibly took over the flight somewhere between Pennsylvania and Ohio. Although their plan was thwarted, it is believed that they planned to crash the aircraft into the White House or the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

The four terrorists were seated in the first class section of an aircraft carrying thirty-three other passengers and crew. The plane took off at 8:42 a.m., after a 41-minute delay on the ground. By this time, Flight 11 and Flight 175 had already been hijacked and were headed towards the World Trade Center. The hijacking of Flight 93 began 46 minutes after take off -- at 9:28.¹⁸ To gain control of the cockpit, terrorists slit the throat of a flight attendant with a box cutter and stormed the cabin.

To maintain control, the terrorists who remained in the cabin moved passengers to the rear. Jarrah (believed to be the head of the operation) was recorded announcing, "Ladies and

¹⁸ The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (Official Edition). London, UK: Createspace, 2010. Print.

gentlemen: here the captain, please sit down keep remaining seating. We have a bomb on board. So sit.”

After realizing that their flight had been hijacked, passengers used air phones and mobile phones to call loved ones on the ground. The transcripts of these calls are heartbreaking.

Jack, pick up sweetie, can you hear me? Okay. I just want to tell you, there's a little problem with the plane. I'm fine. I'm totally fine. I just want to tell you how much I love you. - Message left by Passenger Lauren Grandcolas at 09:39:21.¹⁹

Another phone call, like the one made at 9:50 by Sandra Bradshaw, a flight attendant, revealed that the crew was taking forcible measures against the hijackers. Bradshaw told her husband that she was boiling water to throw at the hijackers.

Passengers rushed the cockpit at 9:57 am. To repel the attack, Jarrah rolled the aircraft right and left, and then tilted the nose up and down. After four minutes, Jarrah ended the maneuvers at 10:01:00. He then recited the takbir, “Allahu Akbar,” an Islamic expression that translates, “God is the Greatest.” Afterward, the recording ended.²⁰

There is debate over whether or not the passengers were able to penetrate the cockpit and reach the controls before the plane crashed. For example, in the feature film *United 93*, a dramatization released by Universal Pictures, the script was written so that the passengers and the terrorists were wrestling at the controls right before the plane crashed. However, in the actual recording, it is indiscernible whether the commotion heard is coming from within the

¹⁹ Susan Sward. “The voice of the survivors / Flight 93”

²⁰ “United Airlines Flight 93 – Flight Data Recorder”. National Transportation Safety Board.

cockpit or from beyond the cabin door. The 9/11 Commission Report says that the hijackers remained at the controls the entire time, but that the passengers were within seconds of reaching them.²¹

The plane crashed into the western Pennsylvania countryside a few minutes after ten in the morning on September 11th. Shanksville is about 20 minutes flying distance from the nation's capital. The passengers' heroic actions resulted in their deaths but stopped the terrorists from achieving their ultimate goal of crashing the plane into another building and killing a larger number of people.

In the hours after the plane crashed, the site was on lockdown and treated as a crime scene. Only emergency personnel and federal and local investigators were allowed on site to decipher what they could by sifting through the wreckage. A *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article on September 12, 2001 described the commotion of the first hours: "... as a plume of smoke hung in the sky, a steady stream of firefighters, police cars, emergency management crews, national guard members and local volunteers swarmed over the crash site."²²

The first memorial service for victims of the Flight 93 crash was held onsite on Monday, September 17, 2001. 250 family members and relatives attended the twenty-minute service, as did First Lady Laura Bush. A report on this same day noted that on Sunday, September 16th, family members had arrived "at the crash site yesterday...to leave flowers, ribbons and cards at

²¹ The 9/11 Commission Report

²² Silver, Jonathan D. "Day of Terror: Outside tiny Shanksville, a fourth deadly stroke," *Post-Gazette.com*. http://www.post_gazette.com/headlines/20010912 (April 27, 2010)

a makeshift memorial. Late in the afternoon, one couple arrived in a state car, left cards, flowers and a red-white-and-blue bow, took several pictures and then quickly left without speaking to reporters.”²³ A report on the first memorial service read:

As [the relatives] walked toward a 70-foot-long wall formed by rows of stepped hay bales, the 300 relatives and friends of the 44 victims of United Airlines Flight 93 were handed white and red roses, and flat Styrofoam angels made by members of a nearby church congregation. Written on one side was, "Someone prayed for you today." On the other was the date now inscribed in the mind of the world, "09/11/01.”²⁴

Gordon Felt, brother of Edward Felt of New Jersey who died in the crash, was quoted in the article as feeling consoled by the impromptu memorialization. “Everything the victims' families saw yesterday -- makeshift memorials, banners, flags, flowers, state troopers saluting, the work of volunteers, letters, tears -- had helped sustain them.”

Talk of the land becoming a memorial inevitably arose in the initial days after the event. Although the plane crashed on private land owned by two coal companies, the owners decided to donate it for a federal memorial. Joanne Hanley, of the National Park Service, who was decided to be the superintendent of the Flight 93 Memorial, said “we want to make sure that 100 years from now, visitors can come to the site and learn what the passengers and crew did.”²⁵

²³ Levin, Steve, and Tom Barnes. "Flight 93 relatives gathering for service," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. <http://www.post-gazette.com/headlines/20010917somenset0917p2.asp> (April 27, 2010)

²⁴ O'Toole, James, Michael A. Fuoco, and Tom Gibb. "First lady meets Flight 93 families at Somerset site," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. <http://www.post-gazette.com/headlines/20010918crashsceneap2.asp> (April 27, 2010)

²⁵ "Plans discussed for Flight 93 memorial," *Post-Gazette.com*. <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04252/375669-100.stm> (April 27, 2010)



Photo of Crash Site Today: Beyond American Flag²⁶

As of March 25, 2010, The Flight 93 Memorial will be paid for substantially through private contributions. According to a *Post-Gazette* article published on that day, \$30 million has already been raised. Families of those killed in the crash are currently petitioning Congress for the remaining \$28 million to complete the memorial.²⁷ The memorial's vision is to commemorate this story and the bravery of those forty passengers and crew, on the site of their final resting place. The memorial is scheduled for completion in 2011, on the ten-year anniversary of the attacks.

Who Decides?

Architects, Design, and The Memorial "Contest"

²⁶ Thorén, Laura. "Flight 93 Crash Site." 2010. JPG file.

²⁷ Marylynne Pitz. "Flight 93 families seek additional memorial funding," *Post-Gazette.com*. <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09052/950745-84.stm> (April 27, 2010)

The second point of interactivity must be the design's ability to convey a memory. "How do we deal with that initial horror; and channel it [into a memorial]?" Dr. Judy Feldman, the President and CEO of the non-profit National Coalition to Save Our Mall posed this question in a personal interview in January 2010. Dr. Feldman works to give the public a voice in the decisions made on future memorials on the Mall. Her question is particularly relevant considering the horrifying – yet heroic – story previously described.²⁸

How do you preserve a last phone call to a loved one; how could a memorial possible represent the horror of deciding whether to trust that the terrorists are creating a "hostage situation," or that the plane will follow the fate of the other three hijacked on that day? No memorial could fully translate these moments and emotions into something that could be understood by all and accepted by all, and yet this is what it strives to do. On a cold winter day in January, I sat down with Dr. Feldman in a private home in Washington, D.C., and talked about the ways it is possible to channeling memory into monument. She emphasized that it is the memorial competition that is the most critical stage. She argued that an anonymous competition, with a large panel of judges of diverse backgrounds, is the best way to assure that a memorial will be accepted by and connect to the general public.

The contest to choose a designer for the Flight 93 memorial began three years after the attacks, on September 11, 2004. The contest was open to the entire public, worldwide. The call for submissions read in part:

Honor the heroes of Flight 93—the 40 passengers and crew who on one September morning changed the course of history... Contribute to the dialogue of what a national memorial should be... Conceive a message that will reflect on

²⁸ Judy Feldman, interview by author, January 9, 2010.

the event that occurred on September 11, 2001, and be timeless in its power and conviction....²⁹

One thousand anonymous submissions were sent in from around the world after the Flight 93 memorial contest was announced. Each submission suggested a unique vision of how the memory of Flight 93 could be represented on Earth. A jury of nine design professionals, family members of Flight 93 victims, and national leaders narrowed the submissions down to five in the first stage of the selection. The finalists were invited to tour the site in Shanksville in February and again in June of 2005. Their designs were exhibited near the crash site and “the public was given the opportunity to comment on the final designs at the exhibition and through the project’s website.”³⁰

Opening the design competition to the public by means of a display of the memorial designs is in line with Dr. Feldman’s philosophy towards public memorialization. To As the president and founder of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, Dr. Feldman is “dedicated to preserving the integrity of the National Mall as our premier civic space for learning about and experiencing democracy.” On such prime real estate as The Mall, visited by international tourists, veterans, and schoolchildren alike, Feldman argues that who better than these visitors to have the right to decide what should be built on this space. Thus, this non-profit organization serves as a voice for the public for national memorials on the Mall. We spoke about who has the right to decide – legislators, victims, or the public, or all three – in deciding the memorial landscape of our nation’s capital.

²⁹ "Flight 93 National Memorial (U.S. National Park Service)." *U.S. National Park Service - Experience Your America*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.nps.gov/flni>>.

³⁰ Flight 93 Website

A second jury, composed of fifteen family members, design professionals, and community leaders, made the final decision. The exact ratio or number of votes was never released. Los Angeles based architect Paul Murdoch was chosen as the winner of the Flight 93 memorial competition on September 7, 2005.

Although Murdoch entered the competition without first visiting the site, being originally from Philadelphia, he knew of the western Pennsylvanian countryside from camping there as a young boy. His design puts emphasis on the dramatic backdrop of the landscape. A graduate of University of Virginia, Murdoch had designed mostly public libraries, university and college facilities, and private homes. I interviewed Murdoch by telephone on October 30, 2009, when he spoke about his initial intention for memorializing Flight 93:

We had in mind that that would be where we would have the visitors center, and we'd have these large memorial walls there where the flight path would cut through, that would be the visitor entrance for the memorial, down by the bowl. That was part of the original design. These walls were coordinated with a large curving walkway with maple trees that would formalize the edge of the bowl. That was meant to focus on the crash site.³¹

Murdoch's multifaceted design includes both structural and landscape elements. He intends that the layers of the design have different meanings for the visitor. "One was the landform, known as the bowl. And it is roughly circular. And then we kind of formalized it into a circle, and by forming that edge there we wanted to focus the whole visitor experience on the crash site down at the edge of the bowl. So it was like a big framing of that space. In the mission statement the preamble was 'a common field one day, a field of honor forever' that was our way of helping to

³¹ Paul Murdoch, Interview with author

recognize the field of honor. By framing it with those trees and allowing the visitors to walk around it.”

