

**Reflections on The Wall:
Unexpected responses to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial**

Mark Callaghan

Abstract:

The veterans fighting to shape the meaning of the Vietnam War found that their efforts to commemorate America's longest war were met with all of the conflicting emotions and ideologies expressed about the war itself. Instigated by veteran Jan Scruggs, and designed by Maya Lin, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a 75-metre wall that symbolically cuts into the earth of the nation's capital. Shortly after being unveiled, the memorial's representation of trauma was contested; its minimalist design considered inadequate for conveying the horrors and emotional shock of the conflict. Subsequently, two further memorials were created in order to satisfy more conservative tastes. Yet Lin's wall remained the most cathartic for surviving veterans and the families of those who died.

Made from black granite, the wall encourages personal reflection in a literal sense, as viewers see their own faces in the highly reflective surface while they scan the memorial's 58,000 names. Further interaction is encouraged by the physical presence of each inscribed name, with visitors invited to take rubbings of their loved one's dedication. Though Lin wanted veterans' families to take something away with them, a further, unanticipated response occurred, as visitors began to leave personal mementos at the Wall, such as dog tags, clothing, photographs, and even wedding rings.

This paper will explore the question of why soldier's relatives left, and continue to leave, objects at the base of the memorial. Is it because the minimalist design is insufficient and needs addendums to be complete or even provoke its mnemonic quality? Or is the abstract wall a conduit for such acts of remembrance? This study will enquire as to whether the mnemonic quality is a sign of the memorial's shortcomings or whether it is actually a sign of its openness. Furthermore, supported by trauma theorists, I explore the complexities of the initial public and political trauma regarding the memorialization of this war, and why, despite the creation of the two opposing memorials, Lin's concept proved to be the most effective of the three. I will argue that the leaving of personal items at the wall demonstrates a new expression of trauma, communicated by the placing of private objects that become immediately public. Knowing that family members who choose to leave these highly charged emotive items will never see them again, I discuss the poignancy of these commemorative acts and what they come to mean.

Key Words: memorial, Vietnam, abstract, minimalist, figurative, trauma, photographs

In 2012, managers of a Maryland storage facility estimated that their warehouse contained some 400,000 objects.¹ The collection began in 1982 and consists of mostly vernacular items made personal. Jewellery, bottles of beer, baseball gloves, photographs, cigarettes, cheerleaders' pompoms, and a helmet with a peace sign, are just some of the articles carefully stored but rarely made available for viewing.² Items that became unseen artefacts, were originally, in most cases, mass-produced goods purchased for, or by a soldier, that would, as a consequence of that person's death in combat, be left as a gift at the base of a memorial – the *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial*, Washington D.C, a black minimalist cenotaph also known as 'The Wall' (image 1). As people bring their own memorials to the Wall, the memorial is protean, appearing different each day, sometimes each hour. The leaving of such items changes the meaning of the object, the meaning of the memorial, and, as a result, the meaning of the war itself.

For reasons I shall explore, a minimalist memorial that lists the 58,282³ names of men and women killed in action, caused, right from its unveiling, unexpected reactions, sometimes prepared, sometimes spontaneous. Be it the leaving of dog tags, photographs, or messages hastily written onto hotel stationery, a darkly reflective wall of coarse granite has inspired responses that were never envisaged by its designer, Maya Lin, or by those who commissioned the radical mnemonic form.⁴ The gifts are, for the most part, offered to the memorial by friends and family of deceased veterans, including veterans who survived the Vietnam War. It is nearly impossible to know anything about the donors except that they felt strongly enough to leave their keepsakes in a public setting. It is often impossible to know even for whom an object was left.⁵ What we can be sure of, though, is that the person leaving the item knew they would never see it again, that they were placing a highly personal memento, be it cowboy boots or a wedding ring, knowing the item could only be imagined from now; that it was being returned to memory (Image 2). As mainstream funerary and memorial traditions in American culture do not involve the practice of offering things, I ask⁶ whether this abstract memorial needs to be completed in some way, hence the leaving of personal items? Or, is minimalism a conduit for such acts of remembrance? Is the listing of names a sufficient form of commemoration? And how do the numerous objects change the memorial's meaning?



