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ABSTRACT   German philosopher Hans Blumenberg's *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (1979) investigates how cultures rationalize their relationship to the life-world through metaphorical condensations, for which the nautical journey is a recurrent trope. Blumenberg suggests that the contraposition of shipwrecks and spectators, through its juxtaposition of peril and safety, is the primary frame of reference for the metaphorics of existence. This paper considers the thematic parallels between this seafaring-as-existence framework and memorial architecture which attempts to anchor a moment in time and space against transient beliefs and memories. It does so by looking at four separate movements which drift from universal through communal to personal, and through four corresponding built designs by Edwin Lutyens, Carlo Scarpa, Maya Lin, and Michael Arad and Peter Walker. It concludes that there is a strong resemblance between the shifts in existence-philosophy and memorial architecture.

Introduction

"Love is a journey," wrote George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), which is why language

includes phrases such as "look *how far we've come*," or "our marriage is *on the rocks*".[1] Journey metaphors, however, can be extended beyond love, to include life itself. Homer knew this when he crafted his epic poem of perseverance, *The Odyssey* (c.eighth century BCE), in which Odysseus' homecoming from the Trojan War is slowed by trials and tribulations, its opening sentence a synopsis of the whole: "Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns | driven time and again off course".[2]

The "fluidity" of existence is discussed in psychologist Mark Landau's "Using Metaphor to find Meaning in Life", when he writes that "meaning is a symbolic fiction floating above concrete reality", where metaphor "helps people to conceptualize abstractions by repurposing more concrete concepts."[3] The German philosopher Hans Blumenberg (1920–1996)[4] agrees, but alters the primacy of metaphors in his essay "Preliminary Remarks on the Concept of Reality" (originally published as "Vorbemerkungen zum Wirklichkeitsbegriff", 1974). Blumenberg writes that metaphors are not merely "the retrospective illustration of the overly abstract but the initial encouragement to engage with it in the first place", such that the study of metaphors, "opens up access to the highest degrees of abstraction."[5]

Fascinated by the communicative value of metaphors within the history of philosophy and driven by a desire for "an unburdening from the absolute",[6] Blumenberg pursued projects which evidenced the "interplays between metaphors and concepts", elevating metaphors above language tropes to a means of "grasping reality."[7] It was an endeavor which commenced with his *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie* (1960, or *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* [2010]) and continued with his work *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer: Paradigma einer Daseinsmerapher* (1979, or *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* [1997]).

One advantage of "metaphorology", or metaphorical analysis, which Blumenberg identifies in several of his works, is its ability to allow readers to "reoccupy" prior positions.[8] Put another way, metaphorical frames allow for a paradigm shift, acting as a lens through which existing material can be seen anew. Architect Stephen Holl, et al.'s, *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (2006) hints at an example when they state that water is a "phenomenal lens", a transformative medium, which holds the powers of reflection, refraction and reversal.[9]

In a similar way, within the "narrative philosophy"[10] of the work *Shipwreck with Spectator*, Blumenberg investigates the way that cultures rationalize their understanding of the world through metaphorical condensations, of which the nautical journey is a recurrent motif. He commences his work by stating "Humans live their lives and build their institutions on dry land. Nevertheless, they seek to grasp the movement of their existence above all through a metaphorics of the perilous sea voyage."[11] Blumenberg suggests "The contraposition of dry land and deep sea as the primary frame of reference for the paradoxical metaphorics of

existence" and establishes an additional configuration which offsets shipwreck at sea with an "uninvolved" spectator on land.[12] Unlike Lakoff and Johnson's notion of journey metaphors, but similar perhaps to Homer's broader intuition, Blumenberg does not see the journey itself as the metaphorical lens through which humans form their sense of self within the life-world, but rather through the wider, dynamic juxtaposition of land and sea, peril and safety, movement or floundering. As such, Blumenberg's "paradigm" of existence is both fixed and fluid, "open to multiple possible actualisations."[13]

These notions of "multiple actualisations", of "reoccupying" old positions and seeing anew the world around us through the transformative lens of water, all invite the question; can architecture be investigated afresh through Blumenberg's paradigm of "shipwreck and spectator"? This paper is premised on the conjecture that *memorial* architecture *does* have enough thematic parallels to pursue an enquiry. Memorials are built to remember those lost in a tragic event, bear witness to the circumstances surrounding that event, and help come to terms with those circumstances. As architect Sabina Tanović states in *Designing Memory* (2019), memorial spaces are "anchored in the past, dedicated to the present and directed towards the future."[14] It is this "anchorage", which attempts to fix a moment in time and space against the transience of existence (whilst being buffeted by tidal tastes, beliefs and fading memory), that lends itself to a study of the potential connectivity of philosophical concept and built form.

To investigate the compatibility between memorial architecture and Blumenberg's understanding of humanity's perception of reality, this paper looks at four case studies. The examples are from the United States and Europe, and were commissioned over a time span of approximately one hundred years. The paper aims to demonstrate the similarities that exist between changes in memorial design and four discrete stages identified within Blumenberg's paradigm. Although he does not specifically signpost the chronological phases, they are clearly identified in his text by the relative distance between the shipwreck and the spectator. From ancient Greece to the end of modernism, Blumenberg recognizes evolutionary "drifts" across the epochs, from classical aloofness and self-control to an existential entanglement that prioritizes self-actualization, as well as shifts from universal to communal, then individual.

