

SERGIO JARAMILLO

PARTICIPATIVE MEMORIALS



& SOCIAL

MEDIA / 2018

HEAD — Geneva
Master Espaces et Communication

PARTICIPATIVE MEMORIALS
&
SOCIAL MEDIA

Thesis by

Sergio Jaramillo

Directed by

Etienne Bernard

2017-2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the many people who saw me through this paper; to all those who provided support, talked things over, read, wrote, offered comments, allowed me to quote their remarks and assisted in the editing, proofreading and design.

Special thanks to our main Professor Alexandra Midal and my Tutor Etienne Bernard.

Thanks to Vera Sacchetti, Oliver Graney, Noora Eklund and my great colleagues Pierre Barada and Damien Duparc.

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INTRODUCTION

An incessant high tide of terrorist attacks has struck the European continent during the last two years killing hundreds of people; there have been atrocities that have shaken us from the inside putting us against a political and a religious panorama, most of the times ignored. However, these tragic events bring society together to condemn terrorism and proclaim social unity and resilience meanwhile a complex process of social mourning takes place in the historical memorialization. These unfortunate deaths catch the attention of society, confront it with the vulnerability of human nature, and with time, the perception and morals and the strengths of good and bad. This creates an emotional disorder that needs to be evacuated in order to handle our grievances.

The process of mourning and memorialization of these terrorist attacks, normally private and reserved to the family circle, becomes public and highly mediatized in a world linked by the internet and social media.

Like never before, the world does not only have immediate access to the information about what has happened in the terrorist attacks mentioned above, but they have also the possibility to share their thoughts about facing these tragedies.

As the architect and urbanist Quentin Stevens affirms in *Memorials as spaces of engagement*, the processes of memorialization after a traumatic death are increasingly taking place publicly, and in the last two decades they have become as mediatized as the disasters themselves.¹

After traumatic events, the world wants to memorialize, commemorate, and subsequently heritagize and Internet and social media appear as platforms for self-expression like no others before, but, which incidence do these platforms have in the creation of spontaneous memorials in public space after the terrorist attack in Europe 2015-2016?

¹ Quentin Stevens and Karen A. Franck, *Memorials as spaces of engagement: Design use and meaning* (New York, Routledge, 2016), 7

This paper starts by introducing the definition of memorials and its typologies and some vocabulary, referred by different authors who will guide the reader across the whole text; concepts as the unsanctioned memorials or grassroots memorials as examples.

The last part of the first chapter continues with the scope of interest: The last spontaneous terrorist attack memorials in Europe, especially the one that took place in Paris 2015 as the main study case. Why the spontaneous terrorist attack memorials? Why those attacks in particular? And why are they important in the parallel analysis of the social reaction in public and digital space?

The second chapter presents a comparison between the social reaction (in a terrorist attack) before and after the development of the software and the hardware that are in charge of making the social media platforms work and letting the mobile devices' signal out of the homes. The medialization of the self explains how the current technologies allow the users of social media use those platforms in the traffic of information and self-expression. What happens when design uses those platforms as a tool

in the preservation of memory in the study cases?

From that point, the last chapter of the paper focuses the attention in the ambivalent transformation of the symbolical elements in social media once they get materialized through objects. Where do they belong? What happens when the ephemeral commemoration in public and digital space come to an end? What can we learn about the construction of further permanent memorials?

Using such a contemporary example in the analysis of how memory is built and preserved by society and especially by the design community in a digital era, among other things the paper notions to understand the role of the designer in the construction of memory in further cases.

CHAPTER 1

The memorials era

From the monument to the digital memorial

The memorials are considered objects of public commemoration and whilst aiming to preserve the historical memory, they become the evidence that remind us of an extraordinary event that took place. Memorials make us look into the past and they guide us in the present, therefore guaranteeing non-repetition in the future.

A memorial can be built for several reasons, but the scope of this paper refers to the case of death memorials after the terrorist attacks. These memorials work as testaments to lives lost, as containers of grief, facilitating the elaboration of mourning of the victims' relatives, the entire nation's and of the globalized reaction of the occidental world.

Before starting an analysis of the contemporary ways of memorials, it seems pertinent to expose the important transition of memorials in

the last half century. As the historian Kirk Savage mentioned, memorials passed to be free-standing statue monuments with no public interaction to the spatial ones created by design, where the space engage and "sought to guide visitors" through movement and sensorial experiences beyond the visual.²

Iconic examples of this transition started to increase in the early 80's with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C designed by Maya Lin and with the German research on how the victims of the holocaust should be honored in a novel way. The intention to commemorate the dark past and to recognize individual sacrifices through a non-figurative form substituting the heroic statue that covers a group of people will change the perception about what and how it is important

² Kirk Savage, *Monuments Wars : Washington , D.C The national mall, and the transformation of the memorial landscape*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009)

to remind the society, establishing a new trend in the construction of sanctioned memorials and in promoting individual reactions in society through the construction of grassroots memorials.

Sanctioned or formal memorials are officially approved by a superior authority as a private organization or by commissions created with government funds. Those memorials count on the permission or approval to be built in a specific location, with a designated budget and the intervention of professional designers, artist, architects and landscapers, usually chosen after a contest with the evaluation of art experts, historians and members of the respective organizations.

