THE RHETORIC OF COUNTER-MONUMENTALITY:
THE STOLPERSTEINE PROJECT

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Communication

May 2019

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

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<u>Acknowledgments</u>

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Abstract

As Pierre Nora and James E. Young suggest, memorialization often shares no attachment to our daily lives. The traditional monument is built to contain memories, the result of which is a shrugging off of the obligation to remember. In an attempt to remedy this failing, artists and theorists have turned to a new memorial concept: the counter-monument. Young's concept of the counter-monument forms the basis for academic inquiry from a number of disciplines. Yet, few critics have analyzed the counter-monument through a rhetorical lens, to ask not what constitutes a counter-monument but instead *how* such a monument functions to shape public memory and its visitors' subjectivities. This thesis analyzes the discourse evoked by Gunter Demnig's S*tolpersteine* project and suggests how that discourse adds nuance to understandings of both rhetoric and the theoretical concept of the counter-monument.

The S*tolpersteine* case provides a strong argument for the rhetorical power of reclaiming banality and its role in evoking consciousness. Moreover, the ways in which evil functions banally must be accounted for in our memorial culture. If Arendt is correct and evil is done not out of hatred but out of a lack of thinking, commemoration is a means by which we may ensure the acknowledgment necessary to demand an ethical engagement with the Other, or at least the memory of the Other. Memory and commemorative culture are constantly working in conversation with one another. Developing proper understandings of the ways in which these linkages operate rhetorically is the task of the critic, and the rhetoric of S*tolpersteine* provides one such revelation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Memorial culture is nearly everywhere at all times. It is around us, in the ground beneath us, and the buildings above us. It is outside of us, placed into archival receptacles that do the difficult work of remembering, forgetting, and navigating between the two. Yet, increasingly, it is not within us. As Pierre Nora and James E. Young both suggest, the impulse to memorialize is self-contained and shares no attachment to our daily lives.[1] The monument is built to contain memories so that we may visit when we wish to encounter them, the result of which is often a shrugging off of our own obligation to remember. By allowing memory sites to do the labor of remembering for us, monuments "relieve viewers of their memory-burden."[2] In an attempt to remedy this failing of monuments, a number of artists and interested stakeholders over the past few decades have increasingly turned to a new monumental form to attempt to shift the burden of remembering back onto the individuals: the counter-monument.

The concept of the counter-monument, first named by Young in 1992, forms the basis for academic inquiry from a number of disciplines. Yet, few rhetorical critics have analyzed the counter-monument through a rhetorical lens, to ask not what constitutes a counter-monument but instead *how* such a monument functions to shape public memory and the subjectivities of its visitors. Nor has an overarching discourse of the counter-monument as a memorial genre been suggested by rhetoricians. This thesis provides no such grand theory. Rather, it analyzes the discourse evoked by one particular monument,

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[1] James Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *University of Chicago Press* 18, no. 2 (1992): 263.
[2] Ibid.

Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones) project, and suggests how that discourse adds an additional level of nuance to understandings of monumental rhetoric and the theoretical concept of the counter-monument itself.

In order to provide my analysis, I draw from scholarly contributions within memory studies, Holocaust studies, and rhetoric. This chapter provides historical context for Demnig's *Stolpersteine* project; a brief overview of each of the relevant fields of study; the methodological approach utilized in this thesis; and an overview for the rest of the chapters in this thesis.

Historical Context

In 1992, artist Gunter Demnig laid the first *Stolperstein* in front of Cologne's city hall on the 50th anniversary of Henrich Himmler's signing of the Auschwitz decree, which condemned Nazi Germany's Roma and Sinti populations to deportation and extermination and marked the beginning of mass deportation of Jews from Germany. This small memorial was the first of about 70,000 *Stolpersteine* to be installed throughout Europe, each individually inscribed and placed into the pavement by Demnig. Translated literally as "stumbling stones," these brass commemorative plaques are installed directly into the pavement in front of the last freely-chosen residence or workplace of a victim of Nazi persecution. Hand-stamped into each plaque is the name of the victim and his or her birth year, the location and date of his or her deportation, and the location and date of his or her murder, if known. When applicable, some plaques give the date and location of escape if the individual was able to flee to asylum in a different country. Together, these nearly 70,000 stones (and counting) constitute the largest decentralized memorial in the world.

Figure 1. Stolperstein of Lehmann Tannenbaum near the author's former apartment in Kassel, Germany. Translated: Here lived/ Lehmann Tannenbaum/ born 1871/ arrested 1942/ Breitenau/ 1942 Dauchau/ Deported 1942/ Auschwitz/ Murdered Nov. 14, 1942. (Photo by Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse.net)

I first provide a theoretical overview of current conceptions of the counter-monument before applying the *Stolpersteine* to the framework of the counter-monument to analyze how it lends support to the theory and also may create room for additional theoretical nuance. Each step of the analysis describes its various rhetorical functions. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of those functions.

An Inter-disciplinary Theoretical Approach

"*Aura,* Jetztzeit, *Messianic, trauma, mourning, sublime, apocalypse, fragment, identity, redemption, healing, catharsis, cure, witnessing, testimony, ritual, piety, soul*: This is not the vocabulary of a secular, critical practice."[3] These are the words of Kerwin

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[3] Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations*, no. 69 (2000): 145, https://doi.org/10.2307/2902903.

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Lee Klein in his oft-cited criticism of modern memory studies, in which he blames the "sudden fascination"[4] with memory to a postmodern rejection of history and religion. He laments the lack of critical rigor in the field and problematizes the ability of memory to effectively critique metaphysics, and he lambasts the psychoanalytic and deconstructionist turns in memory studies with equal severity. However, the very aspects of the discipline he criticizes give quite a succinct overview of some of the most enduring trends within the emerging discipline of memory studies, since scholars have maintained their intellectual foray into the field despite Klein's best deterrent efforts. This section focuses on such trends, providing both a general overview of the field of memory studies and a particular application of the current literature to the opportunities and challenges of Holocaust memorialization. Lastly, I introduce the role of rhetoric into the theoretical conversation, as rhetoric plays an increasingly notable role in the analysis of memory sites and texts.

Memory Studies

As a theoretical practice, the study of memory dates back to at least the ancient Greeks and Romans as found in the writings of Cicero and Quintilian. For orators of the time, a reliable memory was essential to delivering orations, and an emphasis was placed on imprinting images to one's mind.[5] After this, the next development in memory studies came nearly two millennia later, with Émile Durkheim's sociology and Maurice Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory* in the early/mid twentieth century.[6] Halbwachs, a student of Durkheim, furthered his teacher's social focus on phenomena as he analyzed

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4 Ibid.
5 Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 1992).
6 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, Heritage of Sociology. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

memory. Here, we see the advent of the first conception of memory as more than an individual's personal memory. Halbwachs posits the notion of a collective memory as a shared body of knowledge and information regarding the past within a social group that ultimately constructs that group's identity. This conception of a shared understanding of the past has extended into the proliferation of modifiers attached to "memory" in contemporary scholarship, such as collective, social, cultural, public, and prosthetic. The aim of the present chapter is not to quibble about definitions regarding particular concepts within memory studies but rather to highlight trends and debates within the field writ-large.

This proliferation of definitions does bring us to modern memory studies, a "nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise" typified nicely by the aforementioned fractures in terminology.[7] A boon in memory scholarship in the seventies and eighties reflected shifts in the broader academy, such as the postmodern turn and the introduction of identity as a scholarly consideration. This section discusses the role of identity in memory debates as part of a larger schism concerning the proper relationship of memory to both individuals and to social structures.

Sociologists Olick and Robbins correctly point out that memory studies clearly fits within current discourse surrounding the identity turn in the academy in recent years, as memory is a core medium by which social identities are often constituted. They identify how, much as identity is now conceived of as a constant process of negotiation, memory is also thought of as a continual process.

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[7] Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105.

Klein's critique of postmodern memory studies is again applicable here in the discussion of identity and memory. He agrees that concepts of identity and memory are often yoked together yet warns that the focus on identity "undercut[s] the claims of memory work to deconstruct the Western self."[8] He makes this argument through an analysis of identity as foundational to bourgeois subjectivity. Though not explicitly stated, this echoes Wendy Brown's analysis of the individualization of theory as a departure from structural criticisms of public life and politics.[9] Brown's argument through her feminist Marxist lens provides a larger theoretical justification to be skeptical of the identity turn in memory studies or of the ease with which personal identity can slip into moralizing in lieu of structural analysis.

Radstone takes up this discussion, summarizing the arguments of theorists such as Klein and Brown: "Two aspects of these critiques (criticisms of the identity turn in memory studies) are the stress they place on processes of identification with suffering as replacements for more traditional modes of political allegiance formation and the universalism of their comments."[10] In Radstone's own analysis, she takes up the criticism as posited by Klein and, indirectly, Brown, but nuances the discussion by positing that the critique of identity can be redeemed through critical textual analysis that treats memorial objects (chiefly memoirs, for Radstone) as texts instead of reflections of historical accuracy.[11] She draws from critical literary analysis and offers the tools of critical analysis to the field, recognizing that such a methodological approach is not

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[8] Klein, 144.

[9] Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[10] Susannah Radstone, "Memory Studies: For and Against," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 34, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698007083886.

[11] Ibid., 34

currently espoused by memory studies due to its vast disciplinary scope. Such analysis would open up readings of the complexities of power and politics that allow for the meta-structural analysis that Brown would see as providing the best avenue for social and epistemological transformation.