Image 1: Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Washington D.C.
© 2014 Inter-Disciplinary Press. Image courtesy of Mark Callaghan.

Lin's design was favoured, not only for its daring colour and its modernist simplicity, but also for its interactive possibilities. Visitors can see themselves in the memorial's highly reflective veneer, and each carved name invites corporeal interaction; the names have a physical presence, they ask to be touched. Though the competition guidelines called for each veteran's name to be listed,⁷ Lin's organisation of the death-toll was unique, as the names are presented chronologically, and not alphabetically, so the reader must search for a specific name according to the specific moment of loss. Each name, therefore, locates the meaning of

war in the lived individual experience of a specific casualty, whose absence from social discourse extends the meaning of war to the community.⁸ The list of names makes it possible for the memorial to simultaneously comfort the visitor while evoking an interpretation of profound loss.

Despite the innovative qualities of Lin's design the memorial aroused considerable controversy. Though Lin took an apolitical stance¹⁰ she designed a memorial that contravened political memory, which is, according to Aleida Assmann, a type of commemorative work that tends towards 'homogenous unity and self-contained closure'.¹¹ Though designed to be impartial, the memorial's colour struck critics as being non-heroic, and disdain was expressed regarding the Wall's V-shape, which some interpreted as being a peace sign, or alarmingly, a symbol of the Vietcong, America's nemesis in the war.¹² The memorial conveyed a conception of the war and a comprehension of the soldier that ran counter to those of many Americans. These Americans, responded Jan Scruggs, the memorial's founder, "wanted the Memorial to make Vietnam what it had never been in reality: a good, clean, glorious war, seen as necessary and supported by a united country".¹³ Hostility toward the design ultimately led to the commissioning of two supplementary and notably figurative memorials that were shoehorned close to Lin's Wall in 1984 and 1993 respectively.¹⁴ (Image 3). However, amongst the plethora of interpretations the majority of veterans were in favour of Lin's design. To the veterans, the Wall was atonement for their treatment since the war; and to the families and friends of those who died, it was an official recognition of their sorrow and an opportunity to express a grief that was not previously sanctioned.¹⁵ That grief, however, was not expressed purely by the erection of the memorial, but also by the reactions to it, the leaving of personal items.



Image 2: One of the countless mementoes left at the 'The Wall'.
© 2014 Inter-Disciplinary Press. Image courtesy of Mark Callaghan.

Despite objections and misunderstandings of the design, we should acknowledge that Lin recognised the inherent power of the minimalist genre, particularly when accompanied with an overwhelming list of names. As Dori Laub states: 'The predominant view is that massive trauma precludes all representation because the ordinary mechanisms of consciousness and memory are temporally destroyed. It is an encounter that is inaccessible to understanding and imagery'.¹⁶ This substantiates an argument in favour of minimalist abstraction, as trauma cannot be represented by 'normal', accessible means and must instead be depicted in such a way that the viewer can approach the work autonomously. In front of abstract artworks, the lack of a depicted image tends to heighten our awareness of materials, of compositional (or anti-compositional) structures, of the process of looking itself.¹⁷ Abstraction can therefore help to develop aesthetics, not just by moving away from centuries of work largely based on figuration, but also because in order to understand the artwork the viewer has to consider the memorial with different noetic processes. Without an image

corresponding to empirical reality, the viewer has to read an abstract minimalist work with questions that are more founded on the conveyance of a mood, state or atmosphere. This inclination is appropriate for remembering the Vietnam War, as the observer is free to develop their own interpretation, and one that arguably allows the spectator to be present emotionally whilst also keeping a cognitive distance. Yet, as I shall elucidate, the decoration of the memorial by associates of the deceased suggests that there has always been an impulse to adorn the Wall with imagery, meaning the abstract memorial is considered as being either insufficient or stimulating.