As art historian Harriet F. Senie describes in her article titled *Objects Left, Individuals Remembered: "Sanctioned memorials represent a collective idea of mourning or grievance invented by "others" and embodied in artistic, formal, and official monuments"*³

3 Harriet F. Senie, *Objects Left, Individuals Remembered: "Making Memory Real" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial In Wessel Reinink, Jeroen Stumpel, Memory & Oblivion, Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art held in Amsterdam, 1-7*

Sanctioned memorials can get by without the participation of local communities or victims' families, even if their construction is often highly demanded by them. Their construction arrives several months or even years after. According with Senie, despite the critics the existing of these commissioned and sanctioned memorials is indisputable.

Grassroots or informal memorials⁴ is a concept introduced by the ethnologist Jan Margry and the anthropologist Cristina Sánchez-Carretero in their book *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death*. They describe the grassroots as a social phenomenon by which specific individuals, groups of people or communities have built as an improvised and a temporary shrine, frequently in the place where the attacks took place.

This paper argues the importance of recognizing a step forward in the transition of the memorials in the contemporary time, as this time the changes are strictly guided by the

September (Amsterdam, Wessel Reinink, 1996) 1085-1090

4 Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2011)

most important technology advancement applied in the last century; the internet and its permanent influence on our daily life through the sweeping frames of social media, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Social media memorials allow the internet users to express their feelings of sorrow, anger, rejection and doubt in a digital format using a "share", a "retweet" or a "hashtag" publication in their respective platform.

Scope and study cases: Terrorist attack memorials

The grassroots memorials and the social media memorials are chosen among the others forms of memorials as the scope of interest in this research.

The terrorist attacks which happened in 2015-2016 in France were chosen as the main study cases among others, because tragically, they were the most extraordinary and recurrent events since the apparition of the social media and smartphone devices, which is the object of interest in this paper.

Paris is one of the most visited cities

in the world as this premise unites a general feeling of "memento mori"⁵ in the people that were living in Paris at the moment of the attack, people that have been there or are thinking of going soon. This feeling unifies reactions all over the world giving this case more visibility and content to research.

Three main cases of terrorist attacks happened in 2015 - 2016 in France:

Paris / January 7th.

Paris / November 13th.

Nice / July 14th, 2016.

The importance of these cases in the analysis of the contemporary public reactions reside not only in the similitudes between them, or in the "modus operandi"⁶ of the terrorist aggressor, but in the fact that they were committed in urban centers, where the citizen and tourist cross in their daily life. The real interest is the

5 Latin, literally «remember (that you have) to die» Memento mori, Oxford dictionaries. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/memento_mori

6 Latin, literally 'way of operating': Modus operandi, Oxford dictionaries. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/modus_operandi

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unprecedented use of smartphones transmitting everything that was happening into the social network where millions of people were following minute by minute the fatal news. It is the very first time in world history that images, videos, emergency messages and information with all the details about what happened were exposed globally in real time.

With all the eyes of the entire world in these attacks, they might be the most mediatized cases after the terrorist attack in 9/11 in New York, 2001 or the bomb attack 15/04 in Boston, 2013. Due to the accessibility of the places where the attacks were committed, the reaction in the social media, the accompaniment and the attention put in the attacks, even days and weeks after these examples, they are still making an echo in the society.

A basic description of what happened in each case is presented with a merely informative purpose:

Paris / January 7th, 2015

Two brothers attacked the headquarters of the satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo, resulting in the

deaths of 12 people and the injuring of 11 others. The responsibility of the attack was claimed by the Islamist group Al-Qaeda's branch in Yemen. Other 5 people were killed in the Hypercacher Kosher Supermarket siege, and 15 held hostages.⁷

Paris / November 13th, 2015

A series of coordinated attacks occurred in the evening in Paris and in the city's northern stadium in Saint-Denis (Stade de France). Different locations were simultaneously attacked: the stadium, a theatre, several cafes and restaurants (see below) resulting in the deaths of 130 people and the injury of 368 others. The responsibility of the attack was claimed by the Islamist State Daesh.⁸

(- Le Bataclan - La Belle Équipe -
Le Carillon - La Bonne Bière -
Le Petit Cambodge - Casa Nostra -
Comptoir Voltaire -)

⁷ BBC. "Charlie Hebdo Attack: Three days of terror." 14 January 2015.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237>

⁸ BBC. "Paris attacks: What happened on the night." 9 December 2015.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34818994>

Nice / July 14th, 2016

A cargo truck was deliberately driven into crowds of people celebrating Bastille Day during the evening on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. The entire attack took place over a distance of 1.7 kilometers off shore resulting in the deaths of 86 people and the injury of 458 others. The responsibility of the attack was claimed by the Islamist State L'EI.⁹

⁹ BBC. " Nice attack: What we know about the Bastille Day killings ". 19 August 2016 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>

The memorials era

SEE IMAGES BELOW

(A) Demonstrators make their way along the boulevard Voltaire in Paris during a unity rally following the terrorist attacks.

(B) People gather at the grassroots memorial near the Bataclan concert hall in Paris.

(C) People gather at a grassroots memorial on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice.