The tension of the relationship of identity to memory studies is perhaps one manifestation of a larger debate with the discipline concerning the relationship of the particular to the general, or of the personal to the political. For example, Radstone describes the entire discipline of possessing a "tendency to de-politicize what began as a field in which political commitment and scholarly research were inextricably combined."[12] A second manifestation of this same debate is the schism within memory studies about the role of trauma.[13] On the one hand, there is a large amount of support for the notion of trauma testimony as not merely a valid epistemological source of memory knowledge but also an ethical mandate. As Radstone and others posit, the preponderance of trauma narratives follow and constitute the ethical turn in memory studies. In such narratives, the large appeal to truth and authenticity is augmented by the ability to identify with a particular individual's experience with trauma.

On the other hand, there is a strand of writings that critique this "traumaculture." For Radstone, such writings "associate the turn to trauma in western culture (including, in some cases, within the academy) with the atrophy of a political public sphere. On these accounts, identification with wounds, trauma and victimhood takes the place of more traditional affiliations with others, rooted in abstract understandings of the workings of

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[12] Ibid., 32.
[13] Ibid., 35.

power in the social and public spheres."[14] Such arguments, under which Brown and

Klein's own musings likely fall, seem to assume a static notion of "affiliations with

others" and "public spheres" in ways that might prove problematic to modern analyses of

power. For Radstone, she tries to settle the debate between the two schisms by

forwarding understandings of (memory) culture as ambiguous, practiced in a grey area.

She advocates that scholars and students engage in constant negotiation and encounters

"with the politics that the analysis of texts and practices can reveal."[15] I suggest that

Radstone's recommendation ought to extend beyond memory studies to other disciplines

which grapple with the complex and tense relationships between identity, politics, and

trauma, not least of which is my own discipline of rhetoric. Olick and Robbins advocate a

theorizing of modern memory practices through "our grandest theories."[16] Though they

do not specify concretely what these grand theories may be, their oblique references to

the works of New Historian Pierre Nora and critical theorist Andreas Huyssen certainly

open the door to a reading of memory under the scope of critical theory.

Holocaust Studies

Radstone's embrace of the "grey area" in cultural analyses mirrors Holocaust

studies' theoretical espousal of the impossibility of Holocaust commemoration. United

despite the transdisciplinarity of their field, Holocaust scholars recognize an inherent

paradox in memory practices concerning the Shoah—there is a necessity to bear witness

to the trauma of the Holocaust alongside the impossibility of bearing witness to such a

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[14] Ibid., 36.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Olick and Robbins, 134.

trauma.[17] A discussion of all the contributions that Holocaust studies has made to the study of memory is vast beyond measure—certainly too vast for the scope of this review of literature. This section focuses on two main contributions of Holocaust studies to memory studies: embodied witnessing and counter-monumentality.

Shoshana Felman uses the lens of psychoanalysis and performativity theory as she discusses the role of witness testimony in shaping discourses of collective memory in the context of the Holocaust. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer elaborate on Felman's analysis, suggesting that "witness testimony locates the possibility of grasping the Holocaust in 'the slippage between law and art' – between the closure brought by legal judgment, and the open-ended immediacy and presence preserved in a work of art."[18] The prototype for Holocaust witness testimony is widely regarded as Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, as detailed in Hannah Arendt's famous *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.[19]

In her analysis of the six-week trial of Eichmann, perhaps the most infamous Nazi bureaucrat, Arendt describes the procession of witnesses that testified at the trial. Nearly 100 prosecution witnesses came to the stand to bear witness to the trauma and violence to which they had been subjected during the Holocaust. In fact, twice as much time was spent during the trial on witness testimony than was spent with Eichmann on the stand. Arendt ultimately finds the series of testimonies to be a distraction to the judgment of Eichmann and the banality of his evil.

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[17] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/ Memory Studies," *Memory Studies* 2, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 151–70, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698008102050.
[18] Hirsch and Spencer, 152.
[19] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

Others, like Felman, see this trial as revolutionary in the way it opened up a collective story from the testimonies of dozens of disparate victims. This event thus shaped understandings of collective memory via its public bearing of witness accounts. Performance readings of the witness accounts are necessary to gain the full picture, though. As Hirsch and Spitzer suggest through their analysis of one particular witness at the Eichmann trial, K-Zetnik, it is not the words of the testimonies that carry such power. Rather, it is the embodied performance of the testimony, the "concentrated attention to the deep memory lodged in the body and to the unspoken and unspeakable dimensions of traumatic recall" that constitutes such affective potential.[20] The idea of the unspoken and unspeakable testimony comes largely from the political theory of Giorgio Agamben, whose analysis of biopolitics draws heavily on Foucauldian biopower and focuses on the Holocaust figure of the *Muselman*, the abject embodiment of bare life at the limits of humanity.[21] There are vast criticisms of Agamben's focus on the *Muselman* as paradigmatic for all of the concentration camp experience, though future interventions into Holocaust memory studies should seek to redeem the non-problematic portions of his argument vis-à-vis the performative capacities of bearing witness and the biopolitical workings of the Third Reich. In later chapters, I intend to continue this conversation surrounding the affect of embodied testimony by suggesting the rhetorical power of the *absence* of embodied testimony.

The second contribution Holocaust studies has made to memory studies in regard to the current project on memorialization is in its introduction of the theoretical concept

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[20] Hirsch and Spitzer, 158.
[21] Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999).

of the counter-monument. Before discussing the counter-monument in depth, a quick note on aesthetics, a theoretical frame under which memorial art and objects arguably fall. I would be remiss to mention aesthetics and the Holocaust and not to mention Theodor Adorno's widely-cited, though widely-*mis*-cited, declaration that there can be "no poetry after Auschwitz."[22] While Adorno clarified this position in later years, the claim remains one of the most enduring provocations within discussions of Holocaust art and memorialization. Partially in response to this declaration, Holocaust theorist James E. Young draws from Adorno, Hyussen, and Nora to suggest a form of memorialization and, perhaps, aesthetics, that recognizes the sheer impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz.

Young's initial conception of the counter-monument finds its roots in Germany in the late twentieth century, as the country struggled with appropriately commemorating its problematic Fascist history. Through describing various memory sites located throughout Germany, Young coins the term counter-monument to refer to monuments which question the very idea of their own existence, of the ability to secure memory and encapsulate permanence. Such monuments may disappear over time, make use of negative space, or make use of a non-traditional medium like a mechanized video show. This embrace of non-traditional sites, often profane and ordinary, constitutes what Noam Lupu terms constructed banality. For Lupu, the banality of the counter-monument begets its downfall. Through my analysis of the *Stolpersteine*, I aim to show that this banality is precisely the source of its rhetorical force. Future research should address this tension, as the object of the counter-monument invites inquiry from a number of theoretical perspectives. Future research may pose questions such as: What is the relationship

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[22] Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, First MIT Press edition., Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981).

between counter-monumentality and Foucauldian counter-memory? How might counter-monuments interpellate the subjectivities of those who interact with them? Do they problematize the assumptions of publicity that prior monumental forms posit? I suggest that an analytic tool of critical rhetoric could tackle these areas of inquiry.

Rhetoric

Much of the current chapter has discussed the discipline of memory studies both in general and as it interacts with the sub-field of Holocaust studies. Yet, recall the earlier recommendations of Olick, Robbins, and Radstone that memory studies ought to embrace the methodological practices of other disciplines in a pursuit of critical theory. Rhetoric can be precisely the home for these practices to occur, as it has the capacity to encompass the study of memory, places of public memory, and critical theory.

Blair, Dickinson, and Ott provide a useful history of the relationship between rhetoric and memory in their popular *Places of Public Memory*.[23] They notably detail how, despite memory existing as one of the five canons of rhetoric for the ancient Greeks, modern rhetorical theory often undertheorizes memory. Rhetoric, as theorized by Blair, is "the study of discourses, events, objects, and practices that attends to their character as meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential" as organized around the idea of the public.[24] The authors see a clear potential contribution of rhetoric to public memory, though they lament that such a contribution has not been thoroughly taken seriously by scholars.

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[23] Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).
[24] Ibid., 2-3.

For instance, the rhetorical critic's focus on the public in its various iterations provides a ready companion for the emphasis placed by memory studies on collective memory. In addition, the affective components of embodied witness testimony can be addressed through rhetorical analysis. Blair and her co-authors specifically reference the affect theories of Lawrence Grossberg and Sara Ahmed as areas in which rhetoric can supplement current discussions.[25] Lastly, the counter-monument as a theoretical object can be expanded through a rhetorical lens, a task that has to date been explored in any detail only by a small number of argumentation theorists.[26]

Thus, the aim of this thesis is to expand these theoretical discussions of the counter-monument and counter-monumentality in terms of their rhetorical components. Specifically, I discuss one counter-monument case study, the *Stolpersteine* project, in terms of existing rhetorical theories, such as visual argumentation theory and Michael Hyde's phenomenological conception of interruption. I suggest my contributions under the methodological umbrella of *in situ* rhetorical fieldwork, which I describe in detail in the next chapter.

A Rhetorical Approach to Holocaust Memory

The current debates within memory studies can largely be distilled down to the tension of generalization. How can one generalize from the individual to the social? Does a focus on identity necessarily forego a structural analysis of the political? Can one witness testimony create a collective memory? These debates have clear implications for memorialization practices. The importance of witness testimony and the counter-

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[25] Ibid., 16-18.
[26] Ryan Erik McGeough, Catherine Helen Palczewski, and Randall A. Lake, "Oppositional Memory Practices: U.s. Memorial Spaces as Arguments Over Public Memory," *Argumentation & Advocacy* 51, no. 4 (Spring 2015): 231–54.

monument both highlight an important contradiction at the heart of Holocaust memory studies: the dual impulse to bear witness and the impossibility of doing so. In order to grapple with this paradox, memory theorists should settle in to the contradictions as a dwelling place for their scholarship. While rhetoricians can offer analytical tools for memory scholars to use, what is most important is that they dwell in the impossibility as well. As I will suggest in the next chapter, the counter-monument provides one such entry in this impossible dwelling.