Though I describe the memorial as being ‘minimalist, abstract’ the leaving of gifts moves it toward being a hybrid of genres, or perhaps, for its time, a genus of its own. Where abstract, minimalist designs might be criticized for their lack of specificity, the alternative is to produce figurative memorials that might be considered instructional and do our memory work for us. The sites’ two supplementary memorials exemplify this situation, as they focus memorialization on a specific aspect of the war, namely the soldiers.¹⁸ They try to evoke very explicit emotions of pride and acceptance for the soldiers’ efforts and sacrifice. The use of a specific image to memorialize an event can, however, often limit the form and extent of the memory evoked in the memorialization process. Lin in her criticism of the ancillary statues argues that, “a specific image would be limiting. A realistic sculpture would be only one interpretation of that time. I wanted something that all people could relate to on a personal level”.¹⁹ Thus, while the representative statue presents a more patriotic and sympathetic view towards the war, it is limited by its ability to evoke a diverse spread of memories and de-personalizes the memorialization process.²⁰ Furthermore, without accompanying figuration (which arguably represents the generic victim rather than the individual), the use of names can also mean that a person is remembered outside of the circumstances in which they died due to the lack of supporting imagery, so that, in some respects, it is the victim’s life being commemorated as opposed to their death. Many of the personal items, such as childhood souvenirs and objects that have no connection to the war, help to convey this.



Image 3: One of the two supplementary, figurative memorials, Frederick Hart’s *The Three Soldiers*. © 2014 Inter-Disciplinary Press. Image courtesy of Mark Callaghan.

The *Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial* does not dictate the narrative of memory but instead promotes personal reflection, leaving visitors to consider and interpret their memories as they will. Many people would posit that only minimalism can do this. Michael Kimmelman at the New York Times argues that Lin exploited the inherent theatricality and ambiguity of Minimalist abstraction, linking it with the most literal kind of descriptive device - a list. A list that represents every person who died, not through some generalized image of a soldier holding a gun or a flag, but specifically, by name. Lin grasped the modern memorial sublime, the way Minimalist art, precisely because of its stripped-down, elemental forms, evokes a kind of long-lost grandeur.²¹ Lin herself argues that:

The use of names is a way to bring back everything someone could remember about a person.... The ability of a name to bring back every single memory you have of that person is far more realistic and specific than a still photograph.²²

Responses to the Wall do not correspond to other abstract memorials though; the leaving of gifts is not typical. The memorial's reception has been adorned with imagery since its inauguration, so despite Lin's cogent case for abstraction, the public has never been entirely satisfied with the black wall's mnemonic index as originally conceived.²³ Visitors have always felt the need to intervene. One explanation for this might lie in the minimalist approach to the names and how, despite their ability to be personal and evocative, their lack of specifics, including basic details such as age, and place of civilian residence, actually reduces their individuality. Whilst no symbolic reference to the cause or country for which they died, immediately *highlights* the individual, Lin's naming criterion dissolves the individual's uniqueness into a homogenizing sequence of death dates.²⁴ Here I posit that the friends and families of deceased veterans have been compelled to fill this gap and re-appropriate the names to something more specific to the person being commemorated, the person that they knew.

This gap between representation of the individual and the need for more specific, though temporary, markers is illustrated by the Wall's assortment of objects. The jovial or juvenile mementoes are, for the most part, unambiguous when compared to the photographs and letters that often line the base of the memorial. Toys are clear representations of nostalgia for a time when the fallen soldier was a boy. The people who leave these objects – presumably parents – are drawn to reflect upon a time of innocence that was not far removed from their son or daughter's departure to Vietnam. The average age of the soldiers killed in the conflict was, after all, just nineteen.²⁵ The placement of photographs is, however, more complex.