Given the negligible amount of research that equates Blumenberg's ideologies with architecture, this paper relies on induction and personal interpretation of the material. To emphasize the primary themes of each of Blumenberg's four stages, I have titled them: From the Headland – the safety of a solid standpoint; On the Shore – dread and exaltation; Upon the Waves – the metaphysics of embarkation; and Into the Maelstrom – the fusion of meaning and being. The four case studies chosen for their thematic, rather than temporal, compatibility to

Blumenberg's stages are: Edwin Lutyens' *Monument to the Missing of the Somme* (1928-32), Thiepval; Carlo Scarpa's *Monument to the Women of Resistance* (1961), Venice; Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982), Washington; and Michael Arad and Peter Walker's *National September 11 Memorial* (2011), New York. Whilst only two of the case studies specifically include water in their designs, all of them, as built forms memorializing the deceased, represent metaphorical "shipwrecks". I argue that spectators interact with them in ways which reflect Blumenberg's paradigm.

Scholarship regarding memorial architecture is wide and deep, often reiterating dominant paradigms of "truth" and "reality". Adolf Loos' reference to a grave in *Architektur* (*Architecture*, 1910), for example, appears variously translated, but it is the alliterated version within Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966, *The Architecture of the City* [1984]) which reads most evocatively; "If we find a mound six feet long and three feet wide in the forest, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something in us says, "someone lies buried here." *That is architecture*."[15] Rossi considers Loos' burial mound an "extremely intense and pure architecture" because its origin and function are readily identifiable and universally acknowledged.[16] K. Michael Hays's article "Architecture's Appearance and The Practices of Imagination" (2016) uses the shovel-shaped aphorism differently. For Hays, the interaction with the burial mound is an "architectural recognition" which combines memories, intuition and cognition; "Through its interaction with the symbolic, the imagination gains the power to both register and overcome the limits of experience."[17]

Whilst acknowledging the logic of giving architecture primacy in architectural scholarship, this paper consciously prioritizes Blumenberg's methodological frame instead. The intention is to introduce readers to Blumenberg and his lesser-known paradigm of metaphorology, and attempt to release the example memorials from traditional readings, perhaps generating imaginative "architectural re-cognitions".

From the Headland – The Safety of a Solid Standpoint: *Monument to the Missing of the Somme* (1928–32), Thiepval

Life is not without peril, and as Blumenberg notes, in the "field of representation, shipwreck is something like the 'legitimate' result of seafaring," in which the serene sea and the happy harbor are "only the deceptive face of something that is deeply problematic."[18] Antiquity, according to Blumenberg, considered oceangoing "frivolous, if not blasphemous" as it was a deliberate transgression of the "original division" between men and gods, and as such, the sea was justified when it punished what was "overleaped by human pride."[19] As his example, Blumenberg cites the Roman poet-philosopher Lucretius (c.94 BCE) and his poem, *De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things)*, and the "pleasure" gained from observing others in peril upon the sea, whilst standing on

land. The pleasure comes not from the suffering of others but in "enjoying the safety of one's own standpoint," which Blumenberg suggests is not a literal vantage point, but a philosophical one, gained via "inviolable, solid ground" and its attendant world-view.[20] The implication is that from their privileged position, a logical witness can experience awareness of the event unfolding *and* increased self-awareness.

Lucretius suggests that humans can process tragedy through disassociation and self-control, but what if the tragedy is more significant than one "ship" and is instead, like World War I, a "bloodbath" of "unprecedented carnage"?[21] After World War I, the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), working for the Imperial War Graves Commission, visited the battlefields of the Western Front and wrote home to his wife; "What humanity can endure and suffer is beyond belief. The battlefields – the obliteration of all human endeavor and achievement [...] is bettered by the poppies and wild flowers [...] charming, easy and oh so pathetic. One thinks for the moment no other monument is needed."[22] Lutyens goes on to suggest that if a permanent monument was to be constructed it ought to be something such as "a solid ball of bronze!", as the question of what to do "is so big, so wide that the most we can do is to generalize."[23]

By "generalize," it might be supposed from his architecture that Lutyens meant "universalise," or "classicise," and that he wanted to translate the chaos of war into something geometrically simplified, even purified. Platonic spheres, set side by side, would influence the proportions of Lutyens' design for the *Stone of Remembrance* (or *War Stone*) (Figure 1).[24] The large, unadorned stone slab set upon three steps became a recurring feature in war cemeteries across the world. The form can be read as a sarcophagus in which the dead are symbolically entombed, or an altar with associations of both contemporary religious rituals and ancient sacrificial ones. Its simple shape and constant repetition suggest impenetrability and eternalism, which architect Jeroen Geurst suggests relies on an "abstract symbolic language" representing sublime splendor *and* transcendence of death, which combine to generate a paradoxical beauty from war.[25]

At the *Monument to the Missing of the Somme* (1928–32) in Thiepval, France, Lutyens designed a memorial inscribed with the tens of thousands of names of the dead and missing, with no expository text to explain the event or its broader context (Figure 2). The gigantic size of the structure, and the "blood and bandages" style of red brick and white stone, matches the scale and mood of the event that instigated it, and reiterates the enormity of lives lost and the resultant sorrow. The memorial also retains a human-scale. It is made of arches, stacked and overlapped, telescoping down in size as they approach the *Stone of Remembrance*.

Lutyens' refashioning of a classical trope "recast the older triumphal character of monumental designs into a memorial to the

Figure 1
Stone of Remembrance (or *War Stone*), by Sir Edward Lutyens. Photo by Amanda Slater. (Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0).