Methodological Approach

Though the field of rhetoric is thousands of years old, the discipline is constantly evolving in terms of the methodological approaches that rhetoricians take when examining a given object of analysis. Beginning with rhetoric's renaissance in the twentieth century, the field focused solely on (American) public address, and rhetorical critics analyzed texts of the "great speeches" of history as means to build rhetorical theory. The 1960s gave rise to Ed Black's contributions, which led scholars away from the effects standard of evaluating the efficacy of speeches and towards a focus on rhetorical strategies as situated within particular speeches. The critical turn in the academy in the 1970s and 1980s led to a further evolution of rhetorical methodologies, with post-modern theorists suggesting a reconceptualization of works (e.g. books, speech transcripts, or art) as texts, which are open-ended and determined through plays of power.[27] This reconceptualization opened up the world to rhetorical critics, and everything from film to bodies to museums became readable as texts that evoke and

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[27] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (Blackwell, 2006).

perform various discourses. Over the past two decades, focus has shifted to analyzing the

ways that rhetoric is performed in specific communities and contexts. Just as all other

methodological shifts within rhetorical criticism have changed the paradigm within which

the core epistemological and theoretical assumptions of rhetoric function, the current

shift-- the participatory turn-- promises to provide the same rupture.[28] The methodology

used in this thesis, rhetorical fieldwork, falls under this broader participatory turn.

The participatory turn involves a number of considerations. Drawing heavily from

ethnographic and qualitative methods, the practice of participation involves methods such

as observation, interviewing, oral histories, and personal connection. Epistemologically,

understanding a text within its situated context is of utmost import when considering

what knowledge counts as valid. As Blair explicates, bodily "being there" is imperative

for a critic to truly understand the rhetorical performance of texts.[29] As Endres et al. point

out, these shifts "contribute to the field of rhetoric writ large by expanding and

challenging central assumptions of the field, such as role of the critic, texts, context, and

purpose of criticism."[30] For instance, rhetorical fieldwork expands the notion of the text

by "focusing on *in situ* texts that highlight intersectional embodied and emplaced

experiences of rhetoric that resist written textualization and situate the emplaced body as

a central site for comprehension."[31] This thesis takes such a focus through a method of

participatory rhetorical fieldwork.

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[28] Danielle Endres et al., "In Situ Rhetoric: Intersections Between Qualitative Inquiry, Fieldwork, and Rhetoric," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16, no. 6 (December 1, 2016): 511–24.
[29] Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies."
[30] Endres et al., "In Situ Rhetoric," 512.
[31] Ibid.

Endres et al. define rhetorical fieldwork as "a set of approaches that integrates rhetorical and qualitative inquiry toward the examination of *in situ* practices and performances in a rhetorical field."[32] These varied approaches often take the form of oral histories, interviews, observation, participant observation, though other methods are available to critics from both rhetorical and critical qualitative traditions.[33] The term "*in situ*," translated from the Latin as "on site," refers to the state of being in original position or place. If, as Blair argues, it is true that the circulation of a rhetorical text results in a "flattening" that object through the process of textualization,[34] then documenting and analyzing rhetoric as it happens "in the moment of rhetorical invention"[35] is necessary. In pursuit of analyzing the *Stolpersteine* in this moment of invention, I travelled to Germany and Hungary for 6 weeks in the summer of 2018.

Specifically, I draw my analyses from interviews, field notes, observation, and auto-ethnographic reports of my own embodied experience at various sites of memory related to the *Stolpersteine*. While in Berlin, I was able to meet with two members of the *Stolpersteine* team, who answered questions regarding the history, intent, and controversy of the stumbling stone project. While I have transcripts and audio of the interview, this thesis utilizes the information gleaned from the conversation only insofar as providing context for my own knowledge as I work through the project. I took extensive field notes during various visits to stumbling stones that are already emplaced and at two different ceremonies dedicating stumbling stones in Berlin. I utilized observation to note the behaviors of other people as they interact with the *Stolpersteine*. I knew how I embodied

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[32] Ibid., 514.
[33] See Ibid. for an extensive list of articles which make use of these various methodologies.
[34] Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies."
[35] Endres et al., "In Situ Rhetoric," 516.

my performance around the stones, but did others do the same? My observations enabled me to see how others interact with *Stolpersteine* in a few different locations. Lastly, I make use of auto-ethnographic reports of my own embodied experience. My role as critic is not isolated, and the way I read and analyzed these sites of memory is irrevocably informed by my own reactions, feelings, and behaviors. These notes are thus valuable points of inquiry for this project. As analyzed through this methodology, the following sections detail the particular ways in which I argue that the *Stolpersteine* perform.

Chapter Preview

The current chapter provided an introduction to the public art project of Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine*; an overview of the broad theoretical conversations happening within three relevant fields of study (memory studies, Holocaust studies, and rhetoric); and a description of rhetorical fieldwork as a methodology for rhetorical criticism. Chapter 2 narrows the scope of the theoretical discussion, and I suggest that rhetoric and communication scholarship has suffered from a lack of proper engagement with the concept of the counter-monument. In order to rectify this silence, Chapter 3 provides a rhetorical analysis of the *Stolpersteine* project as a counter-monument. The conclusions of that analysis, as well as a discussion about the possible risks of the *Stolpersteine* project, are explained in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2: Communication, Memory, and the Counter-Monument

The previous chapter provided a broad theoretical backdrop for this thesis,

arguing for a combined critical understanding of memory studies, Holocaust studies, and

rhetoric. Given this backdrop, what particular theories and methods provide an avenue to

understand the counter-monument? Scholars from a broad range of academic disciplines

have cited the theoretical object of the counter-monument as a basis for inquiry, from

media studies to urban geography to art history. Yet, few rhetoricians have taken up the

discussion surrounding counter-monuments, despite a wide and increasing interest in the

rhetoric of monuments and memorials.[1] This chapter will first broadly survey the ways in

which rhetoricians and communication scholars have engaged analyses of monuments

and memorials before moving to survey the brief ways in which rhetoricians and

communication scholars have utilized the counter-monument as a theoretical concept.

Ultimately, I suggest that the limited ways in which our field has addressed the counter-

monument occludes theoretical nuance with which we could and should be reading

counter-memorial objects.

The Counter-Monument

Recall from the previous chapter Young's initial conception of the counter-

mounument, a term which refers to monuments which question the very idea of their own

existence, of the ability to secure memory and encapsulate permanence. Quentin Stevens,

Karen A. Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley discuss five features of Young's concept that

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[1] Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

distinguish the counter-monument from the traditional monument: subject, form, site, visitor experience, and meaning.[2] My later analysis applies the study of the *Stolpersteine* to each of these features, thereby showing the ways in which the stones fit current conceptions of the counter-monument and, in some instances, expand these conceptions. Before that analysis, though, a quick note on definitions.

As Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley reveal, the term counter-monument has been used by scholars to refer to myriad different monumental forms and has been used interchangeably with forms such as the anti-monument, the non-monument, negative-form monuments, and counter-hegemonic monuments, among others.[3] Of course, not all monuments are the same, and not all counter-monuments are the same. The language we use to describe such objects should therefore be precise in order to address this complexity. To add a level of conceptual parsimony, Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley bifurcate all that has been called counter-monumental into two categories based on their function.

The first set of counter-monuments, which they term *anti-monumental*, refer to counter-monuments which counter the very idea of monumentality in theory. Meaning, anti-monumental counter-monuments call into question the very idea of permanence and unity. For example, Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) is uniquely anti-monumental in that it calls into question the memory of the Vietnam War. Through the inverted-"v" shape, constructed minimalism, and the accounting of names, the VVM defies traditional monumental forms. As political theorist Steven Johnston explains: "The

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[2] Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley, "Counter-Monuments: The Anti-Monumental and the Dialogic," *The Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 6 (2012): 951–72.
[3] Stevens et al., 952.

Wall may have been designed to heal and provide catharsis, but it also keeps alive, even inflames, a number of old wounds, and in providing relief to some denies it to others. In short, it includes and excludes, unites and divides, mends and rends."[4] Famously referred to as the archetype of postmodern memorializing, the VVM refuses to construct a unified memory of the war and opens up a place of multiplicity and contestation.[5] Given this anti-monumental aesthetic, it is easy to see why the construction and placement of the VVM evoked such heated controversy.