Lin's argument that the carved names are more realistic than a photograph is contested by the regularity of portraits left at the foot of the memorial. Whether one interprets this as an impulse to complete the representation of a veteran, or whether the names and design have inspired such offerings, is open to conjecture, but there is certainly a heightened expectation that this national memorial should demonstrate a desire for more imagery.²⁶ Here we might see that the proclivity for bringing photographs to the Wall relates to the respective person's mourning process. In his groundbreaking study of grieving, Erich Lindemann claims preoccupation with the image of the deceased is characteristic of the grieving process.²⁷ The placement of photographs at the Wall suggests that relatives of the deceased need more than the sight of their loved one's name to enact a process of remembrance; that seeing the soldier's faces is cathartic and part of their healing.

Furthermore, given that the photographs are normally portraits of the soldiers whilst in uniform, an additional reading can be proffered. The representation of the deceased as living, healthy and proud human beings draws parallels to Gil Pasternak's study of photographs that supplement Jewish soldier's graves in Israel. Writing of one such image, Pasternak argues that its appearance on the tombstone evokes a sense of identification between the dead subject and the social role he played at the moment of his death: 'After all, the pose enacted is of a proud, obedient soldier, a soldier at the service of the state and its military commanders'.²⁸ The photographs offered to the *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* do, like the Israeli soldier's graves, re-contextualise the site, representing not just a place of commemoration and death, but also a monument to pride and dignity, thus confronting prevailing attitudes toward veterans who were often, particularly in the 1980's, portrayed as being malcontents or worse.²⁹ ³⁰ The impulse to bring photographs to the Wall might emanate, then, not just from the visceral need to see the face of a loved one, but also to remind the public that veterans died whilst serving their country, that they were humans, usually teenagers, and that those who returned from Vietnam were faced with the complexities of reintegration in a society that often disparaged their contribution to the nation. As surviving veterans find the photographs to be particularly welcome, we might observe that this form of commemoration gave a voice to veterans that were not otherwise part of Lin's apolitical concept.

A closer analysis of the notes and letters reveals multifarious reasons for them being written and donated to the Wall. Notes were often written as though the soldier would be able to read it, as though they were still alive, thus corresponding to Patrick Hagopian's assertion

that dynamic public responses to the Wall, which include the touching of names, allows families to have contact with the person.³¹ Such offerings can sustain personal relationships with the dead. A note left with a can of Colt 45 read, “Hey Bro, Here’s the beer I owe you – 24 yrs late”. In the late 1980s, notes were left by children of the men who died, as the progenies of veterans began to make their pilgrimage to Washington. A photo was left with a note: “Hi Dad. I’m grown up now”,³² and in more recent times, sonogram images of soldier’s grandchildren have also been found at the Wall.

Many of the letters left in the early years of the memorial’s existence seemed intended to achieve closure and purge the nation’s grief, stressing the heroism and sacrifice of those who died, or decrying the waste of their lives so that the nation would avoid unnecessary wars in the future. Other offerings bespeak irremediable pain that cannot be compensated by recognition or assuaged by the promised comforts of “healing”.³³ A note left at the memorial accompanied a wedding band and engagement ring and explained that the widow of a young man who died in Vietnam no longer wanted to keep the rings when she remarried because she “chooses to forget this part of her life”.³⁴ Letters that could have been left, in many cases, at a veteran’s graveside were instead brought to the Wall, suggesting this cenotaph holds more poignancy and power than the veteran’s burial place.³⁵

By contributing their private representations to a public space, those leaving mementoes cross a boundary between the private and the public, between the nation and the citizen powerfully claiming the memorial as their own.³⁶ They also transform, what was already an experience-based design into a co-authored memorial where the dedications represent a ritual of remembrance that might help relatives to work through their trauma, as here routine practices of memory are circumvented due to the tactility and tangibility of experiencing the Wall in this way, thus encouraging the visitor to emotionally and physically participate in the memory.³⁷ Whatever the motivation, those leaving messages and dedications must be aware that others will see their words, that this is a public work of art, an open and accessible memorial space. The effect of this is to amplify the memorial’s work, by offering public testimony to the war’s losses, making evident enduring grief and testifying to the importance of the individual about or to whom the note was written. During the first years of the memorial’s existence this drew sympathetic visitors into a community of feeling and brought survivors out of their isolation.³⁸ A memorial was always desideratum to the veterans and the soldier’s families, but it fast became a social production, sometimes enigmatic, sometimes so intimate that the story behind an object could only be understood by the provider and the deceased. But the Wall and its objects have always been germane and perhaps, in some cases, mollifying. The collection of gifts at the base of the memorial changes the memorial experience for other visitors too, including those who had no personal connection to the war, and might instead be curious to see the details of such public shows of affection, or wish to vicariously partake in the emotions of the bereaved.