Figure 2
Womb-tomb arches over the Stone of Remembrance, at the *Monument to the Missing of the Somme*, Thiepval, by Sir Edward Lutyens, 1928–32.
Photo by Wernervc.
(Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-4.0)

ubiquity of disappearance and death."[26] The design was conceived of as "a fragment of an unrealized cathedral",[27] which is exaggerated by the east-west orientation and "altar" positioned to face gravestones stretching out row-on-row like vacant seats. It can also be interpreted as a ruin, which is, "according to Winston Churchill the most authentic commemorative monument to war."[28] In a lecture on funerary architecture, attended by architecture student Maya Lin, historian Vincent

Scully referred to Lutyens' design as an absolute metaphor for grief, "a passage [...] through a yawning archway [...] a gaping scream, [...] a journey to an awareness of immeasurable loss."[29]

In a later part of *De Rerum Natura,* Lucretius uses another nautical metaphor which Blumenberg translates as "Nature takes the child from the mother's body and throws it on the shores of light, just as the raging waves hurl the sailor onto land."[30] The two "beachings" imply two "gateways", birth and death, which, when blended with Lucretius' earlier metaphor, generate a notion of a life-journey which is bound to the frisson of witnessing a shipwreck in slow motion. Lutyens' memorial, with its combination of "yawning arches" and "sarcophagus," could be seen to represent life's womb-tomb gateways, aligning those who approach and recede from the structure with a universal rite of passage.

Within William Golding's novel *The Spire* (1964), a cathedral is described as "the great house, the ark, the refuge, a ship to contain all these people and now fitted with a mast [the spire]."[31] Conflating Guerst, Churchill, Golding, Lucretius and Blumenberg, Thiepval becomes a ruined cathedral-ark, a colossal shipwreck, its giant, classically austere form visible from a great distance. Alternatively, it could also be seen as a promontory, a land mass rising from a sea of green, solid ground available for self-awareness. Its "uplifting" scale and lack of textual descriptors creates an aloofness that keeps visitors "unimperiled" and positions the memorial like a traditional statue on a plinth, potentially converting the visitor into "a passive recipient of visual information."[32] In a similar manner to the wedding guest in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), who listens incredulously to a lone survivor's tale, removed by spatial, temporal, and emotional distance, the visitors to Thiepval must also surmise the symbolic significance of what they are being told, and the consequences of that telling, relative to themselves.

On the Shore – Dread and Exaltation: *Monument to the Women of Resistance* (1961), Venice

The carnage of World War II was not "unprecedented", and in many instances the names of deceased soldiers were added to existing memorials.[33] In Melbourne, Australia, the neoclassical *Shrine of Remembrance* (1934), constructed to honor those who died in WWI, was retrofitted to include a paved forecourt, sculptural column and Eternal Flame for the dead of WWII.[34] Throughout America, a "living memorial" model was adopted in which civic infrastructure was established in place of memorials, functional testimonies that simultaneously recognized the soldiers' service and serviced the living, while battleships and submarines were "saved from scrap piles and turned into tourist attractions."[35]

The approach was pragmatic, but also reflected a shift in the perceived value of monuments and monumentality. Modernism had become increasingly prevalent during the interwar years in both design

and discourse, and whilst monumentality *per se* was still accepted, new humanistic forms were being favored over designs such as Thiepval. In *The Need for a New Monumentality* (1944) architectural historian Siegfried Giedion stressed that neoclassical designs were banal and undirected, and through their indiscriminate use of old shapes "they had lost their inner significance, they had become devalued, mere clichés without emotional justification."[36] He still acknowledged a future for monumentality that provided society with an "expression of their aspirations,"[37] provided it took a different form to the "pseudo-monumentality" he felt was wrongly proliferated.[38] Similarly, Lewis Mumford's essay *The Death of the Monument* (1937) recognized the impulse to create monuments; "Men die; the building goes on."[39] However, he too believed that recent social changes required altered built forms; "Instead of being oriented toward death and fixity, we are oriented toward life and change: every stone has become ironic to us for we know that it, too, is in process of change, like the 'everlasting' mountains."[40]

Similarly, Blumenberg's recounting of seafaring-existence metaphors suggests that a shift took place in which life, and the living, began to take precedence. For example, the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) believed that remaining forever in port was not realistic, that any pleasure derived from observing disaster was related not to self-possession but self-preservation, and any existential triumph was less about logic and more to do with humanity's curious nature through which even tragedy could serve as a learning opportunity.[41] The Enlightenment considered shipwreck "the price that must be paid"[42] when seeking (commercial) success, and as a means of avoiding its opposite, "complete calming," which equated a becalmed mind to a becalmed boat, and was seen as a form of failure.[43]

Whilst the Second World War was similar to the First in many ways, there was also one significant difference – the extreme loss of civilians. After the war, reports and images of Nazi persecution circulated, revealing the gruesome details and "numbing violence" enacted against one group in society by another, prompting designers to seek out forms that gave primacy to psychological damage and notions of "alienation, and concepts such as negative, voided and wounded space."[44] Many designs were proposed to honor civilian casualties but not all of them were realized.