Murdoch’s responses during our interview corroborated my understanding of the importance of interactivity. He emphasized the interactivity he hopes the visitor will feel towards the surrounding landscape. The rolling mountains in the background, the green in the summer and the colors in the fall, the quiet stillness during the winter months, would allow someone to forget whatever else was on their mind and to concentrate solely on the actions of those 40 passengers and crew on September 11th.

“What we’ve essentially done is create a memorial landscape as opposed to a built monument. The whole idea is to allow visitors to move through the landscape in a series of experiences that culminate at the crash site itself.” However, in contrast to the national parks, this memorial had to clearly commemorate heroic actions, rather than be a place just for experience. “...Here we are really shaping the landscape to memorialize this event and the actions of those 40 passengers and crew members. That’s different from just having the natural landscape as its found and as its maintained. It’s a designed landscape,” Murdoch explained.

Judy Scott Feldman is not familiar with Murdoch’s particular design, with its fusion of landscape and memory, but she cautioned against the common pitfalls of especially large memorials. “...If its not clearly defined, the sentiment, the memory, the concept, if its not defined early on, you’re more likely to get great big things,” she said. People usually want something grand because it serves to emphasize and ‘physicalize’ the level at which they feel an event should be recognized. This usually results in large structures. According to Dr. Feldman,

the most significant example of this is the design contest and construction of the World War II memorial. The veterans were “dying a hundred a day,” and they fervently lobbied for a memorial to be created as a physical place to remember their time in action and those who had died.

For Dr. Feldman, these “great big things” have also resulted in an unclear vision of the future of memorialization at the national level. She perceives a saturation of memorials – an overabundance of memorials to the point that not one stands out – in the capital city. She spoke about how all of the open space in Washington -- from The Mall to the grassy circular plots of highway rotaries -- has a plaque or statue dedicated to something or someone. Kirk Savage also writes about this notion of unsuccessful memorials and saturation in his book *Monument Wars*. “Statue monuments had become a victim of their own success. By the beginning of the twentieth century, as the cost of manufacturing them continued to decline and the demand for civic art soared, no one could fail to notice their newfound presence in the urban landscape...The statues in the city’s public squares and circles were usually plopped there without much thought.”³²

In respect to this idea of saturation, Dr. Feldman spoke fervently of the traits of “successful” versus “unsuccessful” memorials. She joked that the plethora of generals riding on horseback around the Washington, D.C. landscape should be taken down and placed in a group elsewhere. To elaborate on this idea of placing like memorials together, Dr. Feldman emphasizes that there should be an underlying *theme* for memorialization in Washington, D.C.

³² Kirk Savage. *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 1 ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 195-6.

For example, rather than dedicating an entire memorial to World War II, why not add onto the World War I memorial. This was, in fact, how Britain chose to commemorate their war dead in London, by adding another plaque onto their monument to the First World War.

Dr. Feldman's proposal would not work for a memorial such as Flight 93. This memorial faces the opposite problem the "saturation" of the Mall: it is in the middle of nowhere. Shanksville is three hours from the capital, and an hour and a half from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It will be one of the few national monuments *not* in Washington, D.C. The Flight 93 memorial must draw the visitor purely by its individual significance and, arguably, a unique design.

There is a flaw in Dr. Feldman's idea for a pattern or consistency to the Mall's monuments. Those who lobby to create a memorial (and who fund it) may not accept this lack of individuality. A "consistent" or "patterned" landscape on the Mall with a preconceived form and function of each memorial may not appease those who feel most aggrieved. It is difficult to imagine creating a "formula" for memorials because that would make the ability to preserve an individual, unique memory completely obsolete.

Whether a "pattern is employed or not," Dr. Feldman is dedicated to finding a solution to the "story told on The Mall," which she believes is inaccurate. "It is a story of presidents and of wars," she said, that she hopes will be transformed from "a passive landscape into an active player in American minds." This "active player" or what I will call an "interactive player" is one that will allow Americans to use the space for purposes of their choosing, while still honoring

and remembering those that came before them. Dr. Feldman emphasized that the problem must be solved soon. She placed a notebook in front of me outlining the federal government's "real estate plan" for the memorial landscape of Washington D.C. Dr. Feldman stated that legislators would turn every square inch of green into a memorial of some sorts. Dr. Feldman is adamantly opposed to this plan. "If [the federal memorials and museums master plan] succeeds, every piece of grass in Washington D.C. will have a monument...and who builds monuments? People who feel aggrieved...so what is happening to our pocket parks are filling up with things like 'The Victims of Communism Memorial'...We're turning the open spaces into deadly open cemeteries."

One could argue that the Flight 93 memorial, too, "a deadly open cemetery" – but in an entirely different context. The Flight 93 memorial will be on the crash site, whereas the Mall, Dr. Feldman says, is "a stage for democracy" and should be treated as such. This leads to the question that to stop memorial saturation, should the context of a memorial is placed be taken into consideration? Mircea Eliade wrote that several factors determine the level of sanctity a person connects to a space. These factors are not purely physical, but historical as well. Thus, the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall may be fitting for the D.C. landscape because of its historical significance insofar as the abolition of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. It is a "sub-stage for Democracy" on the Mall, which Feldman calls "The Stage for Democracy." The Flight 93 memorial has an entirely different historical context, as the graveyard for the heroes of Flight 93. The memorial can then be treated as such.³³

³³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 17

In Paul Murdoch's case, the designer clearly engaged with the context of the space and its historical significance. The memorial's crescent is placed around, and focused entirely on the spot where the plane hit. At Ground Zero in Manhattan, the plot of land where the Twin Towers fell now must merge both business and commemoration. The land where memorials are placed can be spiritual and "holy" in itself – or, as is the case with the Mall, it can be designed for higher importance. The strip of land that extends from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial essentially represents, through landform, the process of founding and saving the United States.

As Kirk Savage writes in *Memorial Wars*, people and nations will keep buildings memorials as long as world peace eludes us. "In the context of war without end, the future of the war memorial on the Mall will depend on how Americans come to terms with the prospect of living in a world that offers little hope for lasting peace."³⁴ Memorial structures will continue to rise on both sacred and profane space, and each will venture to be a focal point for American citizens to direct their memory and emotion. This "competition" among memorials, particularly in places of saturation like Washington, D.C., is where interactivity plays an important role.

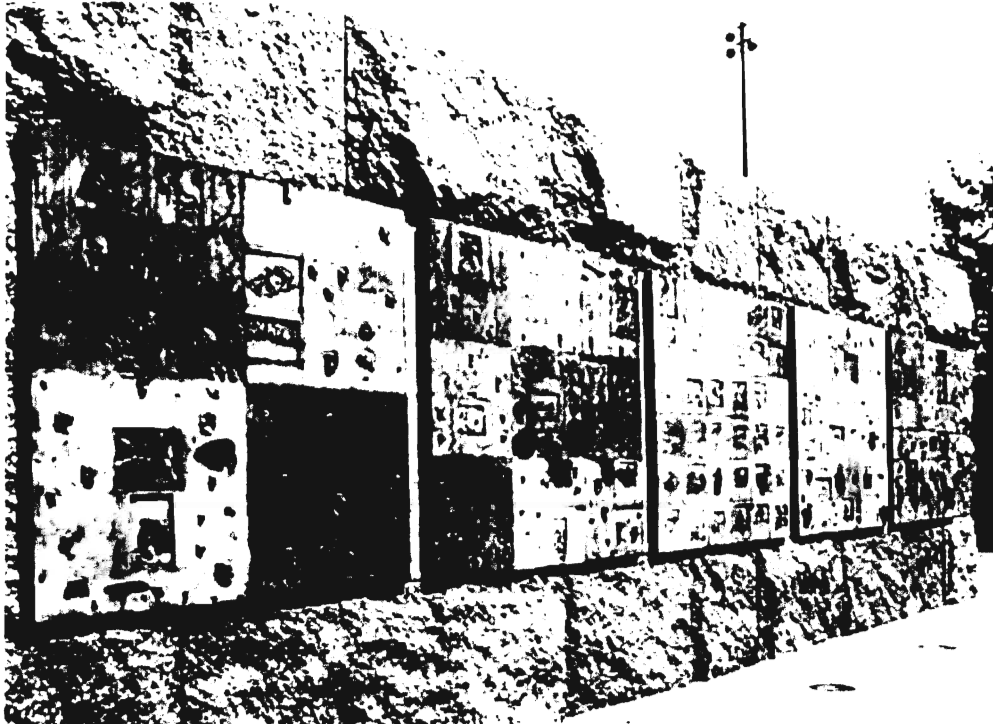
Examples of Memorials with Successful Interactivity

A contemporary edifice that succeeds in interacting with the visitor is the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, in Washington, D.C. Dedicated in 1997, the forty-acre complex welcomes visitors in ways unlike that of more classic, older, monuments like the equestrian statues previously discussed. One element of the design, an art wall described below, stands out in

³⁴ Kirk Savage. *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 1 ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 310.

particular innovative and interactive.

Visitors enter an open area with a large mural and five columns, created by the American sculptor Robert Graham, representing the New Deal. The mural is a collage of scenes, faces, hands, and initials. These images are then inverted on the pillars.



Robert Graham's Memorial Wall³⁵

³⁵ Courtesy of studio of Robert Graham. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial*. Washington, D.C. *PBS Newshour*. Web. 3 Jan. 2010.



Interaction on Robert Graham's FDR Memorial Wall³⁶

The original intention of this art was for pure interaction school children on a field trip to the memorial would be able to make take-home souvenirs by pressing wax onto this convex and concave images and symbols, then having something to take home. Every child – or adult – would have then have interacted with the memorial, and hold a physical piece of Roosevelt's legacy.

Unfortunately, the National Park Service rejected the idea of having children use wax on the memorial. Nonetheless, graphite renderings of the imprints can be made with pencil and paper. Even without these items, Graham's miniature brass sculptures allow a visitor to reach out and physically touch the faces of the victims of the Great Depression, a connection that goes beyond reading a plaque or looking at a photograph. Although the FDR Memorial is relatively new, it is one that will remain relevant because of these modern, interactive elements.

³⁶ Thorén, Laura. "FDR Memorial Wall." 2010. JPG file.

In addition to the wall depicting the faces of the Great Depression, another element of the FDR Memorial that allows visitors to become “one” with the victims of the Great Depression is through the interaction with statues. Rather than putting statues of victims to the Depression on a platform, raised above the viewer like most statues, they stand at ground level. This allows visitors to better interact. One can stand behind bronze statues of men waiting in a breadline in an urban setting, or touch the frail shoulder of one of the American farmers.