Seeing the display of such personal items can also lead to empathetic identification with the soldier’s grieving friends and family. Empathy, especially as it is constructed out of mimesis, is not an emotional self-pitying identification with victims, but a way of both feeling for, while different from, the subject of enquiry.³⁹ Though, as Dominic La Capra warns, we must be conscious of intrusively arrogating ourselves to the victim’s experience or undergoing surrogate victimage,⁴⁰ we should, nevertheless, recognise that empathetic identification can have a transformational impact.⁴¹ In Washington D.C. such viewers are faced with an unanticipated row of personal messages to the dead, which convey the resonating affects of the loss and insights into the plight of the bereaved.

Trauma, whether individual or collective, often triggers the impulse to commemorate, but at the *Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial* the merits, inadequacies and political context of the design, combine to initiate further, more visible layers of memory. Be it teddy bears or dog tags, photographs or letters, the objects are unified by their ability to further personalise a memorial, proclaiming the characteristics of lost soldiers, resulting in a modification of Lin’s intention to individualise the veteran’s by simply listing the names on a black elegiac slab.

The objects might conjure memories of a veteran’s childhood, their marriage, their interests or their disposition. But whatever the items might be, and whatever specific memories they might evoke, they cause an abstract memorial to be figurative and they politicise an apolitical memorial by giving insights into the lives of the lost, reminding the onlooker that the Vietnam Veteran was and is human.

National memory is receptive to historical moments of triumph and trauma provided they can be integrated into the semantics of a heroic narrative.⁴² The figurative

supplementary memorials correspond more to this tradition than Lin's Wall of names. Yet the Wall is the memorial that evokes such responses and has come to represent, not just a social mirror, but also a place where the bereaved humanise the previously disrespected veteran. But as the deeply personal objects cannot be recovered, the process of offering a gift to the Wall relates to a further, even more emotive aspect of commemoration. To leave an item so unique, so charged with meaning, represents more than a personalisation of the memorial. For the individual who places the object at the base of the Wall, the donation to the Wall represents a process of letting go. What we see, then, is a valedictory act.

Notes

¹ Rachel Manteuffel. *The Things They Leave Behind: Artifacts from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Washingtonian.com. The storage facility is entitled, The Museum and Archaeological Regional Storage Facility. All items are stored by category, though there is currently, as of 24.10.2012, 200,000 objects awaiting classification.

² In October 1992, the first sample for five hundred of these offerings was put on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, followed by exhibitions at the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts, the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and a number of other sites.

³ The memorial originally listed 57,939 veterans, but a further 343 names have been added between 1983 and 2011.

⁴ Surreal items have also been left at the Wall. They include a large sliding glass door, which was left at the memorial in November 1990.

⁵ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 23.

⁶ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 8.

⁷ The competition called for several things including, item 3) "Contain the names of those who had died in the conflict or are still missing". Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 36.

⁸ Harry W. Haines. "Disputing the Wreckage: Ideological Struggle at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial" in Hixon, Walter. L. *Historical Memory and Representations of the Vietnam War* (Routledge. New York. 2000): 8.

¹⁰ In imagining her design Lin made a clear decision not to study the history of the war, or to enmesh herself in the controversies surrounding it.

¹¹ Aleida Assmann. "Four Formats of Memory: From Individual to Collective Constructions of the Past" in *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German Speaking World since 1500*. Emden, Christian and Midgley, David (eds). (Peter Lang. Bern. 2000): 14.