CHAPTER 2

Contemporary memorials

The medialization of the self: social media and smartphones

Before the internet was a part of public domain, the information that one could receive would come through in a unilateral way, which means that the news read on the newspaper, the programs watched on TV or the emissions listened to on the radio had no public contestation, answer, reaction or output. The spectator couldn't agree or disagree publicly, nor could they try to spread the information to others that surrounded us in the daily life.

However, social media makes its appearance so that the spectators see the mass media change to a bilateral way and therefore they can now participate in receiving, sending and sharing information.

A personal opinion expressed during a conversation in a bar table will

be forgotten the day after, but nowadays the same opinion can become viral- and worldwide thanks to the power of the social media buttons: Like, Share, Hashtag, Retweet, etc.

Social medias are virtual platforms or software that depend on a physical support or hardware. In the beginning of the 21st century the use of internet and social media belonged exclusively to the personal computer, limiting the use of enclosed spaces with internet connection, but with the development of the fourth screen¹⁰ technologies, social media interaction has become available to use in real time.

Thanks to an escalade of intuitive mobile devices, also known as smartphones, each year, the technologies

¹⁰ In advertising and marketing communication, fourth screen, or sometimes third screen, refers to a small portable video screen such as a mobile phone or portable media player.

Today, people use mobile devices in ways that open new possibilities for documentary practice. Fourth screen, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_screen.

become more affordable, faster and easier to use.

For example, in the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York 2001¹¹, - discussed as the most mediatized attack in the history- the images of this tragic event were global, taken from all point of views by pedestrians with their cameras or phones. However, all the footage transmitted in the news or uploaded on the internet was edited by several groups of journalist that made a call to all the citizens with audiovisual material, and turned them into a compilation video. Even if the videos were taken by the people, the edition and diffusion was controlled by the press and the government.

Twelve years later in the opposite case, the Boston marathon attack in 2013¹², is considered as one of the first times where smartphones and social media, mostly Twitter, played a crucial role in the course of the tragic event (D), not only with the video footage that helped the local police to identify and persecute the perpe-

11 <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/09/911-the-day-of-the-attacks/100143/>
12 CNN. " Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts ". 29 March 2017
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/03/us/boston-marathon-terror-attack-fast-facts/index.html>

trators of the attack (E), but also with vital information with the localization of the wounded people.¹³

New technologies and new applications allow the spread of social media all over the world and its incidence is evident in times of emergency when people have the power to gather, share, and follow information in real time with a common purpose (F).

Commemoration in social media: a design tool in the construction of public memory.

In public hands, social media is a canvas of self-expression, people share their thoughts and opinions regarding a tragic event like a terrorist attack. Some of those thoughts can be consecutively liked and shared by others, but when a person with design skills uses this canvas as a com-

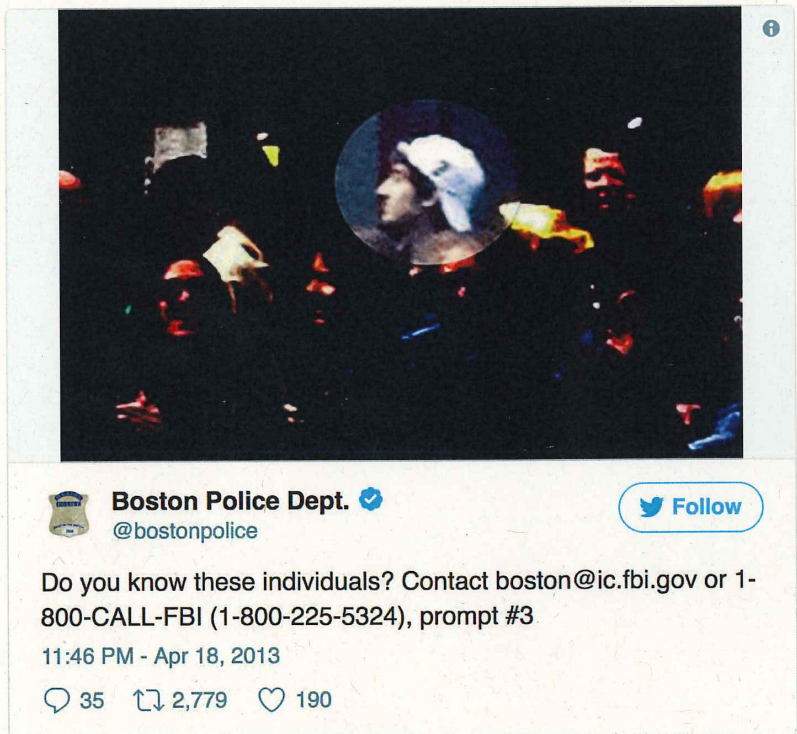
13 Mark S. Luckie. " The Boston Bombing: How journalists used Twitter to tell the story ". Blog.Twitter, 10 July 2013
https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/a/2013/the-boston-bombing-how-journalists-used-twitter-to-tell-the-story.html

Participative Memorials & Social Media

And the tweets were coming thick and fast, including this user, who was probably the first person to tweet about the Boston attacks only seconds after the explosions.