Visitor Interaction with FDR Memorial Statues³⁷

Some may argue that although a quick memory could be made with a snapshot it is still not possible to fully capture what it felt like to be a victim of the Great Depression without having lived through it. Still, by interacting with the metal bodies – resting a hand on a hunched shoulder, or holding a cool hand -- a visitor is managing to come closer to realizing the horror behind the Depression. These interactive elements bring out the sadness and the dearth of the Depression far more than a synopsis on a memorial plaque at the base of an austere memorial.

³⁷ Silverberg, Dave. *FDR statues*. N.d. Abbey Gardens, Washington, D.C.. *AbbeyGardens.com*. Web. 12 Mar. 2010.

The grand layout of the FDR Memorial requires a lot of physical movement. This takes both time and effort, but it also gives an opportunity for the visitor to grasp the memory of FDR without being pushed through a line or squeezed into a small space. The Flight 93 memorial's crescent walkway will have a similar effect. The ability for an individual visitor, or a family, to spend the hour or so to walk along the tree-lined path around the crash site will better able the memory of Flight 93 to penetrate.

The FDR Memorial – and the Flight 93 Memorial – will also offer an opportunity to experience history from a first hand perspective. So many lessons and anecdotes are learned from second-hand sources, like textbooks, this interaction allows every visitor to interact with a “primary source”. The chance to make a rendering or stand between the victims in the bread line creates a personal, unique memory that then will be told and retold to others. A memorial such as the FDR allows the opportunity to see history more closely, more tangibly, and for that interaction to be passed along verbally (or through photographic image) to those who haven't had the chance to visit the memorial.

Interaction in both contemporary and future memorials must incorporate not only one, but all senses. At the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. the sound of the waterfalls pouring from the stone walls; the smell of the cherry blossoms and hot summer air; the sight of the victims of the Depression standing patiently in a breadline; the smooth, cool brass of the late President's hand resting on the arm of his wheelchair all provide the visitor with tangible links to FDR's presidency. The memorial was completed in 1997. I walked through its seven and a half acres in 2009 with Peter Kovler, a Washington D.C. investor and philanthropist

and one of the chief benefactors for this memorial's construction. This memorial is an example of one that incorporates all facets of this new paradigm for an "interactive memorial."

Lawrence Halprin was the designer and architect of the FDR memorial, and Kovler was a good friend of his until the designer's passing in October 2009. On our walk, Kovler emphasized on several occasions the extent to which Halprin had paid attention to interactivity through every detail, in addition to the importance he saw in representing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's legacy "correctly" through the monument. However, he represented his life unconventionally. Rather than read a timeline of FDR's life on some plaque by the gift shop, this memorial literally "walks" the visitor through the president's hardships and accomplishments. It not only represents his legacy accurately and succinctly, it instills through interactive elements how the president, and America, felt during the turbulent years of 1933 to 1945. A visitor can see a life-size version of FDR sitting in his wheelchair at the entrance of the memorial; a perspective the people who lived at the time of FDR's presidency did not see.



Interactivity at the FDR Memorial³⁸

This statue, however, brings a famous president to the level of the visitor, making his work and legacy more accessible. Within the memorial, the varying architecture evokes a rhythm to which one can attach their sentiment. A wall of fallen stones – the most destructed in comparison to the other “walls” in the memorial – resonates the feeling of confusion and destruction as America entered World War II.

Another example of a contemporary memorial that effectively makes use of interaction is that to the memory of the Black Power protest at the medal ceremony of the men’s 200 meter

³⁸ Thorén, Laura. "Interactivity at the FDR Memorial." 2010. JPG file.

sprint at the 1968 Olympic Games. The memorial was put in place in October of 2005 on the San Jose State University campus in California. Unlike the statues in the FDR memorial, this statue depicts the athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, as beyond life size. They stand at twenty-seven feet. The interaction comes in the form of exclusion. The monument design omits the statue of the second-place finisher, an Australian named Peter Norman. This allows visitors to stand and imitate the protestors. The memory of this event is experienced first hand through physical interaction.



Space for Interaction:

The Black Power Protest Memorial in San Jose, California³⁹

In a letter to the editor of The New York Times, San Jose resident Ann Clark wrote that this statue not only embodies the Black Power movement, the statue allows “the impact of this long-

³⁹ UCDVicky. *Olympic Black Power Statue*. San Jose, CA. *Waymarking.com*. Web. 20 Feb. 2010.

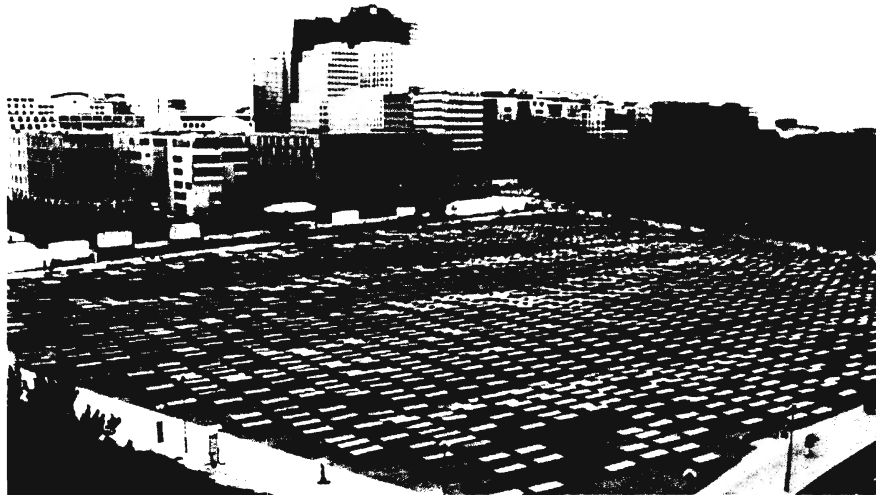
ago event [to continue] to be felt today.”⁴⁰ As evinced by Clark, and countless other visitors, the interactive element of this memorial allows the visitor to experience what it may have felt like to be an Olympian making a controversial gesture and drawing attention to Civil Rights on an unprecedented world stage.

The Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Germany is another example of use of interactivity through physical movement. This memorial was dedicated May 2005. According to an interview between the memorial’s architect Peter Eisenman, an American and a reporter from the BBC, Eisenman said, “he hoped that Berliners and visitors to the city [would] navigate the pathways as part of their daily lives.”⁴¹

This goal of daily navigation – not only interacting with the memorial, but also moving through it, trying to understand it on a regular basis, is effective in preserving the memory of the holocaust for generations. During a visit to Berlin in May of 2009, my walk through the memorial was filled with emotion -- and the fear that I believe the architect meant to instill through design. In the depths of the memorial, where the stone rectangles loomed above my head, I felt, although on an infinitely less degree, those feelings of uncertainty and separation that the victims of the Holocaust experienced.

⁴⁰ Ann Clark, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, January 10, 2010.

⁴¹“BBC NEWS | Europe | Berlin opens Holocaust memorial.” *BBC NEWS | News Front Page*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4531669.stm>



The Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe⁴²



Personal Photo: Author at the Memorial⁴³

⁴² *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*. N.d. Bowdoin College, Berlin, Germany. *Bowdoin College News Archives*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010.

⁴³ Thorén, Laura. "Within the Berlin Memorial." 2009. JPG file.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. opened its doors in 1993.⁴⁴ Like the memorial in Berlin, the permanent exhibition aims to make visitors feel those emotions of fear and uncertainty that victims of the holocaust experienced. Visitors are first herded into “intentionally ugly, dark grey metal elevators in the Hall of Witness...[where they] watch an overhead monitor with black and white film of Americans’ first encounter with [concentration camps] Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Ohrdruf.”⁴⁵ The entrance is not the only physical, tangible element with which the visitors interact. Throughout the exhibit, people are expected to ‘...take this journey with a heart and soul “heavy and dark,” like the space itself’ The design team strived to create the memorial in such a way that emotional detachment would not be an option. “[The team] wanted visitors to eschew forever the role of bystander.”⁴⁶ This article refers consistently to the personalization of a monument – to allow a person to feel emotionally connected through an individual relationship.

This individual, emotional relationship between a monument and its visitor was made famous by Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The stoic wall acts as a receptacle of flowers, notes, letters -- even motorcycles -- that friends and relatives have left for lost loved ones. The polished black marble allows a visitor to “see themselves within the names...an interface of light and dark...of the living and the dead,” as Lin wrote in an article for the New

⁴⁴ Edward T. Linenthal. “The Boundaries of Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” *American Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (September, 1994): 406-433.

⁴⁵ Edward T. Linenthal. “The Boundaries of Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” 407

⁴⁶ Edward T. Linenthal. “The Boundaries of Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” 410

York Review of Books.⁴⁷ This reflection is an example of the exchange that must occur between the architecture and the visitor for “interactivity” to be achieved.



Rose at the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial, Washington, D.C.⁴⁸

One of the most beloved memorials, the Lincoln Memorial, is interactive not in structure but in its presence as a stage for democracy. It is the setting for social and political involvement and change. The meaning of the Lincoln Memorial has evolved over the years. Scott A. Sandage writes how everything from where the memorial sits on The Mall, (giving the viewer a clear view of the Washington Monument and the home of Robert E. Lee) to being the backdrop of the Civil Rights movement, has served as a unifying force of a fractured nation. The prominent presence of the Lincoln Memorial even influenced the commissioning of a

⁴⁷ Lin, Maya. " Making the Memorial | The New York Review of Books ." *Home | The New York Review of Books* . N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2010.

<<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/nov/02/making-the-memorial/>>.

⁴⁸ Laura Thorén. "Rose at the Vietnam Memorial." 2010. JPG file.

monument to represent the Democratic Party. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt advocated the construction of the Jefferson Memorial, which began in 1939, when he realized that there was no physical symbol for the Democratic Party on the Mall in Washington. These memorials, both the Lincoln and the Jefferson serve as social and political platforms.⁴⁹

These examples of monuments that employ interactivity -- the Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Memorial to the Black Power Protest, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and Jefferson Memorial -- are all effective not only to draw in the visitor physically and spatially, but to keep them emotionally engaged. However, many memorials do have such a presence. Although some memorials do have such a presence, many more do not do their “job” of preserving memory and remaining relevant over time.

Flight 93 Memorial and Interactivity

We’ve explored the different variables of interactivity - relevance the original collective memory, the ability for the design to convey this memory, and the emotional attachment and interaction of the visitors. Exemplary memorials that succeed in at least one element of this interactivity have been surveyed, and now we will apply this concept to Paul Murdoch’s design for the Flight 93 Memorial.

The Flight 93 memorial must be relevant to collective memory of the event. This memorial succeeds in some ways and fails in others in order to convey the memory of the crash of Flight 93. Murdoch’s choice to leave the crash site untouched will allow the visitor to see the

⁴⁹ 3rd example needed; perhaps involving Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial – platform for later Iraq War? Feminism? Etc.

point of impact – to relive those photographic and television images on that day – the way that most people remember it. In this way, collective memory will be encouraged and maintained.