¹² Siobhan Kattago. *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*. (Praeger. London, New York. 2001): 16.

¹³ Robin Wagner-Pacifici, and Barry Schwartz. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past*. University of Chicago Press. 1991): 37.

¹⁴ Conservative politicians such as James Webb, who was part of the Reagan Administration, and Ross Perot who would be a presidential candidate in 1992, wanted something more traditional, figurative, heroic, and something more overtly about the Vietnam War. In the *Moral Majority Weekly* Phyllis Schlafly called it a "tribute to Jane Fonda." *National Review* described it as an "Orwellian glob." In an open letter to President Reagan, Republican Representative Henry Hyde complained that it was "a political statement of shame and dishonour." Its implicit admission that the war was disastrous, of course, is precisely what others loved about the design. A great many Vietnam veterans reacted with cautious approval. Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam*

Veterans Memorial (University of California Press): 16. Prior to this President Carter approved Congress's resolution and expressed his belief that the formal honouring of the veteran would also promote the healing of a nation divided by war. Robin Wagner-Pacifici, and Barry Schwartz. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past*. University of Chicago Press. 1991): 33.

¹⁵ Marita Sturken. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (University of California Press. 1997): 80.

¹⁶ Dori Laub in Ann Kaplan. *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations* (Hong Kong University Press. 2004): 3.

¹⁷ Godfrey, Mark Godfrey. *Abstraction and the Holocaust*. Yale University Press. 2007): 4.

¹⁸ Marita Sturken argues that Frederick Hart's sculpture memorialises a need to remember these veterans as manly and heroic; whereas Glenda Goodacre's sculpture memorializes a victory for women veterans over the perceived threat to patriotism posed by the idea of making any memory of war that is not singular and masculine. Marita Sturken. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (University of California Press. 1997): 84.

¹⁹ Maya Ying Lin. "Design Competition: Winning Designer's Statement" (Washington D.C, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1982): 6.

²⁰ Julianne Corbin. *Memory and Form: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. (University of Boston, 2009): 8.

²¹ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 18.

²² Maya Ying Lin. "Design Competition: Winning Designer's Statement" (Washington D.C, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1982): 3.

²³ When the Glenda Goodacre's *Vietnam Women's Memorial* was dedicated, it was festooned with many bouquets and wreaths – conventional markers of mourning and chivalrous tributes to female recipients. This, the third memorial, had been commissioned because Frederick Hart's design, unveiled in 1993, depicted an African American soldier, a Hispanic Soldier and a Caucasian marine, but omitted to represent the women who served and died in the conflict too.

²⁴ Robin Wagner-Pacifici, and Barry Schwartz. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past*. University of Chicago Press. 1991): 42.

²⁵ Michael Hunt. *A Vietnam War Reader: American and Vietnamese Perspectives*. (Penguin, London. 2006): 4.

²⁶ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 26.

²⁷ Erich Lindemann. 'Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief'. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 101 (1944), 141-148.

²⁸ Gil Pasternak. *Posthumous Interruptions: The Political Life of Family Photographs in Israeli Military Cemeteries*. Photography and Culture. Volume 3, Number 1, March 2010: 47.

²⁹ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 76.

³⁰ As Veteran George Swiers writes in regard to popular fictional portrayals of Vietnam Veterans in the 1980's: The message sent from national leadership and embraced by the public was clear. Vietnam veterans were liars, wackos, losers. Hollywood, ever bizarre in its efforts to mirror life, discovered a marketable villain – the standard vet: a psychotic, axe-wielding rapist. Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 76.

³¹ Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 358.