In 1958, an international competition was held to design a memorial at Auschwitz. It was won by a Polish team, headed by architect Oskar Hansen, for their proposal *The Road*, a 70 m wide, 1 km long stripe of black tarmac running diagonally through the prior concentration camp.[45] The design floundered because it was too expensive and destructive to realize, but also because the deliberately open form was not supported by Auschwitz survivors who found the proposal too abstract and at odds with their lived experience.[46] Whilst Lutyens' metaphorical "passage of loss" could also be seen as a "journey to

Figure 3
*Monument to the Women of
Resistance*, Venice, seen
from the water, by Carlo
Scarpa and Augusto Murer,
1961.
Photo by Jacqueline Poggi.
(Openverse, CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0)

healing," Hansen's road-to-nowhere began and ended arbitrarily, offering nowhere to congregate, rest, reflect or obtain closure. Louis Kahn's proposal for the *Monument to The Six Million Jewish Martyrs* (1967), designed for Battery Park, New York, also failed to proceed. The design's nine blocks of ghostly glass echoed, exaggerated and effaced the sacrificial-altar of Lutyens' *Stone of Remembrance*, and predated Peter Eisenman's concrete *stelæ* at the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005). Kahn's proposal was criticized as too calm and ephemeral for a genocide memorial, inadequate in recognizing survivors' material humiliation and suffering.[47]

One postwar memorial to citizen-victims which was realized was the *Monument to the Women of Resistance* (1961) (Figure 3). Created to recognize the Italian women who died struggling against Nazi-fascism, it is located on the water's edge in the Biennale Gardens in Venice and was designed by architect Carlo Scarpa (1906–1978) to support a sculpture of a reclining woman by Augusto Murer (1922–1985). Positioned in the liminal zone between land and sea, the memorial is a series of tessellated, cascading stone blocks, which converts Lutyens' *Stone of Remembrance* into "stepping stones," culminating at the lowest point with the sculpture's platform below the waterline. There is no text to tell visitors to what extent the women suffered or succeeded, or in what numbers, and the hiding of the figure's sculpted face, beneath trailing hair and an extended arm, further emphasizes their anonymity in life and death. The juxtaposition of abstract architecture and figurative sculpture combined with the low, splayed wall that separates the memorial from viewer, creates a "look-don't-touch" esthetic which converts the assemblage into an open-air museum piece. The spectator to this "shipwreck" is thus drawn in, but only so far; distance is maintained spatially and thematically.

Blumenberg writes that the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) saw shipwreck as an extension of man's egotism, where man is always "a vanishing nothing"[48] compared to nature, always headed toward "the total, inevitable, and incurable shipwreck: death."[49] Whilst there was an inevitably to such wreckage, Schopenhauer explicitly rejected gaining pleasure from it, stating it was evil to see others suffer when one remembers personal suffering. He did, however, acknowledge such suffering might initiate the Sublime, a feeling of dread and exaltation which combined to make the sailor in a storm appear stoic.[50]

Scarpa's memorial design could be seen to be equally pessimistic and sublime. It converts the park promenade into an eroded edge where tidal lagoon water laps against the denuded, moss-covered stone and causes what Codello and Dezio call "a continuous, silent interference."[51] Water thus becomes a constant undermining that replicates the actions of the partisan women. The scene remembers the dead but remains eternally alive, stationary yet subject to constant motion. Throughout the cycles of the day, the woman's statue is repeatedly submerged and dried out, drowned and saved. Residing in this purgatory, she becomes the physical manifestation of Auschwitz's "grey zone", which Italian author Primo Levi describes in *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986) as a place where distinctions between danger and safety, defeat and success, victims and survivors, are blurred by situation and grief.[52] In the same way that it is impossible to separate solidity from liquidity at the tideline, so too separating event from witness, witness from participant, and self from sense-of-self was becoming slippery in both philosophy and architecture.

Upon the Waves – The Metaphysics of Embarkation: *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982), Washington
As if to illustrate the above point, the epigraph of Blumenberg's book *Shipwreck with Spectator* is "*Vous êtes embarqué* – Pascal," which Blumenberg later translates as "you are embarked."[53] It was written by the French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) as part of his "wager" regarding the contemplation of God's existence. Blumenberg uses it as evidence reiterating Montaigne's notion that remaining safely in the harbor is no longer an option and writes, "The metaphorics of embarkation includes the suggestion that living means already being on the high seas, where there is no outcome other than being saved or going down, and no possibility of abstention", and by extension, "we are shipwrecked."[54] Now neither self-possession nor self-preservation matters because both "self-deception and self-assurance [were] long since smashed to pieces."[55] The idiom of being "all at sea" demonstrates the connectivity between literal embarkation and metaphorical puzzlement, and indicates an aspect of the shipwreck-spectator condition which is at work here.

In a similarly confrontational and inescapable way, the Vietnam War was the first battle regularly televised to homes around the world. The war was generally conceived of as a "lingering national nightmare" and "much-hated war of defeat", which disrupted the regular narrative of American military triumphalism.[56] Where previously spectators were either embroiled in the conflict firsthand or gained information from remote sources, now spectators were immersed in the action even when located remotely. The spectator was now side by side with tragedy, as the reader is when reciting Felicia Hemans' poem *Casabianca* (1826), placed upon the waves watching someone die just out of reach. The poem starts, "The boy stood on the burning deck, | Whence all but he had fled," and ends with the boy, waiting for orders that will never come, perishing with his "faithful heart."[57] Spectators of the Vietnam War were now uninvolved yet complicit, as previous nationalistic ideologies, which had typically rested on solid ground, were replaced by surging doubt and uncertain purpose.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) went beyond embarkation, implying that every journey included the inevitability of wrecking, given that constant turmoil was a permanent condition of life. Blumenberg calls this "an epigonic form of the ancient *ataraxia*: shipwreck sought out and demanded, as a test of an unbreakable well-being," part of what will later be called "heroic nihilism."[58] Nautical metaphors are recurring motifs in Nietzsche's work, with humanity riding the turbulent waves of society, living a life permanently imperiled, existing in a perpetual cycle of becoming. For example, in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1883, or *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*), Nietzsche has Zarathustra say he is fond of the sea, "and even favor[s] it most when it angrily contradicts" him, and that he shares the seafarer's "joy of searching" that "drives sails toward the undiscovered."[59] Nietzsche creates dialectical struggles between the distressing and the marvelous, not so much annihilating truth and meaning as unmooring them from a Classical resoluteness and a fixed reading, giving them the freedom to float.