The physical components of the Flight 93 Memorial will also be relevant to the collective memory of the event. The “Tower of Voices” will hold forty wind chimes to represent the forty passengers and crew who perished. The design of the tower will make use of the memorial’s surroundings – where there is a continuous wind – but also of the logistical data (number of those who died). In addition, the memorial committee’s decision to maintain the memorial fence that was spontaneously erected in the days and weeks after September 11, 2001, will also preserve the collective memory and raw emotion associated with that memory without putting these items under a “Plexiglas exhibit”.

The memorial must have the ability for the design to convey the memory of Flight 93. This horrific story is one that has been publicized (and in some ways, exploited) by the media, including that of Universal Pictures in Hollywood. The memorial must convey the memory as accurately as possible, while still employing, to some effect, a dramatization of the event in order to rouse its memory for the visitor.

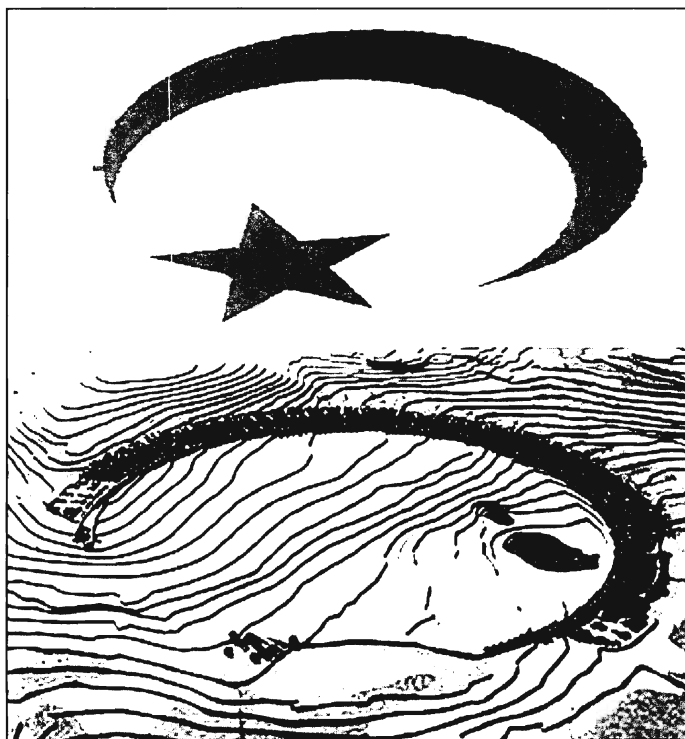
Paul Murdoch hopes to accomplish this ‘dramatization’ through the means of focusing upon the crash site, which he refers to as “the bowl.” The ability to reflect will also be eased by the landscape design of the Crescent of Embrace. Memorial tree groves will allow a visitor to look not only at where the plane made impact, but direct his or her gaze unto the Pennsylvania landscape.

Some may argue that Murdoch's use of nature is not specific enough to convey a story as brutal and grave as that of Flight 93. Because of this, permanent structures such as a Welcome Center and the aforementioned "Tower of Voices" have been included in the design. In addition, a wall with the names of the passengers and crews will create a connection between the visitor and each individual on the Flight. In keeping with Mircea Eliade's theory, structures such as these will be the "profane" overlaying the "sacred".

Visitors must feel emotional attachment to the site and use this attachment to physically or emotionally interact with the memorial. This last element, and arguably the most important, is one where speculation must be employed because the memorial has yet to be built. However, based on the way that visitors to the Flight 93 memorial site leave sentimental items and cards, one can assume that there will be some sort of emotional attachment. Arguably, this evidence of interaction will allow the memorial to sustain the test of time. However, there are several elements working against the Flight 93 memorial.

First, there is much controversy surrounding its design. This controversy takes away from the meaning of the memorial, and thus, the memory it will either fail or succeed to preserve. Additionally, this controversy is another way of superimposing the profane – a theory motivated by hatred, paranoia, and revenge – upon the simplicity of a sacred landscape. I interviewed Alek Rawls in January 2010 about his theory.

Alek Rawls is currently writing a book about Murdoch's intentional use of the crescent shape as a link to Islam. A quick "Google image" search of Flight 93 memorial brings up countless images of an Islamic crescent overlaying the memorial design on the first page – evincing that it is not only Rawls who is perpetuating this theory.



Overlay of the crescent Islamic symbol to Murdoch's proposed design.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Rawls' online web log, "Error Theory", is one of the most popular for publicizing the conspiracy. His biography on the site reads: "I was in the Ph.D. program in economics at Stanford until my research led me more towards moral theory and constitutional law, at which point I dropped the program and started working on my own. I was writing a book on republicanism (the system of liberty under law) for World Ahead Publishing when I discovered

⁵⁰ Gellar, Pamela. *Crescent over Flight 93 Memorial*. Atlas Shrugs/Images. *Atlas Shrugs*. Web. 14 Feb. 2010

that the Flight 93 memorial was going to be a terrorist memorial mosque. World Ahead agreed to first publish my book about this re-hijacking of Flight 93 [the book is titled] Crescent of Betrayal.”

The crescent symbol became affiliated with Islam by way of the Ottoman Empire. The symbol’s exact meaning has not been agreed upon; “most sources agree that these ancient celestial symbols were in use by the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia in their worship of sun, moon, and sky gods.”⁵¹ The city of Byzantine (later Constantinople and today, Istanbul) adopted the crescent and star symbol before the birth of Christ, and when the Ottoman Empire rose to power, they took the symbol as their own and it became affiliated with the Muslim world.

I interviewed Carnegie Mellon professor of Architecture, Omer Akin, in November of 2009, about the use of symbolism in architecture. Akin is Turkish, and happens to be a non-practicing Muslim. We spoke about why humans attach such meaning to symbols, such as the crescent, and the swastika.

The cross, the star of David, the crescent, these are all forms of -- and the swastika -- for good measure; because of the example I gave you. It is one of the most gorgeous dynamic designs that you can have with four lines. (Counts lines) Well, four of five lines, something like that. You find this in indigenous cultures, decorative panels and tablatures. The swastika is on it. But now we have associated a meaning with that that’s loaded with Nazis and fascism and so on.⁵²

More than the crescent shape of the memorial buttresses Rawls’ argument, however. Rawls referred me to several websites, including the blog “Little Green Footballs,” which have proven that Murdoch’s original design pointed within two degrees of Mecca, the holiest city in

⁵¹ About.com

⁵² Professor Omer Akin, interview by author. November 20, 2009.

the Muslim religion. The Vatican, in Italy, lies on this same trajectory as well. However, to this information, Rawls responds that because Islam is a religion where prayer is directed towards a certain place, it doesn't matter what other cities lie on the line: Christian prayer is not directed towards any physical place. According to Rawls, because of the crescent's orientation, the memorial will become, upon completion "the largest mosque in the world."

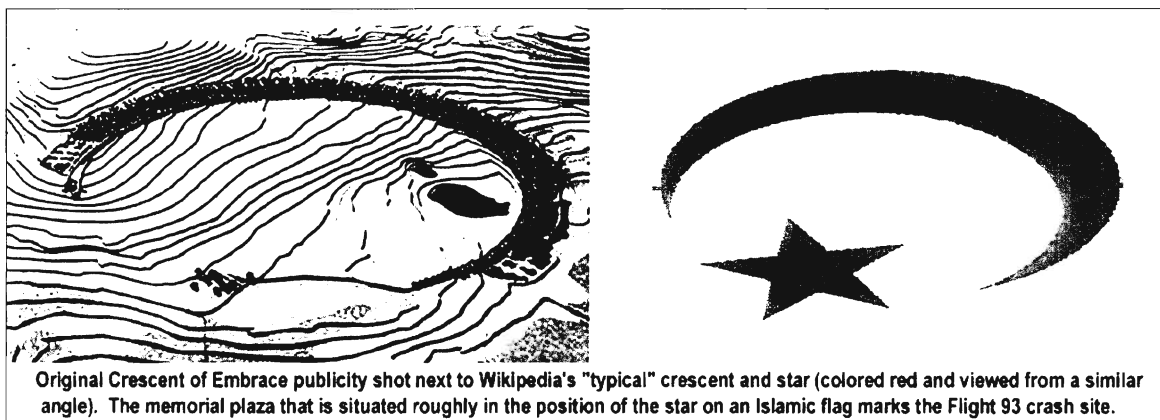
In the context of the third point of interactivity - visitors must feel emotional attachment to the site and use this attachment to physically or emotionally interact with the memorial – there is a chance that Rawls' theories will *not* affect the way that visitors emotionally connect with the site. His conspiracy theory, and the theory of others like him, remains widely unknown outside of the realm of the Internet. In a visit to the Flight 93 temporary memorial, the visitor guide made no reference to the conspiracy. Rawls argues that this is a result of media suppression. "The media has absolutely suppressed [any opposition to the memorial]." He named a reporter at the *Post-Gazette* who told him that she was not allowed to publish any information he provided to her. The *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* and other local papers did likewise, according to Rawls.

Part of this lack of publicity is out of respect for family members of the Flight 93 victims. Most of the family members are supporting the memorial design, with the notable exception Tom Burnett, Sr., whose son was killed in the crash. Rawls' "Error Theory" blog cites a letter from Mr. Burnett saying that he plans to withhold his son's name from the memorial in protest

of the memorial design. The letter also states that Mr. Burnett fully supports Rawls' online petition of the memorial. "I'm happy you are doing this," Mr. Burnett said.⁵³

In our conversation, Rawls did not give me an exact number of signees of the petition. I pushed further, asking what exactly about Murdoch's design did Mr. Rawls find debilitating to the interaction between the visitor and the memory of Flight 93.

Although the memorial committee has changed the name from *crescent* to *bowl*, Rawls argues that everything else remains the same, including the placement of an American flag where the star would be in a crescent and star flag.