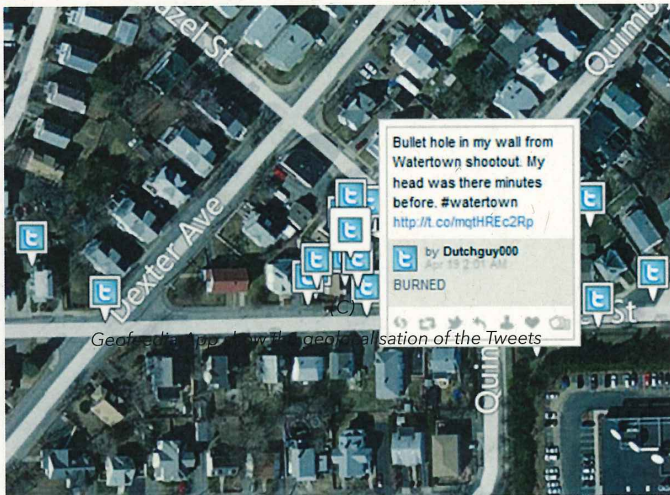
(D) One of the first Tweets about the Boston attacks



(E) Boston Police Department's Twitter account

Contemporary Memorials

Thanks to **Geofeedia**, we can show some of the geolocated Tweets around the area as the manhunt was going on.



(F) Geofeedia app, it allow the user to show their Tweets through a geolocalization platform.

munication tool, the result can turn in to a public reaction out of proportion.

The next examples correspond to the 3 study cases that are analyzed in this paper and they expose the utility of social media in designers' hands.

Paris January 7th, 2015. In the afternoon of the tragic events at Charlie Hebdo headquarters, a French art director Joachim Roncin created the image "Je suis Charlie" (G) and posted it on Twitter. The illustration has the font of the Charlie Hebdo masthead on a simple black and white image that says "je suis Charlie". His illustration, and the associated slogan was used 1.5 million times that day and about six million times over the next week on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, and the use of "Je suis" hashtags were used in further attacks around the world. Je suis Paris¹⁴ - Je suis Nice¹⁵ - Je suis Brussels.¹⁶

15 PBS. "Je suis Paris: In solidarity with France, tributes spring up across the globe". 14 November 2015
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/je-suis-paris-in-solidarity-with-france-tributes-spring-up-across-the-globe/>

16 Alex Wellman. " 'Je suis Nice' trends online as world prays for France after horror Bas-

Paris November 13th, 2015. A couple of hours after the infamous attack in the French capital, a French graphic designer Jean Jullien created the image, "Peace for Paris" (J) and posted it on Twitter and Instagram. The illustration uses the shape of the Eiffel tower inside a peace symbol with black crayon strokes against a white background. It was simple and powerful, its impact worldwide and people embraced it immediately. T-shirts, posters, hats and flags were and are still being printed by the people as the symbol that represent a world that is here and stands up for France in the fight against terror¹⁷.

Nice, July 15th, 2016. The day after the attack, Virginie Rossetti, the director of the communication department of the soccer team of the Olympique Gymnaste Club, made a call to Comback, a communication agency where she worked, to create a commemorative symbol of

17 *tille Day terrorist attack* ", *Mirror*, 15 July 2016
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/je-suis-nice-trends-online-8425693>

17 Robbie Gonzales. " Meet Jean Jullien, The Artist Behind The "Peace for Paris" Symbol ". *Wired*, 14 November 2015
<https://www.wired.com/2015/11/jean-jullien-peace-for-paris/>

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love and peace (K) for all the victims of the tragic event. A heart shape constituted by the names of the victims was presented in the social media of the team before being printed in their T-shirts for a friendly match; those T-shirts were eventually sold to collect a fund for the foundation of the families' victims and wounded people that accepted this symbol as the logo of their association "l'association de défense des victimes de l'attentat, Promenade des Angès".¹⁸

The creations of these graphic elements showed above evidence in a different level of success; the capacity of design as a tool in the construction of symbolic images that are universally understood, commonly interpreted and socially accepted. Symbols of rejection, denial and protest against the terrorist attacks offered commemoration to the victims, showing respect and sorrow to an entire nation.

Those symbols are now banners in

the public memory, they constitute as a template in the further creation of graphic elements in social media and as a new state of art in the construction of memorials. Graphic patterns are being applied by social media users when a tragic event impact the occidental world. (H) (I)

Other designs posted in the social media didn't have the same result, their lack of a clear interpretation and visual association impede public appropriation. Those finished being ignored and never reused by the social media users. (L)

¹⁸ Claire Digiacomì. " 14-Juillet: de l'OGC Nice au mémorial de la Prom; l'histoire du cœur, symbole des victimes de l'attentat ". *Huffingtonpost*, 17 July 2017
http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/07/14/14-juillet-de-logc-nice-au-memorial-de-la-prom-lhistoire-du_a_23025317/



(G) Joachim Roncin makes the first Tweet "Je suis Charlie" hours after the attack to the Magazine Charlie Hebdo.

Contemporary Memorials



Benjamin Kanarek @benjaminkanarek · 13 Nov 2015
I AM Paris and I am in Paris...



🗨️ 2 🍷 2

(HD) Social media user Tweeting “Je suis Paris” the day of the 13 November attack in Paris.