Such freedom generates an ambiguity that can be conceptually liberating or confusing. The *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982) in Washington D.C. is a case in point. In 1979, Jan Scruggs, a returned Vietnam veteran, began raising funds for a memorial that would emphasize healing and reconciliation for veterans who were struggling to readjust to life in the "real" world.[60] A design competition was held, and Yale University student Maya Lin won with a design which was considered controversial due to its unfamiliar appearance. Her competition drawings (Figure 4) have a nautical appearance with their watery hues, a plan which appears as a boat's prow in an aqua sea and an elevation (with the Washington Monument in the background) which could be read as a lighthouse on a coastline. It is the design's metaphorocity and echoes of Blumenberg's writings, however, that are addressed here.

Figure 4
Vietnam Veterans Memorial,
Washington, competition
entry, 1980/1.
Drawn by Maya Lin.
(Wikimedia Commons)

Lin conceived of her design as a desire to "cut open" the earth with "an initial violence that heals in time but leaves a memory, like a scar."[61] The result was an abstract design of two triangular retaining walls of polished black granite, V-shaped in plan and tapering off into the landscape in elevation. Lin's design was unadorned, including nothing but the names of the dead and missing etched into the stone, in the order of their demise, running in a loop around the reader, apex to apex.

The design was the antithesis of traditional monuments. It was black, the color of mourning, whilst other monuments in Washington were white. Instead of thrusting upwards, it was buried, and whilst Scarpa's design had a resonance with pedestals and plinths, Lin's design was invisible from some viewpoints. Although it was much smaller in scale

than Thiepval, some thought it still risked being overbearing, replacing the field of tombstones with what historian Harriet Senie called an "aggregate tombstone",[62] a design in which "the distinction between heroes and victims has been eradicated."[63] Interpreting its minimalist "blankness" relied on individual connotative assumptions rather than traditional cues, and placed "the burden of creating meaning on the visitor rather than the monument."[64] As a result, many interpretations were negative. Vietnam veteran Tom Carhart publicly called Lin's design "a black shaft of shame thrust into the earth," whilst privately he likened it to "an open urinal."[65] For many, the design became an anti-monument. Rather than adopting historical memorial strategies, Lin's design *inverted* tradition.

The negative assessment was exacerbated by the lack of affirmative symbols of heroism such as motivational messages, nationalistic flags, or patriotic statues – all of which were later added to appease critics. Additional script was used as an epilogue and prologue near the fold of Lin's "open-book" design, and a flagpole was installed nearby. The sculpture by Frederick Hart, entitled *The Three Servicemen* (1984), was placed in an adjacent garden with the sculpted men facing the wall, initiating a discourse between elements similar to the relationship created between Scarpa's disassembling-order and Murer's cyclically drowning-saved woman. Hart saw the wall "as a kind of ocean, a sea of sacrifice that is overwhelming and nearly incomprehensible in its sweep," his statues were placed "upon the shore of it", and as such "The relationship of Hart's sculpture to the Wall has often been interpreted in terms of the three figures gazing at their ultimate fate."[66]

Once Lin's design was complete, the controversy receded and the wall became the most visited memorial in Washington, effective because of its "conversational and reflective capacities."[67] The wall's black granite acts as a mirror, reflecting visitors' faces overlayed upon the names of the soldiers, thus merging the living with the dead, and conflating loss with memory and self. The effect completely collapses the distance between "them" and "us," "shipwrecked" and "spectator." As visitors stare at the wall, it stares back, and visitors are faced, literally and metaphorically, with the consequences of war and their own mortality. This echoes Shakespeare's play *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* which notes, "For death remember'd should be like a mirror, | Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error" (Act 1, Scene 1). Furthermore, the recessed names are tactile, making visitation visceral, allowing visitors to "handle" their grief as the wall "impresses" upon them, potentially satisfying their need for an experience sought out and demanded. Erika Doss notes that the word "affect" is derived from the Latin word *affectus*, "meaning 'passion' and 'disposition of mind,' and also 'to afflict' or 'to touch,' 'affect' is perhaps best understood as physically expressed emotion or feeling", and well describes the interactive influence of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*.[68]

Tanović writes that Lin's memorial "is a careful balancing act between witnessing trauma and its memorialization in a permanent form that is at once intrusive and organically embedded into the surroundings."[69] Such a balancing act is recalled in the writing of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) whom Blumenberg cites in regards to aging and the value of time: "like the shipwrecked, we must hold tight to the plank that saved us, and put our precious lost baggage out of our minds."[70] When Goethe refers to the plank in a separate correspondence, however, he notes that it only has room for one.[71] If memorials do help visitors let go of their "baggage," it also needs to be remembered that the maneuvering places them in a position where they must face their mortality alone.