An image from Rawls' blog "Error Theory"⁵⁴

At the end of our interview, Rawls summed his point up by saying:

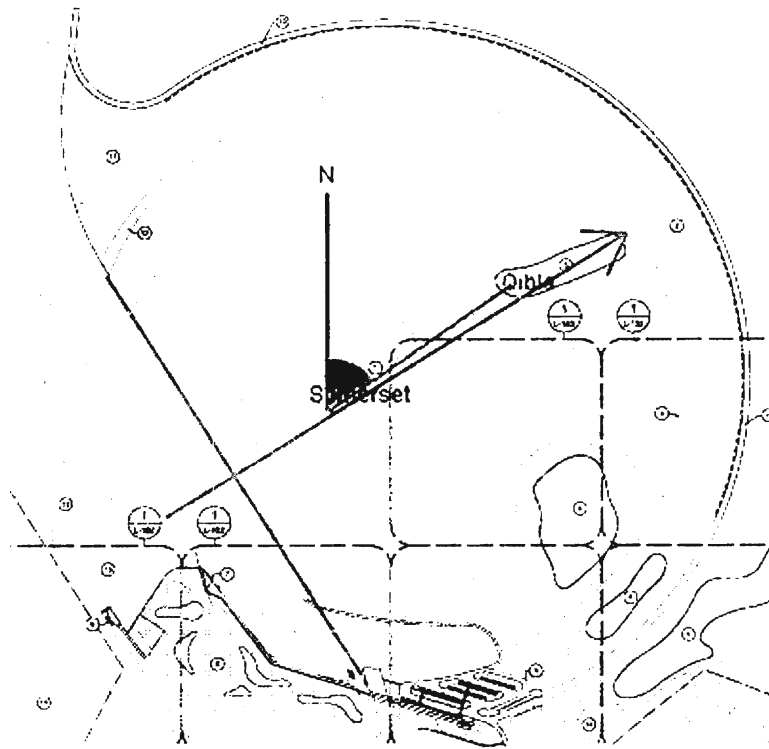
"If all the facts of a memorial are suppressed, then people will say 'oh yes this is beautiful'...[but] it is a mosque, and Muslims will recognize that. We're still hoping we'll

⁵³ "Error Theory" August 2008. <http://errortheory.blogspot.com/2007/08/tom-burnett-sr-denounces-flight-93.html>

⁵⁴

<http://i191.photobucket.com/albums/z36/AlecRawls/MockUpandCrescentBorderedWithCaptio.jpg>

succeed in getting the facts out to the public...There is no chance that Muslims will not use this as a mosque...once it is finished...it is the grandest mosque in the world.



The orientation of the crescent towards Mecca:
One of the new construction drawings, calculated to its degree towards Mecca by Stanford Ph.D. student Alec Rawls.⁵⁵

My conversation with Paul Murdoch suggests persuasively that any resemblance to the Islamic crescent was unintentional. When asked, “Is this a hoax?” Murdoch replied,

Well, with memorials there tends to be a fairly highly charged interpretation of symbolism. And, unfortunately, there always seems to be some element that is closed to new meaning of either new forms or reinterpretations of older forms. And that’s where you come across misunderstandings about design. So, we called a portion of our project a crescent, because it’s part of a circle.... [I] approached it as a series of spaces and elements that we could use to frame spaces rather than

⁵⁵ Rawls, Alec. "Error Theory: Construction drawings released: Flight 93 crescent now points less than 3° from Mecca." *Error Theory*. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.

imposing something sort of before or in front of or at a higher priority than what was there already through the actions of what occurred. So, by framing this large field, with this curved form, a walkway through the trees, which then developed into the 40 groves around those trees, that became this portion of the circle — framing that space and focused on the crash site. ...[If others are going to] assign their own symbolism to it through whatever view they have, there's really not a whole lot I can do about that. Our intent is what is our intent is, and it's certainly been widely appreciated and interpreted for what we have in mind.

Whether or not any conspiracy is true or not (and I am completely in the camp of the latter), this conspiracy will undoubtedly effect the emotional attachment and interaction of the visitors. This being the third point of the interactivity thesis, it is critical that Murdoch and the supporters of this memorial find a way to separate what was intended and what is being incorrectly attached to this symbol.

Controversy surrounding the aesthetic of memorials is nothing new, but controversy is all the more heightened when the event being memorialized is a divisive one. One notable example is that of the Vietnam War and Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, D.C. Lin was a 21-year-old undergraduate architecture student at Yale University when her winning design was chosen in 1981. In addition to the controversy surrounding the end of the Vietnam War, Lin's age, her parent's origins from China, and her gender added to the debate surrounding her design.

The Vietnam Veteran's War Memorial is an austere gash in the Mall. It is a far cry from traditional, classical war monuments. The names of the war dead are etched into the marble, an overwhelming sea of victims. The memorial was both lauded and criticized when it was dedicated on November 11, 1982. Many veterans disliked Lin's design for its color and

orientation descending into the earth. “[It was the] most insulting and demeaning memorial to our experience that was possible ... a degrading ditch ... black is the universal color of shame, sorrow, and degradation in all races, all societies worldwide,” said one veteran in response to it. Others felt that the monument was of “heroic style...newly conceived for the tasteful recognition of those who had died for a useless and less-than-noble cause.”⁵⁶

Another memorial that commemorates an emotionally charged event is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Germany. This monument, like the Lin’s, also makes use of a modern art aesthetic to commemorate one of the most horrific events in modern history: the Holocaust. Inaugurated in 2005, this memorial was designed by an American, Peter Eisenman, and has been met with ongoing controversy. The rows of stone rectangles that into a pit surrounded by Berlin high risers evoke the feeling of an eerie graveyard for some, a reminder of the millions murdered. For others, the abstract stone rectangles without names or symbols are too simplistic, too crude, for such an awful event in world history.

The element of design for the Vietnam Memorial, Berlin Memorial, and the Flight 93 Memorial connects the visitor to the event through art. However, design is physical. Physical interactivity between the visitor and the design aesthetic must also be supplemented by emotional interactivity through the memorial’s placement and how it “speaks” to the visitor, how it conveys to the visitor that this is place of respect and importance.

The Public Voice

⁵⁶ Wagner-Pacifici, 394

As is the case in any art medium, whether it is a painting on canvas or a designed landscape, one must anticipate that multiple meanings will be pressed upon the memorial. And yet, opponents argue that if Murdoch was chosen as the memorial designer, arguably the “ambassador” of the memory of Flight 93 and the commemoration of September 11, then if his design upsets a substantial or vocal number of people, it should be altered.

The controversy sparked by Murdoch’s design points back to the paradox of representing collective memory through one perspective. Dr. Feldman and her coalition on the memorials on the Mall in Washington, D.C., advocate a public voice in how public space is used to commemorate a person or an event. Is the Flight 93 Memorial worthy of protests because of the resemblance to the crescent symbol of Islam? Is there a moral or ethical difference in choosing to contest a memorial selected by a board of family members of victims of September 11, and protesting a new memorial design to World War II on The Mall, for example? These critiques and protests evince the emotion and value that people attach to monuments, to the physicalization of these memories on earth.

Murdoch’s design will not become “the world’s largest mosque” as Alek Rawls hypothesized, but there is a possibility that continued controversy over its design may upstage what the memorial hopes to represent.

Other Forms of Memorials

In December of 2009 I spoke with filmmaker Ken Burns about memorialization in the context of preservation. Mr. Burns had recently broadcast a new PBS documentary titled *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*. The series began airing in September of 2009; its

segments delved into the magnificence of the parks but more importantly, the many steps that had been taken and the many people who had worked to create the National Parks. The documentary also discussed how the parks stay “relevant” and a popular destination for American and international tourists.

In a book discussion at the Algonquin Hotel in Manchester, Vermont Burns remarked that his first visit to a National Park had been profoundly memorable. His father took him to Shenandoah shortly after his mother’s death. Mr. Burns remarked that visiting a place as beautiful and historic as this park during a pivotal moment in his life was impactful. Even as a child, a visit to a place so vast allowed Burns to put into context his own place on earth.

In my interview with Paul Murdoch, the architect said that it is the individuality of each location that evokes an emotional response for the visitor.

... One of the things that distinguishes the national parks is each is so unique. Each has its own cultural or natural nature that makes it special. So, here clearly the landscape is a big part of what we’re working with. What we’ve essentially done is create a memorial landscape as opposed to a built monument. The whole idea is to allow visitors to move through the landscape in a series of experiences that culminate at the crash site itself.

The impact of a space – whether it is the nave of a large cathedral or the vastness of the Grand Canyon – speaks to us in ways that a monument could not. Although both Murdoch and Burns create in very different mediums, their viewers chose their work. In the case of Murdoch this was the decision of a jury, for Mr. Burns, the American public and education system have elevated him to unprecedented status as the nation’s documentarian. Their work is interactive in that it allows the viewer or the listener to feel something, to interact with the memorial, no **matter if the form is a physical monument or a documentary film.**

I asked Mr. Burns was if he believed that his own work as a documentary filmmaker is a new form of memorialization.

Well you know I don't think we think of [creating documentaries] in that way. We try to put on our pants one leg at a time. It's the safest way to do it. And so we are interested in telling a good story. I am hugely mindful that we are now in an era where more and more we rely on a kind of visual literacy. Quite often that's dumbed down, so you do begin to think that this is, quite often, the way that many people do get their history. If that's the only way than that's intensely sad. There is nothing more important than a book in terms of mechanical inventions. But, we're mindful of the fact that for example the Civil War series that came out in 1990, nearly 20 years later, is still the most watched or among the most watched history films in schools across the country in every state.

This mindfulness, as Ken Burns puts it, knowing that by reaching millions he is deepening their understanding of The Civil War, is a form of memorialization just as it is an education. Paul Murdoch is equally aware of these different forms of remembrance.

People have done sculptures, people have done songs, people have written things, and people have made quilts. You know – that is how this becomes personalized on an individual level, or among small communities. In our case doing the national memorial, how do we recognize this as a nation? And so, as an architect, you know we have certain skills that we can bring to bear, but that doesn't mean we wouldn't recognize all kinds forms of memorialization, or ways of memorializing.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Paul Murdoch, interview with the author

Conclusion

I visited Shanksville on a Sunday, April 25th, a crisp, blue-sky day much like that of September 11. Off the I-76 Somerset exit, directions to the temporary Flight 93 memorial take you along roads with the dramatic backdrop of Pennsylvanian hills. The memorial experience begins sooner than I had anticipated; American flags and a large copper statue of an angel accompany the sign that points in the direction of the memorial.

Forty people, a surprising number, were visiting the memorial when I arrived. They silently surveyed the land and viewed the various forms of memorialization at the memorial: the chain link fence covered in flags and baseball caps, plaques donated from around the world, and a chapel that which overlooks the crash site.

Interaction was immediately apparent; unlike a museum or an enclosed space, people touched the granite, touched the hats and flags, and signed their names in the visitor's book. The memorial was much more intimate than anything I had ever experienced at The Mall or elsewhere in the world. About twenty minutes into my visit a petite, elderly woman, one of the forty local residents who volunteer at the temporary memorial, asked the visitors if they'd like to hear the story of Flight 93. We gathered on the chapel pews. Two children, younger than 10, who had not yet been born on September 11, sat next to their grandmother, a woman who looked to be in her seventies. We all sat and listened to the volunteer describe the hijacking, the crash, and the aftermath.