Journal ~ de ~ lili @lili_89100 · Jul 14
Never Forget #Nice #Attentat #oneyear #JeSuisNice



🗨️ 🍷

(D) Social media user Tweeting “Je suis Nice” the day of the attack at the Promenade des Anglais in Nice.



(J) Jean Jullien makes the first publication on Instagram "Peace for Paris" hours after the 13 November attack in Paris.



jean_jullien

Follow

onlytwoeyes Merci, ton travail réunit et c'est déjà énorme pour la suite

elliewew People get killed in Syria and in Iraq everyday. The organization torture and kill them, and who cares? Okay, almost 130 people was shot in Paris, and the whole world is shocked. When will people post something for all those other thousands of people who got killed?
WAKE UP

tromin Paris is a much more civilized "safe" place. Don't get angry over the world mourning unexpected terrorist attacks. @elliquew

collindaise somebody is making a buck off your work....
<https://teespring.com/peaceforparisshirt>

mariecrvts @tromin Word. No need to say more.



174,777 likes

NOVEMBER 14, 2015

Add a comment...



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J'aime Commenter Partager

167 Meilleurs commentaires ▾

24 partages 5 commentaires

Votre commentaire...

Virginie Tosser-baudino Pourquoi le clubs ne ferait pas plus de maillots que l' on pourrait acheter et l'argent récoltée pourrait aussi être reversée aux oeuvres pour les victimes et leur famille.
J'aime · Répondre · 5 · 9 août 2016, 19:11
↳ Afficher 4 autres réponses

Je suis Nice Demande faite, on attends une réponse.
J'aime · Répondre · 2 · 10 août 2016, 14:39

Carine Martinez J'aurai bien aimé en acheter un pour le petit garçon d'une des victimes mais aux enchères ça risque d'être compliqué 😞
J'aime · Répondre · 2 · 9 août 2016, 13:45

Karina Benali Bravo....L'OGC NICE !
J'aime · Répondre · 1 · 10 août 2016, 19:19

Nico Laoudoul Magnifique
J'aime · Répondre · 1 · 9 août 2016, 13:49

Hugues Roux Ils doivent porter ce coeur pour toutes les saisons pour ne jamais oublier 🙏
J'aime · Répondre · 10 août 2016, 21:24

(K) Facebook publication in the group "Je suis Nice" the day of the attack at the Promenade des Anglais in Nice.

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(L) Cindy Timmer makes a website publication "To our burning world" the day after the 13 November attack.

Commemoration in public space: the grassroots memorials

The concept of grassroots memorials, mentioned in the introduction, is as reference of the work of Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, as they define the grassroots as a new concept in memorialization and social action studies, it signifying accurately what happens nowadays after untimely and traumatic death: the creation of memorial bricolages and makeshift memorials in public space in order to achieve change. This authority shift mobilizes the involved community, which through grassroots memorials brings together individuals to participate in actions without being linked to a group-organized initiative.¹⁹ Grassroots memorials could be a new concept, but in its essence it describes a natural behavior in front of a social tragedy that can't be accurately traced in history. It's from

¹⁹ Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death at the the European Association of Social Anthropologists conference in Bristol on September 20, 2, 2006.* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2011) 10-17

its mediatization that society started to be familiarized with the form and content, accepted in a sort of pre-set collective answer to death.

With the development of the social media platforms and the fourth screen technologies, the acknowledgement of this behavior started to take character and have a direct impact in its visibility and comprehension of these spontaneous memorials.

Taking the same examples as before, the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York 2001 and the Boston marathon attack in 2013, the tremendous difference in the mediatization of the images of grassroots memorials is evident, even if the magnitude of the 9/11 is vastly superior and of that there are far more commemorations throughout history.

A grassroots memorial is created normally at sites where an extraordinary tragic event has taken place, consequently, the number of grassroots are directly proportional to the number of places transgressed in the attack.

As the anthropologist Jack Santino describes in the episode *Place, Space, and the Void*; a sort of a theatrical staging is set with random ag-

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glomeration of objects, and as it increases it gives more visibility to the audience.²⁰ They take the form of the physical environment and without any regulation of the authorities they can grow indefinitely in the space.

²⁰ Jack Santino, "Place, Space and the void" IN Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2011) 18-20

IMAGES BELOW

(M) Days after the 9/11 attack, people from around the country sent tiles decorated with messages to the families of the 9/11 victims. They were hung on a fence in New York's near Saint Vincent's hospital.

(N) Running shoes hang from a barrier at the grassroots memorial in Copley square in Boston.

(O) People congregate around pens and candles during a vigil at the Place de la Republique in Paris after the Charlie Hebdo attack.

(P) A man lights a candle at a makeshift memorial near the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, one day after the 13 November attack.

(Q) A garbage pile become grassroots anti-memorial on the spot where the Nice attacker was slain by police. People expressed their fury towards the man who killed 84 people.



God Bless
MI

FREEDOM!

Freedom
Peace
God Bless
America
Pride

Stripes
on a
STRIPES HUNT

USA!!

TRAY
PEACE

Courtesy Fleet Board

PROUD TO
BE A
FIREFIGHTER

LOVE
UNITES
US

WTC FAITH
TRUTH PEACE
US OF AMERICA
REMEMBER
LOVE TRUTH

USA

USA

GOD BLESS
THE U.S.A.