Into the Maelstrom – The Fusion of Meaning and Being: *National September 11 Memorial* (2011), New York

Edgar Allen Poe's short story *A Descent into the Maelstrom* (1841) is told on the summit of a mountain by a prematurely old man who describes how he and his two fisherman brothers were pulled into a gigantic whirlpool. The oldest brother, clinging steadfastly to a ring-bolt on deck, goes down with the boat as it is sucked into the abyss. The youngest brother lashes himself to the mast, as did Ulysses to survive the Sirens and the English painter Joseph M. William Turner (1775–1851) to outlast a gale. Whilst Turner's experience reputedly inspired the painting *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbor's Mouth* (1842),[72] Poe's character drowns when the wind rips the mast from its housing. The middle brother, respectful of the beautiful chaos, is overcome by a calm curiosity which allows him to scrutinize the patterns of the whirlpool. He recognizes his best chance of survival is to tie himself to a buoyant barrel and ride the swell up and out. Whilst the writer-narrator suggests that passion can be overcome with logic and that it is possible to scientifically distance oneself from tragedy (in the manner of Lucretius and Montaigne), another interpretation is also valid, in which the reader-listener is converted into an imperiled sailor, drawn into the vortex of terror, helpless against its narrative pull (caught in the wake of Pascal, Nietzsche and Goethe). The effect of Poe's blinding, deafening, and strangling wind, waves and dread, relies on hyperbolic language and the joy of experiencing fear in spectatorship. The distance between event and audience is collapsed, such that humanity is not simply embarked, they are in the maelstrom, and they enjoy it.

In Blumenberg's *Shipwreck with Spectator*, he suggests that meaning and being became fused with chaos and uncertainty, noting Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt's (1818-1897) reflection that "As soon as we rub our eyes, we clearly see that we are on a more or less fragile ship, borne along on one of the million waves that were put in motion by the revolution. We are ourselves the waves."[73] Blumenberg writes that such a metaphor appears, "if we did not know better, [as the] last

154

Shipwreck, Spectatorship
and Self: A Metaphorical
Reading of Memorial
Architecture
Linda Buhagiar

possible transformation of the seafaring metaphor, along with its denaturalization through the elimination of the dualism of man and reality [...] The metaphor that has been pushed to the point of paradox is supposed to illustrate the epistemological position of the historian of the revolutionary period."[74] The spectator no longer stands on certain ground, can gain neither distance nor perspective, is beyond even the gusts of passion that move them, as everything in the life-world becomes conjoined. In the maelstrom of existence, everyone acts as the wind and the waves, both directing and being directed by the ripple-effects of their sociocultural and spatiotemporal surroundings. Such a scenario, Blumenberg states, is evidence of the near impossibility of the historian's role.[75]

A revolution is a violent form of transformation, initiated by internal unrest and driven by an "us" and "them" mentality. In similar but different ways, an act of terrorism also attempts to initiate a violent transformation, but simplistic understandings of "us" and "them" are often dissolved; "they" are not only amongst "us," they *are* us – and yet – they *are not*. Terror can come suddenly from anywhere and seemingly out of nowhere. The events of September 11, 2001, for example, were witnessed across the globe, uncensored, in real-time, from multiple, first-hand perspectives. Whilst selected scenes of the Vietnam War had been broadcast on television news reports, visual and oral accounts of the Twin Towers' collapse were digitally, immediately and eternally, *everywhere*. Moreover, the wreckage was more than merely representational, it became the embodiment of tragedy for spectators, regardless of their location. Linguist George Lakoff described the image of the plane going into the South Tower as "a bullet going into someone's head [...] It was an assassination. The tower falling was a body falling. The bodies falling were me, relatives, friends."[76] Such a "personal" attack swept away any vestige of "safe ground," people were literally "floored," and the West's unshakeable faith in itself was replaced with doubt. Whilst the event took place in America, the "fall-out" was far more expansive, generating significant ramifications for countries worldwide, both allied and oppositional.

After some time trying to determine how best to proceed with the site of the old World Trade Center, or Twin Towers, a public competition was won by Daniel Libeskind, whose masterplan included elements titled "Wedge of Light," "Park of Heroes" and "Freedom Tower".[77] Whilst postmodernism had introduced alternate modes of reading history through frames including feminism, postcolonialism and multiculturalism, the development of the *"Ground Zero"* site did not seem to follow suit. As Senie writes, "Gone are the [proposed] International Freedom Center, [...] and any consideration of the Arabic neighborhood known as Little Syria that once flourished in and around the site."[78] Instead, life appeared restructured around fear and surveillance, later evidenced by the future museum entry, "defined by the now-routine searches of bodies and bags

prompted by 9/11."[79] The opportunity to present expanded fields and multiple perspectives of the event were sucked in upon themselves, seemingly condensed by public opinion and political correctness, until only one apparent reading resurfaced, sole voice of the maelstrom, which stated unequivocally that victims are heroes.

A separate competition for the *National September 11 Memorial (2011)* was won by architect Michael Arad (later joined by landscape architect Peter Walker) for the entry *Reflecting Absence* (2004). The name of the memorial, compared with its predecessors, suggests a shift in emphasis. At Thiepval, the "missing" are remembered, as are the "resistant women" victims in Venice, whilst the "veterans" of Vietnam are honored in Washington. In New York, the title "reflecting absence" is more metaphorical than literal, with an ambiguous focus that could be alluding to lives lost, collapsed buildings, or a broader sociocultural loss. Similarly, how the names of the victims are recorded also reveals a shift. For Lutyens' memorial, victims' names were sorted alphabetically by birth-surnames, whilst for Lin's memorial they are ordered by death-dates, and for Scarpa's memorial they remain nameless and numberless. At the *National September 11 Memorial,* designer Michael Arad wanted names to appear randomly to reflect the "haphazard brutality of the attacks."[80] Families of the deceased protested, however, and a computer programme converted personal requests into "meaningful adjacencies" to group friends, relatives, and colleagues together.[81] The names, etched into bronze parapets surrounding the water features are heated in winter and cooled in summer to increase their tactility.[82]