Information Session at Flight 93 Memorial⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Thorén, Laura. "Photographs at Information Session." 2010. JPG file.



Visitors Listening at the Flight 93 Memorial⁵⁹

As the guide recited the transcript of phone calls from passengers to their loved ones, a listener held her head in her hands. Another wiped a tear from her face. No one left the thirty-minute presentation until it was over. This was arguably more of a reaction – more of an emotional connection – than I had witnessed during my visits to the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial or even the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Memorial in Berlin.

⁵⁹ Thorén, Laura. "Visitors Listening." 2010. JPG file.



Tourists at the Lincoln Memorial⁶⁰

The visit to the Flight 93 provokes me to add another element to the thesis of interactivity. A “guide” who tells the story, and who is available for questions, is an integral part of the “memorial”. I spoke to the volunteer, Debby, afterwards, and she said that once the official memorial is completed, the National Park Service would assign official guides to inform the visitors.

More than anything a memorial unites us as a people, and union witnessed at the Flight 93 memorial. The Mall is also a place where children visit on school field trips, where bands come to play the National Anthem.

⁶⁰ Thorén, Laura. "Visitors to Lincoln Memorial." 2010. JPG file.



Band playing at The Mall⁶¹

A war graveyard brings together veterans. Living memorials allow people to experience the landscape and reflect on why the place is preserved.

We are often too busy in our lives to read every plaque, or to stop and observe every statue. Life continues to move even as memorials try to preserve what came before. Only those monuments that create such a pretense that they give back just as we still living give to them will be those that continue to resonate for this generation, and those in the future.⁶²

⁶¹ Thorén, Laura. "Band at Lincoln Memorial." 2010. JPG file.

⁶² iLasting.com and eForever.com are names of two websites dedicated entirely to virtual memorialization. For the family members and friends of the deceased, these pages on the internet allow a forum for conversation, pictures, and video.

As I drove away from the temporary memorial to Flight 93, the blue sky became gray, and the clouds opened into a light rain. I felt the emotion experienced through physical act of moving myself to a place of heroism and significance in our nation's history being released by myself and by my natural surroundings. This change in mood and perspective could only have been brought on by my visit to the memorial. This interaction -- the memorial visit giving me a chance to release these emotions -- and my visit to it, leaving behind my name and my presence, succeeded. I never thought I would be able to fully relive the memories associated with the morning of, and days after, September 11. I did -- albeit briefly -- relive those feelings, as I looked out towards an open Pennsylvanian field, marked only by a lone American flag, and imagine the horror but the heroism associated with Flight 93.

The internet has made memorialization all the more accessible through these sites. The inter-net has also allowed inter-activity through these aforementioned modes of media communication. For example, a site for American actress Frances Reid on eForever.com has tabulated **organization for a biography, photos, shared memories, and a link to donate money.**

Appendix A

Telephone interview with documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, December 23, 2009

KB: Good morning, Laura.

LT: Good morning, thank you so much, Ken, for agreeing to this interview.

KB: Not at all.

LT: Is it alright if I record it just so I can get the quotes...

KB: Of course, that'll be quicker for us both.

LT: Alright, great. I know you don't have a lot of time so I'm going to get right to it. You have stressed in your documentary the importance of the National Park system; both to preserve open space for future generations and as a way to make us all feel like we are part of a greater whole. In your view, to what extent does a National Park's meaning change when it is established to memorialize a specific event like September 11th, rather than nature?

KB: Well I think that what happened is, like the idea of democracy itself, the National Park idea has evolved. So when we first said, "All men are created equal" the man who wrote those words meant all white men of property free of debt. We don't mean that anymore. We mean you – as well as me – we mean people of color, we protect our children, our elderly, the handicapped, we debate the unborn, and those of different sexual preferences.

So American history can be seen in a larger sense as enlarging that rather narrow definition of Thomas Jefferson's. So too the National Parks set out to save spectacular scenery but then almost immediately began to consider other things: significant archeological sites, diverse habitats that don't have high mountains or waterfalls like the Everglades. And then we began to aggregate historical sites. And we were precious in that we saved battlefields, the statue of liberty, and the Lincoln memorial, and Mt. Rushmore, but we also began to save places that memorialized a darker, perhaps a more complicated past.

I think that the United Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville sort of fits right into that. A notion that a great country can acknowledge complicated aspects of its past, and by memorializing them, permit its citizens to share in the meaning, quite apart from whatever politics might attend day to day to things.

LT: Okay, and because the Flight 93 Memorial will actually be a national park and in your book you say *space* resonates with Americans, do you think that it being a national park means that it will be more effective than something like a monument?

KB: Well it's actually not going to be a National Park. I don't know what its official designation is; there are 58 Natural National Parks that we celebrate out of a system that has 392 units. So the other you do the math 333, 334, are monuments, seashores, trails, wild and scenic rivers, historic homes, battlefields, etcetera. So it won't be a full-fledged national park. But it'll be part of a national park system. Which means it is at a national level. Just think if Yellowstone had become part of Wyoming State Park. The geysers would still be going off there but we wouldn't have that same of co-ownership.

I think that what the spectacular glories of the National Park System is that it permits us all to share in the ownership, but share also in the meaning, at a national level. And there are some things in which that of course are hugely important.

LT: And to riff off of what you're saying about "sharing the meaning" and being able to understand on a national level, do you think that memorials will shift in trends from something more literal to something more abstract, that more people can interpret in different ways?

KB: No, I think that there will be a kind of concurrent growth. Yes they will be in what you call the more abstract area, I'm not sure that's exactly it, I think I know what you mean. We will be always expanding parkland, or trying to. We will be always trying to elevate monuments into full-fledged park status. We'll be trying to take national forests that are in the agricultural department and bring them into the interior department, which protects these places. We'll be adding other historical sites – be it presidential homesteads or libraries – we'll be hopefully adding more wild and scenic rivers.

And so I think that all of those things will contribute to the very diverse tapestry that are those units of the National Park Service.

LT: As a documentary filmmaker, do you feel you are creating a new medium to memorialize events in the future?

Well you know I don't think we think of it in that way. We try to put on our pants one leg at a time. It's the safest way to do it. And so we are interested in telling a good story. I am hugely mindful that we are now in an era where more and more we rely on a kind of visual literacy. Quite often that's dumbed down, so you do begin to think that this is, quite often, the way that many people do get their history. If that's the only way than that's intensely sad. There is nothing more important than a book in terms of mechanical inventions.

But, we're mindful of the fact that for example the Civil War series that came out in 1990, nearly 20 years later, is still the most watched or among the most watched history films in schools across the country in every state.

LT: Is there a memorial that is particularly resonant for you, and why?

Well, for me, it's the Lincoln Memorial. He is our greatest president. He carried us through the single greatest crisis in the history of our country. The monument is a formidable manifestation of his extraordinary gifts. From the shape of the building, and the columns, to the listing of the states, and of course the incredibly august statue of him sitting there. And then, around him, are these inscriptions from his most celebrated speeches like his second inaugural, and his Gettysburg Address, and other important statements that he made. And so, in some ways, that is the shrine that most moves me more than anything else.

LT: Is there a particular memorial that you feel does *not* do what it could in order to preserve an event or a person?

No I think we have to realize that in a democracy, we all start out as equal, or at least should, that should be our intention. But then, some things end up being more equal than others, not through totalitarian intervention, but just because Abraham Lincoln's the most important president his memorial will loom larger than others.

And so I think it's all a question of scale, of intimacy. For example, in my state [New Hampshire] there is a National Park service unit for Augustus St. Gaudens, the great sculptor. And his home, and the gardens in which there are some sculptures, and the downstairs, which are galleries of his biography and life. It is a very simple and modest thing and yet it reflects wonderfully the significance of that artist.

So we'd never want to compare St. Gaudens with Abraham Lincoln, but you're happy that this system has the foresight to look for not just the spectacularly great but also the specifically great.

LT: Alright well thank you so much Ken. And I'm really enjoying your book. Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview.

KB: I'm so glad and good luck with your project. This sounds so interesting.

Appendix B

*Interview with Paul Murdoch, architect of the Flight 93 Memorial
Friday, October 30th, 12:20 pm EDT*

Laura Thoren: What other memorials did you look to for your inspiration when you did the Flight 93 memorial? The design for that?

Paul Murdoch: Uh, none.

LT: So were you able to visit the land before you drew up your design?

PM: Well, uh. We weren't able to see the site specifically. But I grew up outside of Philadelphia and I had camped in that area when I was younger, so I knew the landscape somewhat from that. One of the reasons that we ended up deciding to do the competition was when we sent for the, um, competition material it was very well put together and we were able to get a very good understanding of the site from the materials they had compiled. They had some drawings and diagrams of the site, and they also sent some good photographs, so we actually got a very good sense of the land and feeling of the landscape.

LT: So when was the first time that you visited the site? Have you been able to yet?

PM: Oh sure, yeah. Well the first time was in February 2005, and that was shortly after we were selected to be one of the five finalists. So it was a two-stage competition. I think there were a little over a thousand entries and they selected five to submit a design for the second stage.

LT: And once you did visit the site did you modify your design or did it stay very much the same as to your original plan?

PM: It stayed very much the same. Basically we had sort of the structure of our design. When I say structure I meant the concept and the main elements stayed as the backbone of the design. The original design that we did had a tower of ?? near the entrance, up by Route 30, to serve as the initial memorial expression as you entered the park and to be a landmark from the highway. So that was in the original design. We didn't develop much from there down to where the visitors center will be, which is where the flight path intersects with the edge of the bowl. So we had in mind that that would be where we would have the visitors center, and we'd have these large memorial walls there where the flight path would cut through, that would be the visitor entrance for the memorial, down by the bowl. That was part of the original design. These walls were

coordinated with a large curving walkway with maple trees that would formalize the edge of the bowl. That was meant to focus on the crash site.

LT: So your inspiration in creating the memorial design was to follow the flight? The flight path?

PM: That was only part of it. We were recognizing a couple of things. One was the landform, known as the bowl. And it is roughly circular. And then we kind of formalized it into a circle, and by forming that edge there we wanted to focus the whole visitor experience on the crash site down at the edge of the bowl. So it was like a big framing of that space. In the mission statement the preamble was "a common field one day, a field of honor forever" that was our way of helping to recognize the field of honor. By framing it with those trees and allowing the visitors to walk around it.

LT: And because it is such a vast space, it will be a gigantic park, how do you imagine visitors will feel visiting this site in respect to other national parks?

PM: Well it's hard to say, you know, one of the things that distinguishes the national parks is each is so unique. Each has its own cultural or natural nature that makes it special. So, here clearly the landscape is a big part of what we're working with. What we've essentially done is create a memorial landscape as opposed to a built monument. The whole idea is to allow visitors to move through the landscape in a series of experiences that culminate at the crash site itself.