The second set of counter-monuments, which Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley term *dialogic*, refer to monuments that are targeted at another specific monument and attempt to counter or critique the existing site.[6] Such dialogic monuments stem from the German *Gegendenkmal*, confusingly and literally translated as "counter-monument," and exist only in juxtaposition and conversation with the original referent monument.[7] Such monuments gain their meaning only in relation to the referent monument. For example, in order to quell the outrage surrounding the ambiguity of the VVM, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts commissioned sculptor Frederick Hart to design a statue that was clear in its honor and praise of American veterans.[8] We can clearly conceptualize the resulting statue, The Three Servicemen, as dialogic, placed in close proximity to the VVM wall as an intentional effort to tidy up the narrative of the Vietnam War. Dialogic counter-

[4] Steven Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic: Democracy, Civic Space, And The American Memorial/Monument Complex," *Theory & Event* 5, no. 2 (January 1, 2001), 2.
[5] Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263–88.
[6] Stevens et al., 952.
[7] Ibid., 962
[8] "Veterans Day to Mark 30th Anniversary of Three Servicemen Statue," accessed April 16, 2019, http://www.vvmf.org/news/article=Veterans Day to Mark 30th Anniversary of Three Servicemen Statue.

monuments thus function as public argument, as suggested by argumentation theorists McGeough and Palczewski.[9]

We can therefore conclude that anti-monumentality and dialogic approaches are theoretically distinct categories of counter-monument, and while they may oftentimes function in tandem, memory theorists should be specific about which form of counter-monumentality they are addressing when undertaking their analyses. For the case of the *Stolpersteine*, I suggest they constitute specifically an anti-monumental counter-monument by calling into question ideas of commemorative efficacy and obligations to remember. For simplicity, I use the accepted term of counter-monument, though with the theoretical specificity outlined above. When discussing memory, I use the term public memory to denote memory beyond that of official history and beyond the individual, while also following Marita Sturken's lead that "debates about terminology should be set aside" within memory studies.[10]

With this clarity about the concept of the counter-monument in mind, I now turn to a discussion about the applicable ways in which the field of communication has addressed both public memorial spaces in general and the counter-monument concept in particular.

Communication and Places of Memory

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[9] Ryan Erik McGeough and Catherine Helen Palczewski, "53. Counter-Monuments, Contested Memories and Public Accountability: The Hamburg Monument Against Fascism, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, and the Fetterman Battlefield Memorial," *Conference Proceedings -- National Communication Association/American Forensic Association (Alta Conference on Argumentation)*, January 2007, 536–46.
[10] Marita Sturken, "Memory, Consumerism and Media: Reflections on the Emergence of the Field," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 77

Following the boom in memory studies scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s, communication scholarship flourished in discussions of monuments and memorials. Defining the scope of this explosion in scholarship is difficult given the immense methodological and theoretical approaches scholars take when discussing memory sites in communication. In these years, scholars have addressed memory sites with approaches stemming from affect theory;[11] traditional public address theories;[12] visual argumentation theory;[13] and performance theory,[14] among others. In addition to the novel theoretical approaches, communication scholars introduced new methodological approaches to the study of texts, such as *in situ* rhetorical fieldwork, the methodology with which I anayze the *Stolpersteine* as was explained in Chapter 1.

On the more recent edge of this scholarship boom, place emerges as a key term through which we discuss memory and rhetoric. Noting that places are "differentiated, named 'locales,'" Dickinson, Blair, and Ott explain that place is marked for recognition and therefore, like memory, place is always rhetorical.[15] Place is something bordered, delimited, and named in particular ways (e.g. Winston-Salem, Wake Forest University, or the sidewalks throughout Western Europe), and place is thus able to be rendered publicly legible through rhetorical intervention.

Dickinson, Blair, and Ott provide five characteristics of memory places and the rhetoricity of such places that attempt to distinguish places of memory from other memory techne, such as photographs or the archive. First, the signifier (the place, in this

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[11] See the work of Lawrence Grossberg.
[12] For example, Alan Gross' essay on the Hiroshima exhibit at the Smithsonian.
[13] McGeough and Palczewski, "53. Counter-Monuments, Contested Memories and Public Accountability."
[14] See the work of Della Pollock.
[15] Dickinson, Blair, and Ott, *Places of Public Memory*, 24.

instance) is itself an object of special attention, since it claims to be a marker of collective identity. Second, memory places evoke specific relationships between the past and the present that construct a public identity for visitors. Third, memory places are selectively partial and therefore political. Fourth, memory places mobilize power. Last, memory places incorporate other memory techne, such as photographs, words, or nationalistic symbols.[16] These five claims set apart memory places as distinct areas for the study of memory and rhetoric. All told, the authors summarize the relationship between theory, memory, rhetoric, and place succinctly: "While we have engaged in a theoretical discussion of the relations among rhetoric, memory, and place, the crux of our argument has been that the rhetorical consequentiality of memory is best understood through the analysis of particular memory places."[17]

To augment or perhaps to extend the general contributions that scholars have made in the study of monuments and memorials, I am interested in the discussions that communication theorists and rhetoricians have undertaken concerning the specific theoretical object of James E. Young's counter-monument. Young's concept of the counter-monument finds wide circulation in fields adjacent to communication, such as in media studies, English, or cultural studies. Despite this proximate popularity, analyses in rhetoric have not explicated the concept beyond a narrow discussion in visual argumentation. I aim to show in the following chapters that the concept, when properly analyzed for its rhetorical significance and potential, fits in well to discussions in rhetorical theory and can add additional illumination to many of our core theories regarding the rhetoric of memory sites.

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[16] Ibid., 25-30.
[17] Ibid., 32.

Argument, the Counter-Monument, and the Sacred

The most robust discussion of the counter-monument as I conceptualize it comes

from argumentation theorists, specifically in the realm of visual argument. McGeough

and Palczewski provide a rhetorical analysis of memory sites including a Holocuast

memorial in Germany and two United States battlefield memorials concerning Native

Americans, ultimately suggesting a number of forms that a counter-monument can take.[18]

Expanding from the basic premise that there are multiple ways to counter an argument,

they suggest that there are multiple ways to counter a monument. For example, some

monuments function to "[oppose] the sacred"[19] while others may accept and expand

monumental sacredness.[20] In suggesting that counter-memorials can either oppose the

sacred or appeal to the sacred thereby expanding sacred space, McGeough and

Palczewski collapse a key distinction. Here, I suggest an application of Stevens, Franck,

and Fazakereley's insightful discussion on monumental forms, in which they distinguish

between the anti-monumental and the dialogic. McGeough and Palczewski collapse the

two terms, losing the nuance that arises with the conceptual bifurcation. Thus, the

conclusions that McGeough and Palczewski draw are not necessarily precise to the

counter-monumental form that Young suggests, which is one in which the sacrality of

meta-narratives is challenged. They conclude by arguing that:

> Regardless of how one allocates responsibility for remembering and forgetting,
>
> one need not reject the sacred in order to qualify as counter-monument. Johnston

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[18] McGeough and Palczewski, "53. Counter-Monuments, Contested Memories and Public
Accountability."
[19] Ibid., 538.
[20] Ibid., 540.

(2001) argues that sacred space runs counter to the plurality and contestation that should be at the heart of democratic societies because it honors "the eternal and unchanging, symbolic of truth and fidelity, eliciting reverence and awe, demanding deference and devotion, committed to unity and consensus" (para. 6). However, both [the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and the Fetterman Battlefield] offer examples of how plurality and contestation can be incorporated into the very ground of sacred spaces. The Indian Memorial offers a form of the sacred counter to the 7th Cavalry's phallic obelisk. The Fetterman interpretive plaque does not reject the sacred but includes all battlefield dead within it... Ultimately, monuments and counter-monuments challenge us to consider the way in which publics are constituted by memories (Cox, 1987).[21]

While I agree with the conclusion that both monuments and counter-monuments force a consideration of the ways in which publics are constituted, I disagree that the counter-monument, especially in contexts of commemorating trauma at the level of genocide, can ever expand or open sacred space. While dialogic monuments (as described by McGeough and Palczewski, though not termed as such) can expand sacred space by presenting a marginalized perspective in conversation with an existing monument, the same cannot be said for a proper (anti-monumental) counter-monument. In fact, quite the opposite must be true. For a counter-monument to qualify as such, I suggest that space must be actively profaned and sacrality rejected. The next chapter will discuss this argument in further detail.

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[21] Ibid., 542-543.

As an expansion of their previous analyses, McGeough, Palczewski, and Lake

forward a discussion of the visual argumentation of monuments.[22] Suggesting that

dialogic counter-monuments function as public argument that can correct or contradict

the narratives evoked by a previously existing monument, their analysis is limited only to

"how argumentation works at sacred sites, and how arguments about the past, once

carved in stone and cast in bronze, may be countered" by expanding the lives deemed

worth of grief.[23] Here, the authors specifically recognize the distinction among various

forms of counter-monuments by citing Young in context of European Holocaust

memorials. Their contributions are insightful, though limited to discussions of

monuments that exist a) on sacred space and b) in direct proximity with another physical

monument. Again, existing contributions are therefore limited and cannot theorize a text

like the *Stolpersteine*, which do not exist on sacred space (nor do they attempt to make

such space sacred) and do not exist in proximity with related monuments. Despite these

limitations, the discussion from argumentation theorists is helpful in provoking a central

question. How do monuments enable the visual to rupture or alter the consideration of

who is deemed grievable?

The argumentation theorists cited thus far draw heavily on critiques of political

theorist Steven Johnston's interventions into the discussion of civic space. Johnston

problematizes the notion that sacred space can exist in a democratic society. He explains:

"That which is sacred, honoring the eternal and unchanging, symbolic of truth and

fidelity, eliciting reverence and awe, demanding deference and devotion, committed to

unity and consensus, runs counter to a vibrant democratic ethos featuring plurality and

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[22] McGeough, Palczewski, and Lake, "Oppositional Memory Practices."
[23] Ibid., 232.

contestation."[24] This criticism of the sacred as an unchallengeable truth echoes Young's

description of the memory culture in Germany at the twilight of the 20th century and

criticism of fascistic memorials and monuments. While argumentation theorists within

communication posit that public and democratic deliberation can happen through an

expansion of sacred space at memory sites, Johnston uses the idea of the counter-

monument to suggest that it is only through a rejection of the sacred that democratic

principles can be enacted. Put simply, "as the monument and citizen encounter and

engage one another, democratic principles are not just celebrated but enacted…[a]s the

monument consumes itself, the citizen is to emerge."[25] For the case of the *Stolpersteine*,

Johnston's extension of the counter-monument into political theory is helpful insofar as

the stones operate to reclaim democracy through a non-redemptive inversion of sacred

space.