This tactility is part of a wider emphasis in "experiential" memorials. Doss writes that visitors to memorials and museums no longer want information alone, they "demand" designs which facilitate "affective sensibilities" and provide "altered experiences."[83] For example, at The *New England Holocaust Memorial* (1995) in Boston, six glass towers, etched with the tattoo-numbers of Holocaust victims, have steam rising from their bases. The architect Stanley Saitowitz intended the fog to convert the columns into chimneys and simulate human breath passing up to heaven.[84] Images of people in the haze appear as if they are trapped inside miniature gas chambers. The trend to reprioritise visitors over victims, make them participants and generate a sense of reciprocity, is part of what Doss calls "expectations of exchange" which she suggests are inevitable in a capitalistic system.[85] It forms part of what Tanović calls "the lucrative business of memory tourism."[86]

Whilst immediacy rewards visitors with a memorable experience, by pseudo-shipwrecking the spectators, there is a risk that the original event being remembered is forgotten. The spectator taking primacy over the material is similar to the situation identified by semiologist Roland Barthes in his essay *Death of the Author* (1968): "Classical criticism has never been concerned with the reader; for that criticism, there is no other man in literature than the one who writes," whilst for modernity, the

reader holds sway, and "the birth of the reader must be requited by the death of the Author."[87] That original messages might be overwritten by the creation of new messages is evidenced by the (week-long) online experiment at Yolocaust.de, in which German-Israeli activist-artist Shahak Shapira downloaded "disrespectful" selfies taken at Berlin's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005), and superimposed the posing people onto photos of Jews in WWII extermination camps, thereby forcing viewers to reconcile gravity and levity through juxtaposition.

If immersive experiences make visitors feel ethically involved or accountable, then perhaps such an approach is justified. Doss, however, suggests that the increase of memorials, an activity she calls "memorial mania," is not due to an altruistic recompense, but to "heightened anxieties" and "adamant assertions of citizen rights and persistent demands for representation and respect" which tend to favor "individual memories and personal grievances."[88] The trend suggests that self-control, self-preservation and self-reflection have all been replaced by self-satisfaction, even at sites designed to remember the suffering of others.

As a counter-argument to this narcissistic trend, however, Blumenberg cites French philosopher Voltaire's (1694–1778) entry in his philosophical dictionary for *Curiosity* (1764), in which Voltaire says he and "all my fellow gawkers"[89] are driven by a primal curiosity, which encourages people to the shore to watch a ship in peril or climb a tree to witness a hanging, suggesting curiosity is "not a human passion but one we share with apes and puppies."[90] Blumenberg appears to concur when he writes "Man is a being so given to rubbernecking that, in his curiosity, he even forgets to be concerned about himself."[91] To what extent "gawkers" are "rewarded" with heightened experiences, however, cannot always be predicted or controlled.

Whilst the water features at the *September 11 Memorial* (Figure 5) were intended to mute city noise and create a contemplative space, many visitors heard instead the noise of the disaster replicated. Harriet Senie cites author David Simpson as saying, "This is a monument to violence, and its effect is terrifying ... The water roars and deafens – like jet engines up close."[92] Similarly, she cites essayist Adam Gopnick's belief that "The rush of pouring water and its accompanying roar powerfully suggests the falling of the towers, its constant disappearance a symbolic visual and aural reenactment that is felt viscerally."[93] Lastly, she cites architectural critic Phillip Kennicott who observed, "We suffer the trauma again and again in a way that inflates our sense of participation in it. This isn't history, it's a spectacle, and it engulfs us, makes us part of it, animating our emotions as if we were there, again, watching it all unfold."[94]

This "animated unfolding" is akin to Blumenberg's theoretical examination of objective distance versus living engagement, which seems to arrive at a similar position to German philosopher Paul Lorenzen
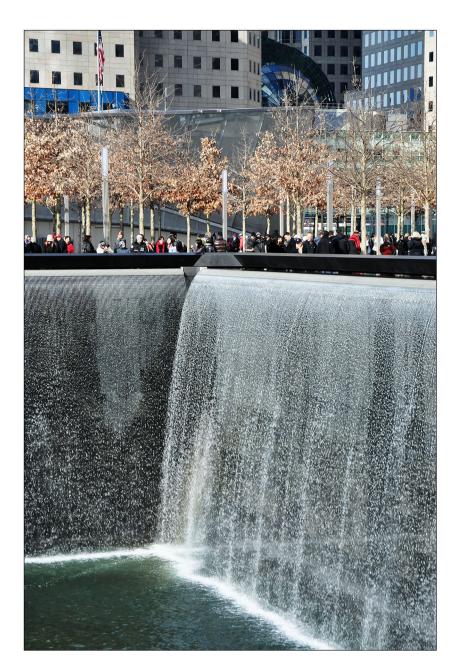
Figure 5
Cascading water at the
September 11 Memorial, New
York, by Michael Arad and
Peter Walker, 2011.
Photo by George Rex.
(Openverse, CC-BY-NC-2.0)

(1915-1994). Lorenzen (paraphrased by Blumenberg) suggested that language is like a ship built at sea by our ancestors, "who presumably were good swimmers [and] built a raft then slowly improved it until we have the comfortable ship we have today," and that it is up to each new generation to maintain this "mothership of natural language," always in motion, without dry land to rest upon.[95]

The notion of perpetual alteration is part of the ever-changing perspectives and the cyclical nature of life, which often returns to where it began. For example, *The Sphere* (1971) sculpture by German Fritz

Figure 6
The Sphere, Battery Park,
New York, Fritz Koenig, 1971.
Photo by Tim Alosi.
(Openverse (wordpress.org),
CC-BY-NC-ND-2.0).