LT: Ok.

PM: And again that was part of the original design, that the focal point for the entire park would be the crash site and that the public would be able to get down to the edge of the crash site. So it's a little bit different from the other national parks per say in the sense that, uh you know, most of those parks are the natural landscape itself. Not man-made landscapes per say. Clearly some national parks are built around cultural artifacts of historical importance, but here we are really shaping the landscape to memorialize this event and the actions of those 40 passengers and crew members. That's different from just having the natural landscape as its found and as its maintained. It's a designed landscape.

LT: So, in many ways, because the park will be directing the visitors' path and visit towards the crash. I understand completely how you are memorializing that specific area as well as allowing someone to reflect. But in that respect, there has been controversy that it's in a crescent shape – the symbol of Islam – and memorial controversies have been around since memorials. I mean, Maya Lin's Vietnam memorial and the Holocaust memorial in Berlin are two examples I can think of right now that are controversial. What is your response to critics that believe this is some kind of hoax or conspiracy?

Well, with memorials there tends to be a fairly highly charged interpretation of symbolism. And, unfortunately, there always seems to be some element that is closed to new meaning of either new forms or reinterpretations of older forms. And that's where you come across misunderstandings about design. So, we called a portion of our project a crescent, because it's part of a circle. And the scheme, the design has always been about working with that circular

landform, and uh, trying to heighten the sanctity of that. One of the things about this place and one of the – a big part of our philosophy approaching it was that we were not creating something sacred here. It was already there. And so we really approached it as a series of spaces and elements that we could use to frame spaces rather than imposing something sort of before or in front of or at a higher priority than what was there already through the actions of what occurred. So, by framing this large field, with this curved form, a walkway through the trees, which then developed into the 40 groves around those trees, that became this portion of the circle – uh, again - framing that space and focused on the crash site. So, that was what we called the Crescent of Embrace. In other words, it was part of a circle that embraced that field in a kind of national scale as recognition of the heroism that occurred there. That was the symbolism that we had in mind and still do. The other thing about it is it's always been, we've always seen it, that the crescent is a part of what is essentially an open circle, which may sound paradoxical, but the symbolism that is – is also – strong in the scheme in the sense that it terms of focusing on the crash site and kind of commemorating the collective actions of that group of people. But it's open to allow for personal interpretation by anyone who chooses to come. So, uh, there are various ways we open the circle, whether it's through the radiating rows from the center or whether it's the flight path that cuts through the perimeter of the circle and ends up at the crash site. Or whether it's the permeability of the circle as expressed through the wetlands that occurred at the center of the circle and then crossed over to the outside. Or whether it occurred at the sacred ground of the crash site itself as it comes in from the perimeter towards the center of the circle. So there are different expressions, uh, that would symbolize not only the combined effort but also the openness of interpretation. That's the symbolism we have in mind. If other people are gonna assign their own symbolism to it through whatever view they have, there's really not a whole lot I can do about that. Our intent is what is our intent is, and it's certainly been widely appreciated and interpreted for what we have in mind.

LT: Memorials have been, I mean they serve many purposes: a place to reflect for someone who has been most affected by a tragedy, a place to visit to remember our nation's history. Where do you see this memorial fitting into that timeline of the history of memorials? And what do you feel about memorials as a whole? Are they necessary? What is their purpose?

PM: Well I think they are important. They're important to help remember, uh, the actions that create our history. And by doing so, allow us a way to affect and improve hopefully our lives as we're living them. So, this particular memorial is really about courage, and a very critical moment in our nation's history when 40 individuals came together and fought for freedom. And so, not only is it important to remember that in its importance to our country, but also to be able to reflect on what that means for ourselves. Um, how can we learn? How can we gain from that courage? How can we measure ourselves against that? How can we approach our own lives through a new perspective - that was helped by the actions of these people. And that's how it becomes personal. That's how it becomes more meaningful. That's how it endures over many generations. That there are lessons to be learned and there are personal lives to be affected on a continuing basis. That's why we remember these things. Not just to give thanks, but also the power of how that can improve our own lives.

LT: As an architect are you more inclined to think of memorials as forms, as structures, and has that impacted your studies or your growth as an architect?

PM: Well I think memorialization can occur in many, many ways. For example, if you've visited the temporary memorial you know there is not really much of a form out there. There's a fence and there's some flags and some benches. And yeah, the tributes that have been left and the events that have occurred there continue to have very powerful meaning and provide an experience that people come far and wide to be a part of. So, here's the place, right. It's the place. It's what occurred there that's carried there. It's not as much in a form as it is that place. So, again, our approach on this memorial was to recognize that. That it's part of the land; it's part of that place. And not to impose a building there, as an architect might want to do. We're using some built form there, along with planting, along with earth movement – we're creating an earth form – we're creating planting to create spaces and we're using pathways and walls, site walls and what not, to create a sequence of spaces. But, uh, it's more, uh you know – it's kind of a blend of architecture and landscape architecture – and we felt that was appropriate for this memorial. But, you know, there was the film United 93. In a way that's a memorialization. In a whole different medium. There are memorials to Flight 93 all around the country that different communities have created on their own, anything from forty stone monuments to trees to whatever. They're all forms of memorialization. They are all entirely appropriate. People have done sculptures, people have done songs, people have written things, people have made quilts. You know – that is how this becomes personalized on an individual level, or among small communities. In our case doing the national memorial, how do we recognize this as a nation? And so, as an architect, you know we have certain skills that we can bring to bear, but that doesn't mean we wouldn't recognize all kinds forms of memorialization, or ways of memorializing.

LT: Well thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. I will definitely be quoting you in my project, my thesis. I will send you the recording.

Appendix C

*Interview with Professor Omer Akin
Carnegie Mellon University, November 20, 2009*

(Recording consent given)

Laura Thoren [LT]: So, the Flight 93 Memorial in Somerset County, the design has caused some controversy because it's in the shape of a crescent and the shape is formed by maple trees that, in the fall, their foliage will be red. So, some people have put another meaning onto that crescent, saying that it looks like the Islamic crescent. What is your opinion when people put another meaning onto a design that was not intentionally supposed to have that meaning?

Omer Akin [OA]: If we branch out of memorials actually we have an example right here, on campus. I don't know if you're aware but the East Campus design was...

(Sound fixed)

OA: Michael Dennis designed this East Campus for us about 15-20 years ago. I was on the jury actually, that selected this project. To make a long story short if you look at the proportions of the colonnade that surrounds the Cut, and the distance of the buildings and the height of the columns and so on, it resembles [the design] for the headquarters of the Nazi Party.

Now, this is a coincidence. Michael Dennis is an architect and an historian who understands neoclassical architecture and Italianesque architecture. In fact his description, when I spoke to him about this, was that this was an Italianesque design.

But, the Albert Speer design for the Nazi party was also looking for some classical grandeur that would elevate the headquarters of the Nazi Party design to a higher level to impress with authority. And this is the entrance quad for our campus, which there was none before Michael Dennis designed this quad. So he was looking for some abstraction of classical features and proportions, to give a grand entrance to the campus. So they started at different points but arrived at the same design.

And one time, at the (name?) festival, I'm not sure if you're aware of it, a festival that we used to have. Students were invited to make installations on campus about art, architecture, and commentary about it. And a group of students decided to project one of Hitler's long speeches on the loft of the Purnell Center, that big box on top of the building, as a reference to Albert Sch's design. Uh, and of course, unsuspecting citizens of Pittsburgh who were driving on Forbes Avenue, seeing Hitler's face on CMU's campus were outraged. This is a long-winded story but I think that it gets to the heart of your question. Can we attribute things to designs that were not

intended? Of course we can. And is this a moving target? Yes it is. Today something may not mean much, but tomorrow there's a semantic context that is created.

The awareness of the red crescent in the United States would have been absolutely unthinkable before 9/11 or all of these incidents that brought another kind of religious warfare for humanity. So, I think that it has a meaning today that it didn't have before that. Is this legitimate? Is this fair? I think one has to put a perspective of time on it. Today it is quite relevant. Fifty years from now it may not be.

LT: What do you think it says about humans that we attach such meaning to arbitrary symbols?

OA: That's a good question, too. I believe, if you look up the definition of symbol, you'll find that it is arbitrary. All symbols are arbitrary. We assign meanings to things. The cross, the star of David, the crescent, these are all forms of -- and the swastika -- for good measure; because of the example I gave you. It is one of the most gorgeous dynamic designs that you can have with four lines. (Counts lines) Well, four of five lines, something like that. You find this in indigenous cultures, decorative panels and tablatures. The swastika is on it. But now we have associated a meaning with that that's loaded with Nazis and fascism and so on. And so, of course it's very offensive. And this is nothing we can't do anything about. And it's ... something that's difficult to condemn. Because everything is a symbol -- every word is a symbol -- so symbols are important.

LT: In your opinion, if the memorial design, on the site where 40 people were killed in a terrorist act involving Fundamentalist Islam. If people feel like the site evokes some sort of resemblance to Islam do you think that the design should be changed or that should be left up to the architect? Who has a say?

OA: Well, I think that we need to be a little bit more sophisticated in interpreting these things after the first symbolic interpretation. Yes, the Red Crescent is part of the Islamic symbology. But what is wrong with that? The perpetrators who injured the United States and created havoc in the world are not true representatives of Islam. First of all, we have to understand this, I think, in the West. I would say -- first of all, I don't know if you know, but I'm a Muslim. I didn't know whether you had the knowledge of that up to this point. But, not that it matters, but the reason I'm saying that is that I do know something about the Islamic world. I'm a Muslim of Turkish kind, which is probably the mildest version of Islamic belief in the spectrum. Turks are not very serious about their religion, but nevertheless, I'm technically a Muslim. I don't practice.

I do know that more than 90%, I would say 95 to 98% of Muslims are not upholders of this kind of behavior. So, to say that somehow an Islamic symbol represents only the fanatic faction, not only that - but also that attribution is now covered over the rest of Islam - is unfair. It is, uh, shortsighted. It is incorrect. So let's...suppose for a moment that this crescent, Red Crescent, not intentional, but it did happen. Suppose that people who look at it in the next decade or two see it as a connection to Islam. I wish that they would see the maturity of that gesture. To represent to a degree, the mainstream Islam, which is peaceful and humane and so on, as part of the site. Rather than the extreme outlier factions of Islam that caused the tragedy.

Of course, this is a very complicated way of looking at it.

LT: I spoke to the architect and he said there is no connection. He was using the crescent as a form of embrace, no connection to Islam. As we look at the history of memorials in America [from Revolutionary war to now], the memorials have become more and more abstract. Because there is no logical 'this is a statue of a soldier' people have attached other meanings. So, because of this abstraction does the architect – should the architect – be providing some sort of explanation?