Beyond Argumentation

Beyond the sub-field of argumentation, how else have communication theorists

and rhetorical critics engaged the concept of the counter-monument? There are three

categories in which we can group such additional contributions: analyses of photographs,

bodies, and space. First, critics like Deborah James focus on the rhetorical power and

limitations of digitizing counter-memorials. Through her analysis of shared photographs

of civilian counter-monuments in the former Yugoslavia, James argues that photographs

can create a networked community that exists even after the monument has

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[24] Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic," 2.
[25] Ibid.

disappeared.[26] This analysis evokes Barbie Zelizer's interventions into the relationship of

visuality and memory. Zelizer suggests that photographs concerning trauma events have

shifted from a role in which they bear authentic witness to one in which the photographs

convey moral importance.[27] While future work may discuss the role of digital

commemoration in context of the *Stolpersteine*, the current discussion does not draw

from the rhetoric of digitizing counter-monuments.

     The second way in which we might group communication theorists who have

engaged the concept is those who speak about the relationship between counter-

monumentality and the body. For example, Suhi Choi discusses the embodied witnessing

that is performed by trauma survivors at a site in South Korea. For Choi, "survivors'

fragile, mortal bodies echo the very form of countermonuments of the Holocuast…that

German young artists created to work against the fascistic propensity of monuments."[28]

Choi continues to suggest that, while the bodies of survivors are themselves monumental

in their embodiment of trauma, physical monuments can in fact communicate such

embodied trauma via the transference of unarticulated "emotions, imagination, and

empathy."[29] Choi's suggestion provides critical insight for the case of the *Stolpersteine*,

in which the absence of the lived body necessarily precludes the potential for survivors to

embody their witnessing. All here that is left is absence and a material marker, which can,

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[26] Deborah James, "Social Networking Sarajevo Roses: Digital Representations of Postconflict Civil Life in (the Former) Yugoslavia," *Journal of Communication* 63, no. 5 (October 1, 2013): 975–92.

[27] Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[28] Choi, "Can a Memorial Communicate Embodied Trauma? Reenacting Civilian Bodies in the No Gun Ri Peace Park," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2016): 469.

[29] Ibid., 485.

through "incomplete, historical imagery,"[30] perhaps evoke the embodied trauma of violence long past.

Lastly, there are theorists who discuss Young's counter-monument concept in analyses of the rhetorical dimensions of space. Peta Malins combines critical media studies with the counter-monument concept to suggest how Deleuzian concepts of subjectification can explain how "the inside (our subjectivity, mind, and body) and the outside (discourse, knowledge, the spatial environment) become intimately entwined" when passers-by engage with counter-monuments in Australia.[31] The contributions here are helpful for the current project. Malins provokes us to ask how bodies and spaces operate as an assemblage and how memorial spaces can hold the relations of the body and its relations to the social world in tension.

Ultimately, despite widespread discussions of the rhetorical dimensions of museums, monuments, and memorials within the field of communication and despite popular extrications of the counter-monument concept in a number of related fields, few critics have made the leap to combine the two. The closest intervention has been the recent extension of the concept into visual argumentation theory. However, such studies are limited by a conflation of various types of counter-monuments, as there is a significant rhetorical difference between an anti-monument object that seeks to dwell in the profane and an informative plaque that extends mournability to an additional group of people. A related theme that emerges from these studies is the claim that counter-monuments function to extend sacred space to bodies and people which were previously

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[30] Ibid., 484.
[31] Peta Malins, "Body-Space Assemblages and Folds: Theorizing the Relationship between Injecting Drug User Bodies and Urban Space," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2004): 484.

deemed ungrievable. I find Johnston's contributions instructive in my suggestion that, to

the contrary, counter-monuments function to invert the sacrality of space and to reclaim

the banal as a site of civic space, rhetorical power, and citizenship. The following chapter

explicates these claims through a critical, situated analysis of Gunter Demnig's

Stolpersteine project.

Chapter 3: Stolpersteine as Counter-Monument

My observations in this chapter stem from my own thoughts and impressions of the *Stolpersteine*, a public art movement in which I have been emotionally invested since my own stumbling over the project in 2014. My observations are thus partial and always already occluded by my "horizon" of experience and feelings, to borrow from Hans-Georg Gadamer's phraseology. As a white American, my relationship to the history of Germany and to the memory of the Third Reich is always one of an outsider. Through my year living and working in central Germany, my relationship to the *Stolpersteine* became one of familiarity and habituation, though I acknowledge that the stones may function differently for tourists who will only ever encounter a particular stone once, if ever. The Germany I know is always already partial and incomplete, though there is nobody who has an impartial and complete view of the place. I recall here the writing of ex-pat and journalist Jane Kramer, who describes those of us who face the difficult task of making sense out of our impressions of Germany. She writes, "All this is really to say that any outsider writing about Germany over the past few years has had the doubly difficult job of weighing his or her Germany against the Germany that Germans are now reinventing for themselves."[1]

To return now to the theoretical conception of counter-monumentality, there are five features in which scholars may distinguish these spaces from traditional memory sites: subject, form, site, visitor, and meaning.[2] If we are to conceive of the counter-monument as a genre of commemorative space or memory sites, there ought to be a

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[1] Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany*, First edition. (New York: Random House, 1996), xviii.
[2] Stevens et al., 955

general level of consistency among everything deemed a counter-monument in regards to these features. The *Stolpersteine* project not only meets each of the five features, but in several cases it presents unique rhetorical features that enhance our understanding of the counter-monument as a theoretical object.

Subject

The first distinguishing feature is that of subject. Traditional monuments are usually of an affirmative nature, celebrating an individual or event in a way that is consistent with prevailing ideology.[3] Take, for instance, the Jefferson Memorial in Washington D.C., which deifies the presidency in an architectural rhetorical association with our republican roots in Rome by modeling itself after the Pantheon, a two millennium old site of memory. There is a consistent narrative glorifying Thomas Jefferson as a good Founding Father as he sits over the Potomac surveying the rest of the nation's capital. Even memorials to tragedy, such as military cemeteries, exist under a prevailing narrative of justified wars and noble sacrifice. The *Stolpersteine* involve a radically different subject matter.

Each stone is dedicated to a specific individual made victim by the Nazi regime, and the focus on death, forced displacement, and absence is uniquely anti-monumental. There is nothing celebratory in the stones, nor do they create a space to mourn or grieve. They simply note the absence of a body once present. The focus on the individual victim in lieu of the total mass of suffering constitutes a shift in subject matter as well. The naming of individual victims, such as in the VVM or the AIDS Memorial Quilt, invokes

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[3] Stevens et al., 955.

a particularity of that individual's experience that is difficult to wrap up in a larger narrative of history, though the sterilizing impulse of history will attempt to do so. Individual names beg the visitor to question, who is this? What is their story? Individuals problematize the desire of history for cleanness and clarity.

Form

The second feature of anti-monumentality is a change from traditional monumental forms.[4] Bronzed men on horses atop marble edifices are incapable of memorializing those who have long been ignored in official histories. There are a couple of ways in which the form of the *Stolpersteine* may be thought of as counter-monumental within an analysis of form. First, the stones exist in multiplicity—indeed, there are over 60,000 of them throughout Europe, earning the project the title of the largest decentralized memorial in the world. By eschewing a singular physical representation, the multiplicity of the monuments refocuses the visitor to an individual's lived experience with National Socialism. The forced deportation and extermination of millions is too astounding to be comprehended, and any attempts to memorialize a tragedy on such an epic scale will fail at their task, for it cannot be comprehended neatly in our history traditions as well. The stones make no attempt at allowing a visitor to comprehend the Holocaust, but they do allow an individual's name to be remembered and, for a brief moment, that victim to have a grievability about them. They bring the scale of the violence to a manageable level, if that can be done at all.

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[4] Ibid.

The stamping of the letters on to the brass plaques also represents a shift away from traditional monumental forms. The letters, hand stamped by Demnig's team in his Berlin studio, are not the artistic engravings or careful scripting found on traditional monumental brass. They are as mechanic as the systematic, brutal efficiency of the Nazi extermination machine itself, with no aesthetic liberties taken. The medium of the brass itself, a common feature of constructed memory sites, is inverted by the *Stolpersteine*. While it evokes a sense of permanence, the placement of the stones in the pavement invites erosion by weather and the wearing down by pedestrian soles. They are open to be dripped on by children's ice cream cones in the summertime and walked on by people's pets. The brass is therefore present but clearly open to its own destruction by the elements of life above it.