World Peace is
Still Possible

BRILEDM WI
NEVER
FORGET
9-11-01

NEVER
FORGOTTEN

USA

USA

USA



FROM CT TO

God Bless
America

THIS IS A MEMORIAL FOR THE
VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.
WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL TAKE
COURAGE, COMFORT & PRIDE
FROM IT.
TAKE THOSE THINGS - PLEASE
DON'T TAKE THE TILES.
NO ONE NEEDS A SOUVENIR
AT THE EXPENSE OF SOMEONE'S
MEMORY. THANKS

Peace to
you

PEACE

PEACE

FL
Peace Love

9-11-01
NEED NYFD NYD
ENT

PEACE

NY

Bless
America

USA
NY20

God Bless

God Bless

















CHAPTER 3

When the social media meets the grassroots memorial

From the digital commemoration to the grassroots memorial

Social media users react almost immediately to the graphic images found in the web with the same instinct the designer created them with. Public appropriation will transform these graphic images into symbolic elements and then materialize them, wear them and share them; they will be printed, painted, sculpted and shaped in papers, posters, T-shirts, teddy bears, candles, pencils, glasses, hats. Afterwards, they will be placed carefully in the public space helping in the creation of grassroots In his article *Between commemoration and Social Activism*, Santino describes this social behavior as performative, symbolic and instrumental, ultimately defining it as "ritualistic" - "symbolic public actions that are done to make a difference, to cause a change in social attitudes

and behaviors, to make something happen²¹."

A change in context and significance of these symbolic elements and objects can be observed. Symbols posted in social media transcend the vectors of cyber space and enter the physical world, whilst common objects that contain these symbols become ritual artefacts, tokens or mementos brought to light with the public peregrination to the grassroots memorials. (R) (S) (T)

Once in the grassroots memorial, the symbolical gesture of placing the mementos around others can be seen as the glue in the construction of the relationship between the mourners and the site, in which the mementos are "perceived as the embodiment of the public grief"²² materializing the presence of the giver

21 Jack Santino, "Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death." (Palgrave, New York, 2006) 5-15.

22 Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, "Death, Memory & Material Culture." (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2001)

and cutting the bounds of individual property in between.

The mementos left behind move from the individual offers to community participation, even if the offers were individual, non-planned and randomly displayed in the public space. When the memento makes part of the grassroots memorial it is the ensemble and not the unity that matters.

From the grassroots memorials to the social media

Pedestrians and visitors from all around the world passed by at the memorials daily discovering a stunning mix of different commemorations objects. As it's expected, pictures and videos of the memorials were taken around the memorials; some of them showing the whole space and some the particular objects carrying digital symbols (Image,,). And once again these pictures would go to the social media, where they'll turn into (digital) memorials themselves. (U)



(R) Candles, glasses, a music CD and a drawing with the message "Je suis Paris" on it. Grassroots memorial at Place de la Republique in Paris.



(S) Candles with the symbol "Pray for Paris" drawn on it. Grassroots memorial at Place de la Republique in Paris.



(T) Dolls, teddy bears and a French flag with the symbol of "Pray for Paris" and the message "Je suis Nice" on it. Grassroots memorial at the Promenade des Anglais in Nice.



Charlène 🌲 🍄
@Lecturesucrees

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Une année, 365 jours, 8 760 heures et plusieurs vies que nous n'oublierons jamais, en hommage aux victimes 🇫🇷 #jesuisparis #13Novembre2015



3:15 AM - 13 Nov 2016

3 Retweets 10 Likes



↻ 3

♥ 10

(U) Social media user makes a Retweet of a French flag with the symbol «Pray for Paris» for the 13 November attack anniversary

From the grassroots memorial to the archives

After an undefined time that can vary in each case, grassroots memorials are removed, destroyed or collected by legal authorities, but with the internet and social media playing a role, the visibility of these memorials has notably changed. People who participate directly (deposing material at the grassroots) or indirectly (posting elements online) seem to take their creations more seriously than before.

In the case of Charlie Hebdo, the grassroots memorials were almost completely removed and thrown away, only some objects were kept as historical documentation in the Paris archives. No evidence of their construction was left and the public opinion complained against the incompetence of the state not preserving the biggest public mobilization since world war II.

"It's time we got rid of everything and made brought the statue back to normal"²³

23 Bruno Julliard, Mayor of the 10th arrondissement, In a interview for France's Buzzfeed, Published by The Guardian : Paris to archive notes and drawings left at memorials to terrorist attacks. 16/12/2015

Ten months after the multiple attacks in Paris, several grassroots memorials were made and this time the government decided to learn from their mistake and therefore obey the social opinion.

"The operation is a first for the Archives of Paris. Most of the tributes left following the January attack against satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo have been lost. The city is now trying to gather some photos taken at the time"²⁴

For the first time in history, a team of archivist were hired to collect, preserve and archive more the 7700 objects placed in the grassroots around the city during the 2 months that followed the attacks. Those objects, memento objects that were individually collected and archived obtain the status of relic and have been preserved in the national archives of Paris. (V) (W)

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/16/paris-archive-notes-drawings-memorials-november-attacks>.