OA: This is all about communication. And it also has to do with the span of attention of human beings, which is getting shorter and shorter. The willingness to look at deeper and deeper meanings, layers of meanings. When you have a facsimile, or something that is a realistic depiction of something, the room for interpretation is very little. I think that could also be argued, if you look at the statue of David or the Thinking Man by Rodin or so on, you can have layers of interpretation. In the end, it is what it is. When you have something abstract it leaves room for other interpretation, so it expands the expression of the artist or the architect to a larger realm. This is why architects do this abstract business. So do artists and musicians and writers, and so on. More fuzzy, more vague, more room for different meanings. And it makes it richer. So the observer can see one thing in one instance and in a more contemplative instance, something entirely different. So the same object can evoke many many different dimensions of emotion and interpretation, which is what artists and architects find enriching and rewarding in their work.

LT: The only difference is that artists – I mean you go to a museum to see a piece of art, or you go to a sculpture garden to see a sculpture or The Academia to see *The David*. But architects are much more in a public sphere, where people can't turn their heads. So do they have more of a responsibility?

OA: Absolutely. In this one, I will agree with you 100%. Architects do have that responsibility. But especially those who are more talented and aspire to greater heights in their accomplishments get into this artistic urge to a degree that they override or ignore this public responsibility. Some of the greatest buildings even, who are not just memorials, they are functioning things, have become memorials in effect because they were designed not to function well. Like Falling Water. I mean, we can say Falling Water is a memorial. Or, I should say, perhaps more accurately, a symbol for the watershed advancements in design... (inaudible). Very poor house. But a great design.

LT: Well I'm glad you brought up Falling Water because it is so close by the memorial that there will be many tourists that will visit both this site and the memorial at Somerset, and then travel on to see Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water and Ken tuck Knob. So do you think – and the architect Paul Murdoch has really emphasized the connection between the memorial and the land. I mean, not only is he incorporating trees but he's landscaping it to become a whole landform. So, maybe to turn my question, is it the responsibility of the architect particularly in a memorial such as this for Flight 93 to use the land given? Or it depends, I guess.

OA: No, I think you touch upon a very interesting and important connection from architecture to environment and land. I believe if we ignore the environment and architecture relationship to its

context – landform, trees, climate, orientation towards the sun, winds, the whole works – and the manmade issues like highways and roadways, what is visible, what is not. If they ignore that, they make edifices that are bound to fail and disappear. Is longevity important? Well, human beings want to make things that will last.

LT: Well is that true? The pyramids were made to suit the land? I'm just trying to think of the oldest structures.

OA: Well the pyramids were built to protect what was inside, and also be durable forever and ever. In a harsh environment, the desert environment, there is a lot of devastation. If you had a less sturdy structure I don't think it would last that long. In fact, take any of these buildings that we exist in. Put it in a place where there is no human care and habitation. In 50 years you will not recognize it, it will be completely covered over in things. I think we've digressed a little bit, but I think that this desire to make something lasting is part of again the urge of the designer and the architect.

You didn't ask this, but earlier on you touched upon Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam memorial and I think that the connection is very clear here. Again, there is a very simple abstract form: elegant, absolutely beautiful. But then, people started attention meanings to that. Well – it's subterranean, it's underground. It's almost like a grave. It has these negative, morbid interpretations attached to it. Which may all be true. But that was actually the reality of Vietnam. And the fact that she happened to be somebody from the Far East originally or ethnically made things worse. But, you know, it's an absolutely thrilling memorial. The first time I went there -- I had nothing to do with Vietnam. I was a kid of the 60s, which made me against all of that stuff -- I couldn't help, but getting overly emotional. I saw somebody touching the marble, just so tenderly, as if it was a human being. And the reflection of this person on that. And the inscription. It kind of told volumes that an actual human figure couldn't possibly.

I haven't really studied the one in Somerset but if it can capture something more basic about our sensory reaction, I mean, all of this is the intellectual part of things. We're talking about, conceptually what these means. But, all aesthetic reactions or aesthetic states have another dimension, which is purely sensory. Before you can even think about things, there is something you see, you feel, you hear that immediately evokes a positive or a negative. Hopefully there is something in the Somerset memorial that can do that. I don't know if it does, because the crescent you can see from above. But when you're eye level, do you see a red crescent?

LT: Well the Memorial hasn't been built yet; it will be completed in 2011. But Mr. Murdoch did say that he hopes that seeing the vastness of the landscape will evoke those kinds of emotions.

OA: I think that is an appropriate reaction. And this whole business of seeing it from a single vantage point to resemble something that people want to object to is somewhat superior (?). The grandness of the place – I don't know enough about it to speak about it intelligently – but some of these dimensional impacts are true evidence about how architecture has become aesthetically important. This is not a memorial it is a church, but Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, I don't know if you've been there –

LT: I have. I went last February.

OA: Talk about scale. You walk in there and you say – unfortunately there is construction and repairs going on there so it takes away – but if you’d seen that place without any of that, you walk in there, and you don’t need to think whether you are a Christian or a Muslim or a Buddhist or what have you, you don’t need to think. It was built in the 6th century with technology that was so primitive you can’t imagine. You walk in there and you are hit with a hammer. You know you just go “Wow”. First off, I am Turkish so I have seen it when I was a child, but the first time I saw it after I’d become an architect, I just wanted to go down on my knees and pray. So when an edifice has that kind of impact, it’s done it’s job.

What is a memorial other than the fact that it impresses something upon us that we will not forget? Hopefully positive, or it could be even negative. I mean I had a lot of sorrow when I saw the Vietnam Memorial. Doesn’t diminish its effect in my mind one bit, I love the place. So, a memorial is something that should invoke these kinds of emotions. Hopefully not anger and resentment.

LT: Earlier you’d said that a memorial, or any kind of design should be meant to last. In a turn, a memorial is meant to create a memory that will last. Or, a memory of an event or a war or a person that will last. In this move from a person on a horse or a person standing with a flag to The Jewish Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, which is stone, rectangular in different sizes – what does this say about us as human beings – are we learning to remember in a different way? Choosing to put our sentiments onto abstract symbols versus a person?

OA: I think that it goes back to the earlier point that I was trying to make about the limited set of interpretations that analog – I’m going to call them, “man on a horse” analog depictions, it corresponds to a more realistic – they have a more limited or maybe we should different set of meanings you could attach to it. When you move into the abstract realm, we are not talking about how the nurse in Vietnam may be caring for the fallen soldier as a little narrative or so on. We’re talking about the angst and pain of death and those who remain behind. That said, I think that the broader ?? of the human condition than a specific narrative. I see that in the reflection of somebody’s hand gently touching a script on the marble. That, it’s all about what is real what is image what is past what is present what is the relationship between these to individuals? One in the form of a name inscribed in stone the other one in flesh, coming there by moment and transmitting this human energy and feeling. So, it’s a different kind of memorialization.

I think that – I wouldn’t take away from either one of those things. A memorial in the end is one that successfully evokes memorable emotions. And, sometimes it can be an ... I think the objective of a memorial, from a humanistic point of view, instigate more violence and hurt and so on. But it should just remind us of all kinds of human conditions. Some of them may be extremely disturbing. I remember going to a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. This wasn’t Auschwitz, or anything there you walk in and be blown away, but at the outskirts of the camp, behind a wall, you walked around and we saw the site for the human hangings, and the structure that was built for that was built for this [purpose]. And it was just sitting there in a pastoral environment, very calm, very quiet. Very stoic.

So, I think this move from analog explicit realistic representations to more abstract is part of the phenomenon of how art and expression and design has evolved over the past century. It has brought with it the kind of realm of meanings and interpretations for memorials, and also buildings. Buildings are more abstract these days than they used to be. If you look at these classical designs like the one we have in the column, we have a three-part representation of a body – the legs, the torso, and the head, in that order. So it's very analog. It's very descriptive of your object. But now, buildings don't do that. They have their own kind of abstract...I don't know if I'm rambling or answering your question.

LT: No, I'm trying to understand this movement towards the abstract.

OA: Modernism. It happened at the turn of the century, and architects had been...If you look at architecture styles, I think that this memorial fits in this category, there are paradigm shifts, from the classics and then the Greeks, the Romans, and neoclassicism, to the Renaissance, and then High Renaissance, Mannerism broke it up, which led to Baroque and Rococo, Gothic comes in there somewhere. All of these have their roots in the human reference to architecture. Neoclassicism came in again, once again, and then after a while the intelligentsia of the design world decided they could not go back and forth from the Neoclassicism and its destruction, we have to reinvent the palette that architects use. Instead of going back to pattern books, which is what they did. They were pattern books and you just used them to make buildings – we have to reinvent the principals of composition and design. No reference to Classicism. No reference to real depictions of decorative elements. They all came from natural, abstract forms of leaves and branches and so on. More than that, we have to look at the true nature of materials that we build from and how they come together. Naturalism and Cubism took over and so on. There were a few styles in between, but now that we are in a world of design that is much more abstract than it used to be, this is the palette of the designer.

LT: Art movements have come and gone, is this another movement? Or is this the way we're beginning to think?

OA: Yes, I think it's another movement and it will evolve more. Will it go back to Neo- some old style; you're talking to somebody that doesn't have a lot of faith in the soundness of these styles. I think there is a lot of ... but I think we have passed the threshold with the Bauhaus and the Modern movement, that we'll never go back to a purely Neoclassical movement, so that's past. So I think this is the way designers think about things. How does this trickle down – and I don't mean to create a hierarchy – to the way a person walks into a memorial, to the extent that I think these raw, sensory emotions and understandings can be evoked.

Some of the pure modernist abstract stuff doesn't evoke anything. I've been to a show in the MoMA – no I think it was in the East Wing of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. – which was the hardcore modernists and they had canvases, that are as big as this wall, that were a single color. One after the other. And after a while, I just turned off and walked out. There has to be some indication of suggestion that takes you from that canvas to somewhere else. I mean, you could contemplate all kinds of intellectual things about it - a single color canvas as well. But I think there are extremes ... but more and more I think art and architecture is moving into relevant contextual things. There are lots of installation art. There are things you can appreciate

as art but that you can also occupy. So there is richness, there are no rules, like in the Neoclassical days. I think it is a richer and a more fruitful and more rewarding environment for the artist. And hopefully, this translates to the beholder, the occupant, the person who comes here to enjoy this thing. And if it doesn't translate, it will wash out. It will go away.

From your description, again, not knowing anything from this memorial up close – even as a design – but your description of an expansive environment that embraces you, if that is accomplished, I think that is successful. That would be successful, is my point.

LT: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

OA: *I think you're doing a...you've picked a very nice subject. It connects to so many things. It's an interdisciplinary...*

LT: Yes, it's tapping into a lot of my [interests].

(Recording ends.)