- ³² Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 362.
- ³³ A regular at the memorial, Jeffrey Davis, had seen almost his entire company of 160 men wiped out in a single night of fighting in Vietnam. The Washington police officer became increasingly preoccupied with that night, unable to eat or sleep. He became the first Vietnam veteran to kill himself at the memorial in September 1984. Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 365.
- ³⁴ Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 370.
- ³⁵ Similar responses occurred at the replica Vietnam veterans memorials that were built around the country where the practice of leaving offerings became part of a commemorative tradition, spread from the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial to these monuments. Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 375.
- ³⁶ Kristen Ann Hass. *Carried to The Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (University of California Press): 20/21.
- ³⁷ Kirsten Harjes. *Stumbling Stones: Holocaust Memorials, National Identity, and Democratic Inclusion in Berlin*. German Politics and Society, Spring 2005, Vol. 23, Issue 1: 5.
- ³⁸ Patrick Hagopian. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009): 362.
- ³⁹ Alison Landsberg. "America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Towards a Radical Politics of Memory" in *The New German Critique*. No. 71 (Spring 1997) 63-86: 82.
- ⁴⁰ Dominic La Capra. *History & Memory After Auschwitz*. (Cornell University Press. 1998): 162.
- ⁴¹ David Bathrick, Prager, Brad and Richardson, D. Michael D. *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (Camden House. London. 2012): 76.
- ⁴² Aleida Assmann. "Four Formats of Memory: From Individual to Collective Constructions of the Past" in *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German Speaking World since 1500*. Emden, Christian and Midgley, David (eds). (Peter Lang. Bern. 2000): 28.

Bibliography:

Assmann, Aleida. "Four Formats of Memory: From Individual to Collective Constructions of the Past" in *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German Speaking World since 1500*. Emden, Christian and Midgley, David (eds). Peter Lang. Bern. 2000.

Bathrick, David, Prager, Brad and Richardson, D. Michael D. *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*. Camden House. 2012.

Corbin, Julianne. *Memory and Form: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. University of Boston, 2009.

Forty, Adrian, and Kuchler, Susanne. *The Art of Forgetting*. Berg. Oxford and New York. 1999.

Godfrey, Mark. *Abstraction and the Holocaust*. Yale University Press. 2007.

Hagopian, Patrick. *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*. University of Massachusetts Press. Boston. 2009.

Hunt, Michael. *A Vietnam War Reader: American and Vietnamese Perspectives*. Penguin, London. 2006.

Haines, Harry W. "Disputing the Wreckage: Ideological Struggle at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial" in Hixon, Walter. L. *Historical Memory and Representations of the Vietnam War*. Routledge. New York. 2000.

Harjes, Kirsten. *Stumbling Stones: Holocaust Memorials, National Identity, and Democratic Inclusion in Berlin*. German Politics and Society, Spring 2005, Vol. 23, Issue 1.

Hass, Kristin Ann. *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. University of California Press. Los Angeles. 1998.

Kattago, Siobhan. *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*. Praeger. 2001.

Landsberg, Alison. "America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Towards a Radical Politics of Memory" in *The New German Critique*. No. 71 (Spring 1997) 63-86: 68.

La Capra, Dominick. *History & Memory After Auschwitz*. Cornell University Press. 1998.

Laub, Dori in Kaplan, Ann. E. *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations*. Hong Kong University Press. 2004.

Lin, Maya Ying. "Design Competition: Winning Designer's Statement". Washington D.C, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1982.

Lindemann, Erich. "Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief". *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 101 (1944), 141-148.

Manteuffel, Rachel. *The Things They Leave Behind: Artifacts From the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* www.Washingtonian.com (accessed 10 January 2014).

Pasternak, Gil. *Posthumous Interruptions: The Political Life of Family Photographs in Israeli Military Cemeteries*. Photography and Culture. Volume 3, Number 1, March 2010.

Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. University of California Press. 1997.

Wagner-Pacifici, Robin and Schwartz, Barry. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past*. University of Chicago Press. 1991.

Mark Callaghan is a Ph.D Researcher, Associate Tutor at Birkbeck College, University of London, and Art History Lecturer at The Highgate Institute, London. Mark's thesis, *Trauma, Memory and Aesthetics: The Berlin Holocaust Memorial Competition and the Representation of Negative History*, is due for completion in 2015. Mark is a graduate of Oxford University and the University of Manchester. Mark is also editor of the *Dandelion* academic journal.