Koenig (Figure 6) is a 20-tonne ball of bronze, 5 meters in diameter, which originally stood between the Twin Towers in New York and was partially crushed by the falling towers on September 11. Rescued from the rubble and relocated (though not restored) to a nearby park in 2017, the ruined bronze ball acts as an unofficial memorial to resilience.[96] It brings this article back full circle, as it were, to Lutyens' initial, intuitive response to overwhelming loss; the abstract evocation of "a solid ball of bronze!"

Conclusion
This article has demonstrated, albeit through a narrow sample, that memorial designs can be seen to have shifted from valorization to vocal victimhood, changing in form from light to dark, surface to void, present

to absent, phallus to funnel. So too their effect could be said to have altered, flowing from uplifting to depressing, objective to subjective, visual to tactile, existential to experiential. Such "slippage" was perhaps the logical path for an architectural form that emphasizes a conscious awareness of life, death, and the world around us. Placing ourselves at the center of the meaning of that existence was also potentially inevitable since memorials *remind*, but the visitors do the *remembering*. Such an ego-centric version of memorials need not, however, be the endpoint. The phenomenology of Being need not conclude with self-actualization but might initiate a self-effacement. It might, like the tide, one day roll back and reemphasise not the "Being," but the "being-in-the-world" aspect of existence and consider a bigger picture of global difficulties and the importance of collective responses, encapsulated in built form.

Whilst Blumenberg cites the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) description of philosophy as "doubt in a hundred forms" and his notion that we are either wrecked or what we can salvage is hardly worth talking about,[97] Blumenberg does not seem to agree. Instead, he ends his work suggesting that even the modernist, who ignores home and heritage to "found his life on the naked nothingness of the leap overboard,"[98] will find the sea is not empty, but full of material. This prompts him to ask, where does it come from, and replies with a question-answer; "Perhaps from earlier shipwrecks?"[99]

Even if the past shapes the future, there remains a question of authorship and control. To what extent is humanity steering the "vessel" of culture that is riding society's "waves"? Tanović believes that memorial architecture is "a collective process and therefore a demonstration of human progress," a means of reasserting solidarity and compassion over violence and atrocities, and as such it will always have positive, transformative potential.[100] That collective progress and the built forms it generates, however, remain shaped by the violence and atrocities; life shapes architecture as much as architecture shapes life. The codependent relationship generates a causal illusion, or *epiphenomena,* which philosopher Nassim Taleb describes: "When you spend time on the bridge of a ship […] with a large compass in front, you can easily develop the impression that the compass is directing the ship rather than merely reflecting its direction."[101]

The relationships which Blumenberg identified between shipwreck and spectator, self and sense-of-self, appear applicable to a speculative evaluation of memorial architecture. However, it has to be noted that the examples cited in this article were explicitly selected to magnify that relationship, a contrivance which may undermine the correlation. It is still reasonable to suggest, however, that the drift between architecture and philosophy, from classical to modern, universal to personal, aloof to involved, do run on similar currents, albeit not concurrently.

Perhaps the most significant realization of this research is the notion of motion. Architectural movements are evidenced by repeated

160

Shipwreck, Spectatorship
and Self: A Metaphorical
Reading of Memorial
Architecture
Linda Buhagiar

tendencies that generate a stable ideology. Architectural movements are, ironically, fixed. Moreover, as Doss notes, memorials are designed for affect. Monuments are meant to be moving. Memories that are supposed to be fixed are also in motion. Each spectator brings a palimpsest of recognition and imagination, history and intuition, as their self and "the other" come face to face at a particular sociocultural moment in time.

Blumenberg's paradigm endorses the need to bear witness to major upheavals. The perspectival shifts between the spectator and the shipwreck, which Blumenberg discloses, reiterate that history, memory, and meaning are never fixed, closed, or everlasting. His paradigm *underlines* the apparent fixity of memorials as a locus of centralized memory and *undermines* that manifestation by highlighting the fluidity of interpretative meaning. Future research could benefit from Blumenberg's sea-faring-as-existence paradigm by investigating memorials for actual shipwrecks, comparing memorials designed for naval wars against those for land battles, expanding to include examples outside of the western framework, or addressing impromptu and temporary memorials. Alternatively, the model could be extended from the past into the future, developing practical implications including the design ideas for contemporary memorials.

In broader terms, the experimental application of Blumenberg's paradigm reminds researchers, who are themselves world-spectators, of the limitations of assigning singular readings to architectural forms and functions. His metaphorical condensations encourage rhetorical abstractions which challenge the collective understanding of dominant narratives, refracting and reversing prior positions. Whilst metaphor is designed to make the unfamiliar familiar, Blumenberg's nautical frame of enquiry can be used in reverse to make the familiar unfamiliar again and encourage researchers and designers to see historical architecture through fresh eyes. Even without ships and shipwrecks, ports and embarkation, the sea itself has metaphoricity enough: it divides and unites, destroys and heals, is variable and eternal. (Re)viewing memorial architecture through the liquid-lens of seafaring suggests new ways to reoccupy existing architectural analyses, and demonstrates that meaning derived from our interactions with architecture can be both anchored *and* floating, depending on whether our perspectives are framed or freed.

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Shipwreck, Spectatorship
and Self: A Metaphorical
Reading of Memorial
Architecture
Linda Buhagiar

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