24 Associated Press, The Guardian : Paris to archive notes and drawings left at memorials to terrorist attacks. 16/12/2015

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/16/paris-archive-notes-drawings-memorials-november-attacks>.

"It would have been even sadder to throw all these messages away. They are part of Paris' history. To me it's a way to keep the victims' memory alive"²⁵

The same action was repeated by the mayor of Nice, but this time, victims' associations were claiming for a museum construction:

"Nous, on veut un musée du souvenir, la mairie nous a proposé une salle mais nous on veut qu'il y ait la mémoire de nos proches, un peu dans l'esprit de ce qui a été fait à New York pour Ground Zero, avec des écrans vidéos, des photos, l'histoire des personnes, et tous ces souvenirs et témoignages"^{26 27}

25 Raphaëlle Fontaine, student from the southwest of France, in a interview to *The Guardian*: Paris to archive notes and drawings left at memorials to terrorist attacks. 16/12/2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/16/paris-archive-notes-drawings-memorials-november-attacks>.

26 Elise Petitjean, President of de association Promenade des Anges. In a interview to the *Ouest France*, "Attentat de Nice. Les souvenirs en hommage aux victimes mis à l'abri" 09/02/2017.

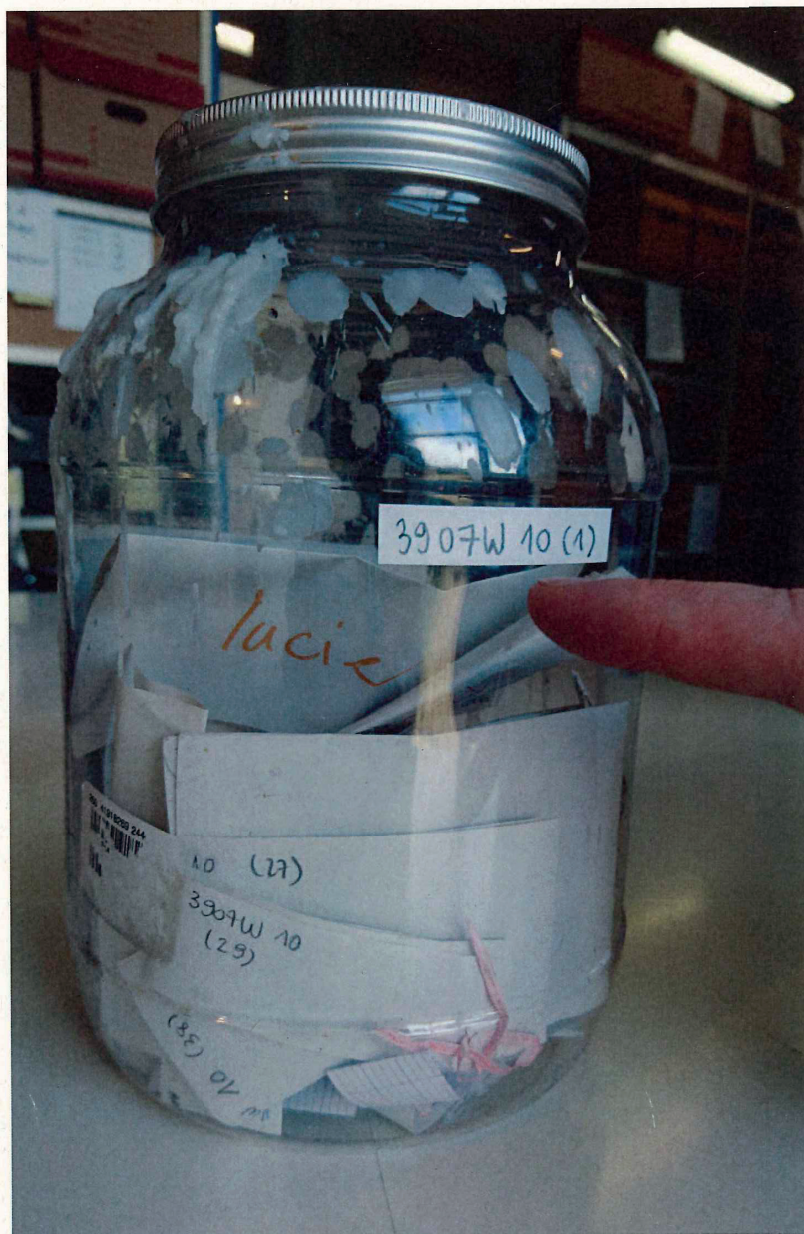
27 Translation from French to english : "We want a souvenir museum, the town hall has offered us a room but we want to have the

From the archives to the digital commemoration

Visiting this object collection in the archives wasn't an accessible work, so the mayor decided to digitalize the collection through photography and scanning to make a print edition catalogue with 1000 of the 7700 objects creating a website platform to facilitate the public consultation. (X) This result in one of the biggest catalogue of objects collected in a grassroots memorial that has been digitalized, uploaded on the internet by the enterprise Arkhênum and opened for public consultation.²⁸

memory of our loved ones, a bit in the spirit of what was done in New York for Ground Zero , with video screens, photos, the history of people, and all these memories and testimonies "

28 Hommages aux victimes des attentats de 2015, Paris Archives. <http://archives.paris.fr/r/137/hommages-aux-victimes-des-attentats-de-2015/>



(V) Object archived in the Paris archives with the serial number 3907w. It was placed as an offering for the grassroots memorial in front of the restaurant "La Belle Equipe"

When social media meets the grassroots memorials



(W) Shelves of the Paris archives containing the objects collected and catalogued from the grassroots memorials in the 13 November attack.