There is a particular nuance to the placement of the stones in the site of a sidewalk pavement that must be attended to. As part of their anti-Semitic program of attack, Nazi Germany destroyed Jewish cemeteries. Given that Jewish law unequivocally states the necessity of a traditional burial, this desecration of sacred space was particularly heinous. Yet, doubling down on this evil act, the toppled gravestones were at times used for sidewalk pavement, so that people were literally walking atop the gravemarkers of Jewish citizens in that town. There is an unspeakable desecration in this act, though this was not acknowledged by Germans of the early twentieth century who were known to exclaim "A Jew must be buried here!"[5] after tripping over a loose cobblestone in the street. In both

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[5] There is debate about the origin of this joke and its historical veracity. The Stolpersteine team in Berlin have told me they have no evidence of this saying being used, yet numerous scholarly and journalist sources widely report the joke. The first reported instance I have found that reference the old saying vis-à-vis Stolpersteine are the minutes from the Munich city council in June 2004 in which the Jewish community of Munich rejected the placement of Stolpersteine within the city boundaries: "Ich hätte sie fragen müssen, ob. wenn jemand über diese 'Stolpersteine' stolpert, sie

speech and action, Nazi Germany destroyed a number of spaces held sacred by the people

they would soon attempt to exterminate. Knowing this history, Demnig places his

Stolpersteine in the pavement itself, complete with the name of a persecuted Jewish,

Roma or Sinti, disabled, or homosexual individual. The plaque fits in with its

surroundings, unseen to all but those who look down, open to the further desecration of

being treaded upon. This placement is a reclamation of profanity, of the desecration that

Nazi Germany brought to the very sidewalks on which Jewish individuals walked and

from which they were taken to be murdered. Given this intentional reclamation, to

conceptualize *Stolpersteine* as a traditional monument would be wholly ineffective and

counterproductive, yet scholars who correctly deem them counter-monuments can begin

to understand the depth of meaning they evoke.

Site

The traditional site is, in its appeals for sacrality, oftentimes set apart, elevated,

protected, or on holy land. Key examples include the height of the Washington

Monument on the civic sacred space of the National Mall, declaring progress and success

to all who see it. There is also the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, literally guarded to

protect it and those interred within it. There is a holiness to civic monuments and

memorials that makes them seemingly untouchable, indicative of what sociologist Robert

Bellah would term civil religion. Even memory sites constructed in the last few decades

retain this traditional use of site, and these sites are notable enough that the

Spring/Summer 2011 issue of the journal *History & Memory* was dedicated to analyzing

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gewollt halten, dass dieser dann gesagt hätte, 'hier könnte ein Jude begraben sein' -, so wie es in der Nazizeit in München war, wenn einer stolperte. Da sagte man: 'Hier ist ein Jude begraben.'"

the process of how such memorial sites are made sacred through the creation of memorial space. The case studies in the issue, which range from commemorative sites in former concentration camps, Ghanaian heritage sites along previous slave routes, and the Separation Wall between Israel and Palestine each present a nuanced argument for how memorial space is made sacred, whether it be through the organic creation of pilgrimage destinations or an intentionally constructed national monument.[6]

The counter-monument, in contrast, is not an obvious destination site nor does it "gain symbolic meaning from any specific eternal arrangement." [7] The dispersion of the *Stolpersteine* throughout various streetcorners and sidewalks in Europe thus fits the framework of the counter-monument in regards to site. The decentralized *Stolpersteine* appear when unexpected, frequently a chance encounter on one's daily commute or on habitual walks to the grocery market. Recall the translation—"stumbling stone." Often literally stumbled upon, the stones surprise the pedestrian, beckoning her to examine the ground more closely, to read the name of an individual, a would-be neighbor for time long past. They are, to borrow rhetorical critic and bioethicist Michael Hyde's terminology, an interruption. They physically interrupt your movement, either causing you to break your stride and move around them or to trip over their raised position, and they also metaphysically interrupt by evoking the memory of a human existence, the absence of a lived body, which "is fundamentally an interruption; it never stops putting

[6] Katharina Schramm. "Introduction: Landscapes of Violence: Memory and Sacred Space," History & Memory 23, no. 1 (2011): 5-22.
[7] Stevens et al., 960

you and your beliefs to the test, it never ceases bringing to mind the issue of contingency."[8]

Through this interruption, the *Stolpersteine* rhetorically constitute a different audience than traditional monuments. No other site of memory can interrupt and remove premeditated intentions to reach an audience in such a way. In addition to changing the way an audience engages with a memorial, decentralized memorials also have the capacity to reach a different audience entirely: namely, those who actively avoid sacred spaces in attempts to forget the violence of the past. Those who may wish to ignore the violence of the past do not stumble into museums, do not trip their way onto national monuments, and do not fall into reading commemorative plaques. Audiences unwilling to come to grips with the past will never find their way into the sacred spaces that exist to remember and give meaning to that past. To theorize how an unwilling audience is taken into a space of memory requires an understanding of anti-monumental use of sites. In the case of *Stolpersteine*, the adoption of common, profane spaces allows for an entirely different audience to create a public place for remembrance by asking the stumbler to remember the name of the absent victim.

This embrace of non-traditional sites, often profane and ordinary, constitutes what Noam Lupu terms constructed banality. In discussing the seminal Harburg counter-monument addressed in Young's initial analysis, Lupu explains his argument criticizing constructed banality:

> Unlike traditional monument conceptions, the Harburg monument seemed
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> to impose *Denkmal-Arbeit* [memorial activity] on the most banal moments

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[8] Michael Hyde, "The Interruption That We Are (The Health of the Lived Body, Narrative, and Public Moral Argument)" In author's possession, n.d.

of German daily life. Yet in so doing, it seemed also to relinquish its call

to a more meaningful discourse than the banality of traffic jams and

pedestrian detours... A continuous argumentative thread—paradoxically

among both critics and supporters of the monument—was its price

tag…Harburg's disgruntled mayor… felt the money could have been

better spent repaving a highway… the banality of such a comparison…

begins to set the tone of the local discourse of the Harburg monument.[9]

For Lupu, the banality of the counter-monument begets its downfall. Drawing from Lupu,

Thomas Stubblefield writes of the same monument that "the very attempt to interject the

monument into the everyday can fuel its disappearance."[10] I suggest such claims are

incorrect, as the success of the *Stolpersteine* project proves. It is precisely the

banalization of memory that allows the stones to open a space for stumbling visitors to

renegotiate memory and their relationship to it in the successful way that they do. The

banalization of the stones via the placement in the sidewalk is exactly the move to the

profane that Demnig uses to evoke, to call upon the violent history of Jewish cemetery

destruction. Moreover, only by placing the stones within the banality of the urban

landscape can the artist ensure that unwitting passers-by can stumble over them and, in

that interruption, be drawn into a space of memory where the stone evokes the

consciousness of the visitor to attend to questions of complicity, guilt, and history. This

intentionally constructed banality that allows for interruption thus is critical to understand

how the stones function rhetorically, if we are to accept philosopher Henry Johnstone's

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[9] Noam Lupu, "Memory Vanished, Absent, and Confined: The Countermemorial Project in 1980s and 1990s Germany," *History and Memory* 15, no. 2 (2003): 137-138.
[10] Thomas Stubblefield, "Do Disappearing Monuments Simply Disappear?: The Counter-Monument in Revision," *Future Anterior* 8, no. 2 (2011): xii–11.

definition of rhetoric as "the evocation and the maintenance of the consciousness required for communication."[11] The stones evoke and maintain consciousness not simply by their anti-monumentality but also by their embrace of the banal.

Additional support for the efficacy of the counter-monument embracing constructed banality comes from Hannah Arendt's notion of the banality of evil. As Stephen Whitfield explains of Arendt's depiction of Adolf Eichmann, the war criminal and architect of the Holocaust was "simply unaware of his own wickedness" more than he was personally motivated by evil.[12] The overwhelming normality of Eichmann was at odds with the monstrous acts he was responsible for orchestrating, and Arendt's concept of the banality of evil can account for this disconnect. His evil was not, for Arendt, based in fanaticism or ideology but rather an "eerie indifference."[13] As Judith Butler explains of Eichmann, "what had become banal—and astonishingly so—was the failure to think. Indeed, at one point the failure to think is precisely the name of the crime that Eichmann commits."[14] I would amend that the failure to think, of being a thinking being, is also the failure to acknowledge the Other, of being an acknowledging being. The rhetorical move of the counter-monument to embrace banality thus acknowledges this facet of evil and pushes against the desire to forget, to walk along the street in a state of *non-acknowledgment*. Through interruption and placement within the urban landscape, the *Stolpersteine* place the ethical burden of remembering onto the public. They evoke

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[11]   Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument: An Outlook in Transition (University Park, PA.: Dialogue Press, 1978): 129.

[12] Stephen J. Whitfield, "Hannah Arendt and the Banality of Evil," *The History Teacher* 14, no. 4 (1981): 470.

[13] Ibid 471.

[14] Judith Butler, "Hannah Arendt's Challenge to Adolf Eichmann | Judith Butler," The Guardian, August 29, 2011, sec. Opinion, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/29/hannah-arendt-adolf-eichmann-banality-of-evil.

consciousness in the stumbling visitor and in so doing force an acknowledgment of the Other in a way that no traditional monumental form could do.

Visitor Experience

Counter-monuments vary from traditional monuments in terms of visitor experience. In the traditional memory site, there is a social script that we invariably follow when encountering the space. As the visitor approaches, the monument demands solemnity, quietude, and private reflection. The sacredness of the space seems to evoke a spiritual reverence at times, and physical distance is often needed in order to perceive the monument in its entirety. When the solemnity or reverence is interrupted, say by a tourist yammering loudly into his cell phone or children splashing around in a memorial fountain, we feel an immediate and visceral response. Yet, counter-monuments implicitly question why we feel such a discomfort at this behavior by inviting a new type of visitor experience. In the case of *Stolpersteine*, the visitor experience may entail a physical encounter with the monument in the form of a stubbed toe or a tripped foot. Once noticed, further examination of the monument requires a bodily proximity. To be read properly, one may have to bend their body over the stone or to kneel or squat on the pavement. In addition, some visitors make rubbings of the stones and in the process of creating a physical reminder of their interaction with the memory site lay hand, paper, and pencil to the monument itself, not unlike the interaction of name rubbings made at the VVM in Washington D.C. This act of physical engagement is anti-monumental as it breaks down the barriers of physical distance that are demanded by traditional memorials and implicitly questions the distance of memory and of the past.

Meaning

Lastly, counter-monuments represent a shift in meaning from that espoused by traditional monuments. The traditional monument is didactic, deploying a particular memory within a prevailing ideology in order to instruct about the failings of the past or to teach a curated narrative to the public. There is a clear and unified message to such monuments. The message may be debatable, such as in the instance of monuments to Confederate generals that propagate a "lost cause" narrative. But, the monuments themselves rhetorically present only a singular message. In contrast, counter-monuments are ambiguous and provide no interpretation of the meaning of the past they purport to represent. The VVM again provides a key example of a successful counter-monument in this respect, the rhetorical power of which has been well-documented elsewhere.[15] Do *Stolpersteine* represent a similar ambiguity of meaning? I suggest they do. The relatively abstract face of the blocks does little to instruct the visitor. There is simply a name, a set of dates, and perhaps a location mechanically stamped into the brass. Nowhere will you find an explanatory plaque that reveals information about the stumbling stone project, Demnig's intentions as artist, or what the memorials attempt to do.

This ambiguity is a rhetorically significant characteristic of the stones, for instead of looking to monument for information or instruction, the visitor is asked to look at the surrounding landscape for interpretive clues or to look within themselves to make meaning. The landscape will likely provide few bits of meaning to augment that of the stumbling stone. Perhaps the stone sits near the doorstep of a pre-war apartment, and the

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[15] Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263–88.

visitor can be certain that the individual remembered in the stone was a resident in the

building, though the particulars are lost to the archive. Or, more likely, the stone may be

outside of a drugstore or a souvenir kitsch store, themselves a palimpsest of buildings

destroyed by either the bombs of war in the 40s or the steady march of capitalist

enterprise in following decades. As a result of the decades of construction and

reconstruction, the modern visitor cannot know the urban landscape of the individual on

the stone. So, the making of meaning is left neither to the monument nor to its context but

rather to the individual visitor. Such as revealed in the previous discussion on form, the

Stolperstein through its ambiguity rhetorically pushes the ethical burden of remembering

onto the shoulders of the present visitor. The meanings they may make are infinite—

perhaps they will feel guilt, perhaps sadness, perhaps an imperative to reflect on modern

crises of forced deportation and genocide. Or, perhaps, they will make no greater

meaning from their encounter with the memorial. A full index of the potential meanings

made is not within the scope of this thesis; merely an understanding of the ambiguity of

meaning and the rejection of didacticism is important to our task of fitting *Stolpersteine*

within the existing framework of evaluating counter-monuments.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Implications

Reclaiming Banality

Stolpersteine meet each of the five features that distinguish counter-monuments from traditional monumental spaces: subject, form, site, visitor experience, and meaning. Having fit the stumbling stones within the existing typology of counter-monuments, I turn to a discussion of what they tell us about the rhetoric of counter-monuments and the ways in which we can expand our understandings of counter-monumentality to account for the nuances the stumbling stones provide. First I suggest the rhetorical significance in reclaiming banality. As seen in the critiques of both Lupu and Stubblefield, the question of the effectiveness of the constructed banality of counter-monuments is a core concern to the entire counter-monumental project. Without a defense of banality, the project collapses onto itself. The *Stolpersteine* case provides a strong argument for the rhetorical power of banality in its unique role of interrupting and evoking consciousness in visitors. Only in banality can one be surprised by memory, for any other traditional site of memory will only be visited by those with an intention to experience it.

Moreover, the ways in which evil functions banally must be accounted for in our memorial culture. If Arendt is correct and evil is done not out of hatred but out of a lack of thinking, commemorative spaces and acts are entirely a means by which we may ensure the acknowledgment, the thinking, necessary to demand an ethical engagement with the Other, or at least the memory of the Other. Current conceptions of the counter-monument thus seem to undertheorize the importance of constructed banality, and future work should take this neglect into consideration.

Stolpersteine as Profane Memorial Space

Recall McGeough and Palczewski's earlier analyses of counter-monuments in the United States. Their analysis concluded with the explanation that the counter-monuments in their case studies functioned successful to expand sacred space to other bodies, to expand the notion of who or what counts as grievable.[1] There are, within their analysis and other such writing,[2] at least two assumptions about sacred space: a) that it is possible to expand sacred space to those who were initially outside of it and b) it is an inherently worthwhile endeavor to do so. Here, I would like to use the *Stolpersteine* case study to push back against these assumptions with the use of Johnston's theorizing about sacred space and democracy and philosopher Lars Östman's analysis of the *Stolpersteine* project.

The first assumption is that it is possible to extend or expand sacred space to those initially on the outside of such space. Yet, what if the very idea of sacrality was destroyed by the Nazis? If that were the case, then traditional language of sacredness is insufficient to capture the reality of destruction in Nazi Germany. Just as legal scholars were forced to create new juridical concepts (such as the idea of a crime against humanity) to comprehend the crimes of Third Reich, we may be in need of new ethical concepts as well. Perhaps, the very language of traditional ethics is insufficient to capture the reality of life and death in the Third Reich. Lars Östman writes of the Third Reich:

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[1] McGeough and Palczewski, "53. Counter-Monuments, Contested Memories and Public Accountability."
[2] Katharina Schramm. "Introduction: Landscapes of Violence: Memory and Sacred Space," *History & Memory* 23, no. 1 (2011): 5-22.

[T]here was nothing normal or ordinary about the exterminations. Naked life in the Third Reich was subject to the most extreme degree of *Entwürdigung*; that is, to a production into a zone were [sic] life had been stripped of the clothes of law and ethics. The mass graves and gassings were nto a result of faulty ethics or even of execution. Both were the result of extermination, of a gigantic production of naked life swept away like trash, as though it were not human…victims of the NS-era suffered something *far worse than murder and faulty ethics.*[3]

Thus, we might hesitate to read the lives of victims into the traditional monumental discourse of sacrality. Given that the fate they suffered was beyond the scope of sacredness and ethics, we are in need of a new monumental form that suggests a discourse that reflects this fate. The *Stolpersteine* can, I argue, communicate such an incommunicable reality through a refusal of making space sacred. If the stones were an attempt to sacralize the space, they would not be placed in the sidewalk. They would not be so impersonal in their mechanic stamping of names and dates and places. They would not be open to the profanity of destruction. Yet, of course, this is not the case. The stones are banal, impersonal, and open to destruction. In this way, they are interminably non-redemptive and therefore call into question the very idea of sacrality.

The second assumption made by other theorists is that there is a value in extending sacred space to previously marginalized individuals or groups. Here, I recall Johnston's arguments from Chapter 2, in which he suggests that the very notion of sacred space in a democracy is "problematic" and "counter to a vibrant democratic ethos

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[3] Lars Östman, *The "Stolpersteine" and the Commemoration of Life, Death and Government* (Peter Lang, 2017), 69.

featuring plurality and contestation."[4] Something that is sacred attempts to ascribe

meaning to a violent past,[5] and Johnston elucidates how such an appeal to sacrality

requires a unity and consensus that leaves no space for plurality and contestation. This is

not, of course, to say that the effects of the Holocaust should be made contestable. What I

do mean to suggest is that polysemy should be encouraged in our commemorative spaces,

as the ways in which a passer-by can remember are numerous and varied. There is

plurality in the ways in which citizens and visitors come to a memorial space—some may

come with intention, some may be brought there by surprise, some feel a personal

connection to the history, and some are in the process of navigating their relationship to

memory—and our memorial spaces should encourage this plurality as a means for

democratic reclamation. Appeals to the sacred shut down the possibility for polysemy—

abdication of the sacred can foster it. Thus, we should see the *Stolpersteine* as profane

memorial space, emplaced in the banal moments of everyday life that bring the visitor to

a place of remembrance, though the exact parameters of that remembrance are varied and

permeable.

Signifying Risks

The bulk of this thesis has described a staunch defense of the *Stolpersteine* project

as a rhetorically powerful interruption, a reclamation of banality, and a form of

memorializing that dwells in the sheer impossibility of redemption. Yet, I would be

remiss if I completed this writing without mentioning my personal observations and notes

that do not support my argument at all. In addition, there are a number of theoretical

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[4] Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic."
[5] Schramm, "Introduction: Landscapes of Violence."

reasons why one might suggest the *Stolpersteine* has ceased to function with rhetorical force.

While in Europe and surrounded by the *Stolpersteine*, I cannot pass by a stone without pausing and bending over to read the name of the individual inscribed on the monument. When I lived in Germany, my daily commute brought me past one particular stone, that of Lehmann Tannenbaum, whose name I read with quotidian compulsion. Yet, this behavior is not a ubiquitous one. I recall one instance of travelling in Hungary with a friend, a well-meaning liberal type who had just recounted her moving visit to Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. She was proud to talk about her encounter with memory, a willing tourist into the difficulty of Holocaust commemoration. We had spent the day walking the city and talked deeply of my research into the stones and my interest in the memories they evoke. En route to dinner, mere minutes after talking about this thesis project, we came across a stumbling stone in the pavement. Without seeing, without thinking, she stepped on it.

Annoyed, I asked her, "Did you not see what you just stepped on? Are you kidding me? This is exactly what I'm talking about!" referring to the ways in which we choose to ignore our relationship to the past. Her response spoke volumes. Unapologetic, she shrugged her shoulders and said, "I guess I just didn't realize it was there."