Hommages numérisés

[Accueil](#) > [Archives numérisées](#) > [Hommages aux victimes des](#)

Si vous êtes le propriétaire d'une de ces images et que vous ne s

Résultats 1 à 2

54 résultats - Nombre de résultats par page :



 **Comptoir Voltaire**



(X) Screenshot of the website *archive.paris.fr* designed to be presented publicly as an online memorial with more than 7700 tribute objects placed in the in Paris. They were collected and catalogued after the 13 November attack.



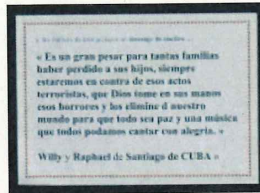
attentats de 2015 > Hommages numérisés

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0 sur 54 : **1** 2 3 > >>



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CONCLUSION

Mise en abyme

A whole cycle in the life of a digital object is complete. Designed, posted and appropriated in the social media, it becomes one of the symbols that represents and commemorates the attack and the resilience of a big part of society. Thus, the digital object turns into a tangible makeshift, during which its context and meaning change. It emerges now as a crafted offering to be placed in the grassroots memorial. Once there, this object takes another connotation and becomes a belonging to a collective rather than an individual self. While the ephemeral nature of the grassroots memorial comes to an end, the object could again take a digital form in web commemoration, either by being catalogued in public archives (physical and digital) made by official institutions, or being captured in a photo by visitors, posted and shared on the social media.

A mise en abyme is produced. The object designed as a digital memorial in social media is submitted to several changes. It's an offering, a ritual object, a memento, an archive, and it will be seen as a relic and be digitalized in social media. Paradoxically it is transformed in a memorial represented within a memorial.

A template for spontaneity

The content of a grassroots memorial is never fixed, that's why it can be considered as a spontaneous creation, however, as Connerton²⁹ explains, "a template of content and form has been frequently presented in mediatized representations of public memorials since the late 1990." The medialization of this template might indirectly create social archetypes about what is normally accepted to do in the creation of a

²⁹ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 72-104.

grassroots memorial. The human behavior is spontaneous because the contexts differ each time and the reaction at the grassroots is individual, but when the form and the content are based in a template, the reaction of public can be predicted and orchestrated.

"Someone knows not only how to start the process of memorialization, but also—being not personally or directly involved—how to continue and add materials in a way that does not subvert or threaten the meaning or dignity of an improvised memorial."³⁰

A similar reaction happened with the digital commemorations designed and mediatized by social media user after the Paris attack. The propagation of those digital symbols reached a worldwide visibility without precedent - echoed and replicated in further cases of terrorist attacks.

The digital commemorations designed in the social media after the terrorist attack in Paris are expressions of digital memorialization inscribed in the human mind and in archival memories, that have also been incorporated as a bodily practice in-

30

Ibid 72-104.

side the grassroots memorials.

Those designs are now templates, annexed as a new state of art. Designers use the power of social media to suggest new material archetypes, new ways of digital and physical commemoration.

Even if the reaction of the design community was immediate and not premeditated, it's in the developed and trained skill in communication where the designers found their vital role, unifying millions under one symbol.

Stuck in the limbo

The spontaneous character attributed to the grassroots memorials is justified by society as an authentic act of social mourning. Visitors at the memorials claim that the objects deposited in the memorials deserve and should be preserved as historical evidence of what had happened.

However, collecting and archiving the objects propose larger problematics, describes James Gardner B. and Sarah M. Henry in their book *September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy*.

"When society—certainly contemporary Western societies where mediated personal emotions are rated the highest—asks for the safeguarding of personalized public outcry, it should be the task of governments and the generic institutions to cope with such demands. But the question whether we may conserve, make available, and exhibit personal documents that are not addressed to these institutions and are meant for ephemeral purposes only is more problematical."³¹ Archiving the objects not only changes their context and meaning even more, but also the materiality is alienated from what it was and was meant to be.

But as the Free-lance curator and Professor Alexandra Midal said : "accessible doesn't mean permanent"³²

. The archives can have a fundamental importance in the historical point

³¹ James Gardner B. and Sarah M, "September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy" IN *The Public Historian* vol 24 No. 3, (California: University of California Press, 2002) 37-52

³² Ph.D. Alexandra Midal, Head Professor of the Master thesis at the MA Spaces & Communication, Design Program at the HEAD - Genève.
Feedback of an oral presentation of this paper, 12/10/2017.

of view, but they are ineffective keeping the memories alive.

Metaphorically talking: with the efforts of preserving, archiving and digitalizing the historical memory of the grassroots and social media memorials, it is considered as giving an afterlife to the objects that are saved from the hell of oblivion as they were supposed to reach the immortality, but instead these objects got stuck in the limbo of the storage shelves waiting to become relics, exhibited in a museum or being retweeted in the attack's anniversary.

Conclusion

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HEAD — Genève
Printed in Geneva,
Octobre 2017