My friend is not alone. I spent an afternoon this past summer watching a couple of stumbling stones from across the street, noting how people chose to interact with them. I anticipated, surely, that at least a few people would echo my own behavior, pausing to read the name at a minimum before continuing their stride. I anticipated that some would break their stride to avoid them, if nothing else. And, I anticipated that some would

ignore their existence altogether. All told, I watched 200 people come to a *Stolperstein* for Kati Schwarz, located feet away from the entrance to an apartment building. I watched 198 of them ignore the stone completely, in many instances stepping directly on top of it. I noted that only two individuals looked at the stone and acknowledged its place in their trajectory, though neither of them paused to read the name of Kati Schwarz. The stated purpose of the project draws from Demnig's reading of the Talmud, saying: "a person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten."[6] Given this purpose, it is difficult to feel at peace with what I observed. What I observed on multiple occasions was a *failure to acknowledge*.

In addition to a failure stemming from a lack of acknowledgment, the *Stolpersteine* may run the risk of *over-acknowledgment*. One major criticism in the memory studies literature is that monuments, perhaps including purportedly self-aware counter-monuments, suffer from an over-abundance of self-referentiality. Young explains:

> More recently, German historian Martin Broszat has suggested that in their
> references to the fascist era, monuments may not remember events so much as
> bury them altogether beneath layers of national myths and explanations. As
> cultural reifications, in this view, monuments reduce or, using Broszat's term,
> "coarsen" historical understanding as much as they generate it. In another vein, art
> historian Rosalind Krauss finds that the modernist period produces monuments
> unable to refer to anything beyond themselves as pure marker or base. After
> Krauss we might ask, in fact, whether an abstract, self-referential monument can

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[6] "HOME," accessed April 16, 2019, http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/home/.

ever commemorate events outside of itself. Or must it motion endlessly to its own

gesture to the past, a commemoration of its essence as dislocated sign, forever

trying to remember events it never actually knew?[7]

I am intrigued by this notion of monuments as dislocated sign, a discussion taken up

briefly by Carole Blair in her analysis of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.[8] Do the

Stolpersteine function as a dislocated sign, a signifier with no extant relationship to the

signified, in this case the enormity of a human life? They may indeed run this risk. When

the *Stolpersteine* project first began, many stones were placed at the request of a specific

community or family. Relatives of victims or survivors provided the Berlin team with the

biographical information, and a stone was laid at their last chosen residence. What began

as a defiant public art piece by Gunter Demnig, a true *Achtundsechsziger*[9], transformed

over time into one of the most well-recognized memorials in Germany, enjoying mass

support. The first stones were emplaced as protest without formal city approval, yet it did

not take long for the cities themselves to begin requesting a stumbling stone be emplaced

within their limits. Now, the majority of stones are not requested by family members or

those with ties to the commemorated individual. The requests for stumbling stones are

instead driven by schoolchildren or city councils, eager to display to the world their

willingness to engage in history. There seems to be a sense of pride in one saying, "I

have a *Stolperstein* in my neighborhood—we specifically asked for it."

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[7] Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," 272-273.
[8] Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies."
[9] Refers to a member of the post-war generation which was typified by active involvement in politics, mass protests, and calls for a dramatic shift in Germany's relationship to Holocaust memory.

What began as protest, as a counter-hegemonic accounting for the human cost of the Third Reich, has for some become a dislocated sign. Proximity to a stumbling stone has, for some, become a type of virtue signal, a flag to the rest of the world that proclaims "Look at how good and moral we are for doing the *hard work* of remembering." In this way, the *Denkmalarbeit* (memory work) that the stones were originally intended to provoke becomes concealed by the signifier. The stones, though I have described them as non-redemptive, may serve a strong moral importance for those who place them. The individual information imprinted on the stone, the bare facts of an individual's lived existence, become secondary to the notion that the stone simply exists for all to see, a sign for the moral worth of a school or city council. The name, date, and locations that are imprinted on the stone theoretically serve as a reminder of the past, an appeal to authenticity that requires a reckoning with the reality of the Third Reich. Yet, for those for whom the stone functions as a dislocated sign, the individual authenticity of the biographical information is no longer important. Indeed, the information could belong to anyone. What is important is simply that the stone exists for the public to witness.

Barbie Zelizer's work on photographs of Nazi atrocities is instructive to explain this phenomenon. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the photographs taken to document Nazi crimes were integral to shaping public consciousness about the horrors of the war. Through an appeal to authenticity, these photos functioned as witnesses to the past. Yet, over time, photos that were initially jarring, confrontational, and illuminating, became recycled, referenced, and echoed.[10] Images were hyper-circulated. Newspapers and magazines visually compared any global atrocity to the images of the camps.

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[10] Caroline Alice Wiedmer, "Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye (Review)," *Biography* 23, no. 1 (December 1, 1999): 231–35.

Through over-use and mis-contextualized use, photographs of Nazi atrocities "ceased to work as a reminder of the past."[11] Instead, such photographs become "a representation without substance."[12] The *Stolpersteine* run the same risk.

Future Directions

Despite these risks, I remain convinced of the rhetorical power of the *Stolpersteine* in their ability to evoke consciousness and foster a public memory about the horrors of the Third Reich, even in the most banal of circumstances. My own response to the monuments displays the myriad ways in which the stumbling blocks force an acknowledgment of the past and of the individuals whose lives fell victim to the terror machinery of Nazi Germany. In addition to the rhetorical contributions of my analysis as discussed earlier in this chapter, I suggest that my project also contributes to studies of public memory. As explicated in chapter 1, there is a tension within current conceptions of public memory, in which public memory is defined as that which is beyond official history and beyond the individual. Per this articulation, if an event is described by the field of history then in cannot be within the field of memory. Yet, as the *Stolpersteine* suggest, official historical or biographical data, like a name and a set of dates, can function at the level of both history *and* memory. There need not be a stark dichotomy between the two. Future research into public memory can and should attend to this nuance.

Recall Nora and Young's joint admonitions about the current trajectory of memorializing, in which the memorial site or object itself becomes the container in which

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[11] Ibid., 234.
[12] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*.

memories reside and in which we become passive beings, like a snake shedding its skin devoid of our ethical obligation to remember. Counter-monuments present a rhetorically powerful alternative to this trend by forcing both acknowledgement of this past and present Other and an ethical *Denkmal-arbeit* onto a transformed active participant. Memory and commemorative culture are constantly working in conversation with one another, as well as in conversation with history, the present, and the future. Developing proper understandings of the ways in which these linkages operate rhetorically is the task of the critic, and the rhetoric of the counter-monument provides one such revelation.

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Education

Master of Arts in Communication   **May 2019**

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Teaching Experience

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Communication Department, Wake Forest University
- Empirical Research in Communication, Spring 2019 (Dr. Marina Krcmar)
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Graduate Coach   **2017- present**

Wake Forest Debate, Wake Forest University
- Instruct the undergraduate debate team in argumentation and public speaking
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Preceptor   **2016**

University Fellows Program, Samford University
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Research Experience

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Communication Department, Wake Forest University
- Assist Dr. Marina Krcmar with independent research on moral conflict and cognitive processes
- Develop online study questionnaires through Qualtrics, recruit participants, analyze data

Conference and Workshop Presentations

- Accepted to the Rhetoric Society of America Institute seminar, "Emerging Lines of Inquiry in the New Generation of Memory Studies Scholarship," June 2019

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- "Stumbling Over the Sacred: Stolpersteine as Profane Memorial Space" paper presenter, Student Division, National Communication Association, November 2018

- "The State of Debate in Asia" discussion panelist and chair, CEDA Division, National Communication Association, November 2018

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- **Fulbright Scholarship**, 2016-2017, English Teaching Assistant in Kassel, Germany
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- **Cross Examination Debate Association "Academic All American,"** awarded in 2014, 2015, and 2016, awarded to a maximum of 30 debaters nationwide who demonstrate success in
both competitive debate and academics
- **National Debate Scholar,** *summa cum laude*, awarded in 2015 and 2016 by the by the Cross Examination Debate Association

Wake Forest University
- **Gordon A. Melson Outstanding Master Student Award**

Samford University
- **Presidential Scholarship**
- **National Merit Scholarship**
- **University Fellow Honors Program Scholarship**
- **Debate Scholarship**
- **John Howard Scholar**, representing the Howard College of Arts and Sciences in regular meetings with the Dean of the College
- **Class Honor Medals (2014, 2015, 2016) for GPA**
- **Outstanding Legal Communication Award**

<u>Service to the Discipline</u>

Reviewer for National Communication Association   **Present**
- Visual Communication Division
- Cross Examination Debate Association Division

CEDA Graduate Representative   **Present**
- Elected by CEDA member universities to represent graduate students in topic selection for the 2019-2020 season of CEDA debate

<u>Service to University</u>

Fulbright Interview Committee	**2018**
Piedmont Environmental Alliance public debate volunteer	**2018**
Wake Speaks community speech event volunteer	**2017 - present**
Every Campus a Refuge team member	**2017 - present**

<u>Grants & Scholarships</u>

Richter Scholarship, Wake Forest University	**2018**

Graduate scholarship for independent, international research
Used funds to pursue six-week independent research at memory sites in Budapest, Hungary
$3000

Alumni Travel Award, Wake Forest University   **2017, 2018**
$300 for conference travel, twice awarded

Full Tuition Scholarship, Wake Forest University   **2017 - present**
$38,650 for graduate tuition

Fulbright ETA Grant   **2016 – 2017**
English Teaching Assistant at the Heinrich-Grupe Schule

Professional Associations
- National Communication Association
- Southern States Communication Association
- Rhetoric Society of America

Languages
English, native language
German, advanced proficiency
French, conversational