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## Spaces of the Tragic: Modern Dramatic Tragedy and Contemporary Memorial Design

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# Spaces of the

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## **Spaces of the Tragic :** Modern Dramatic Tragedy and Contemporary Memorial Design

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May 13th, 2022

# ces of the *Tragic*

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# Abstract

Humans use narrative to understand the world around us. At early ages we are exposed to storytelling with variable intent, from cautionary tales to the inspirational and everything in between. The dialectic strength of narrative mediums is well-known and well-studied. Theatre is one of the world's oldest enduring forms of storytelling and has a strong ability to reflect and adapt with cultures as they develop, as a means of commentary and cultural reflection.

Architecture shares theatre's ancient roots and has always been an important method of communication and expression. However, its tactics have historically been less narrative-centric than theatre and the other storytelling mediums. A notable exception to this rule is the memorial typology (which historically could encompass monuments and tombs) which without fail is tied implicitly to a narrative, whether known or not. Recent shifts in memorial architecture in the last half-century have opened up new avenues of commemoration which are significantly more narrative-focused, grappling with the question of how to best address the public, and individual visitor, with increasingly tragic subject matter.

Similar changes in theatre's approach to Tragedy, since the onset of the twentieth century, prompt a comparison. This project follows this line of inquiry. Through an analysis of two well-known memorial spaces, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the National September 11 Memorial, and director/theorist Bertolt Brecht's 1939 masterpiece *Mother Courage and Her Children*, a discussion is prompted surrounding the employment of narrative elements in each medium as a dialectic tool to engage tragic topics, and introduce the idea of the memorial as a spatial form of the dramatic Tragedy.

# Introduction

**Dramatic Tragedy.** The Tragedy, in its dramatic definition, has a rich and well-documented history, particularly in the Western world, spanning from its development in Ancient Greece and theoretical articulation by Aristotle<sup>1</sup> to the iterations of the contemporary era. Annamaria Cascetta comments in *Modern European Tragedy* that “[the consciousness of the tragic] is closely bound up with the intuition of inescapable limits, inseparable from the human condition” and goes on to state that “the awareness of the tragic is a profound permanent structure of the human.”<sup>2</sup> The tragedy has a history as a narrative dialectic tool to explore morality, and the modern iterations have also used the tragic as a philosophical idea,<sup>3</sup> to the point at times of making it the paradigm for the interpretation of human existence and reality.”<sup>4</sup>

**Memorials.** The design disciplines, including architecture, possess dialectic potential and sociological power of their own, but in large part create commentary and dialogue through some degree of abstraction or subtler psychological means of composition, rather than an explicit narrative or unfolding plot. Narrative is certainly a frequent informant of the built environment, but it can be reasonably stated that traditionally, architecture relies notably less on traditional forms of storytelling, i.e. the performative or written. However, one category of architecture complicates this methodological boundary: memorials and their associated typologies. Adolf Loos famously quotes that “only a tiny part of architecture comes under art: monuments.”<sup>5</sup> While this statement is polarizing, it does well to distinguish memorializing (Loos’s use of “monument” is in a discussion of death, suggesting that it can be reasonably interchanged with “memorial”) works of design from the field of architecture as a whole, due to the complicating factors of narrative and mortality which are implicit in their conception.

to highlight methodological parallels between Bertolt Brecht’s modern-day iterations of the dramatic Tragedy and contemporary memorial spaces, particularly their psychological approaches to communicating ideas. This project will analyze two significant memorial projects: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial by Maya Lin and the National September 11 Memorial by Michael Arad and Peter Walker. It will also examine one modern Tragedy, Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Through methodological analysis and comparison, a case will be built for the memorial typology as a form of “architectural tragedy,” which has the dialectic ability to explore the tragic spatially, making it a unique form of discussion within a genre dominated by more recognizable types of written and performed storytelling. It is my hope that these analyses will yield a better understanding of the theoretical and dialectic overlap of these mediums and could inform an architecture that will be more willing to embrace narrative elements as communicative and psychological devices.

**Motivation.** Through five years of study in the architecture program, I have consistently studied theatre in tandem, building a theoretical understanding of each. As a frequent performer and active participant in local and regional theatre communities, and now as an undergraduate student, I have gained an interest in an important area of commonality between the fields: their sociological power to reflect and comment on the human condition. Varying degrees of performance, perception, empathy, and storytelling within each brought out interesting theoretical overlaps, all tied to the existence of narrative and how we as humans respond to it.

**Building a Relationship.** This discussion seeks

# Background

**Overview.** A conversation dealing with contemporary memorials and modern tragic theatre requires a degree of historical contextualization. A massive amount of public scholarship exists on these topics; consequently, the literature review which shapes the following analysis is extensive. However, current scholarship focuses on these topics as distinct from each other. The areas of theoretical overlap which will be highlighted have gone largely undiscussed, meaning that the synthesis is my own.

## TRAGEDY, THE TRAGIC, & BRECHT

**Ancient Tragedy.** The Great Tragedy as we understand it was conceptualized in Ancient Greece, and eventually given a formal theoretical body by Aristotle in his book of dramaturgy *The Poetics*. The Tragedies, in their ancient classical forms, were intended to produce empathy (eleos) and fear (phobos) within an audience. Aristotle simplified the many ancient tragedies (few of which survive) into six formulaic elements: plot, characters, theme, diction, rhythm, and spectacle. Descriptions of these components are as follows:

- **Plot:** the single story told through the unfolding action of the narrative.
- **Characters:** “Confronted by problems, the characters make choices, and by understanding and analyzing these choices, the audience is brought to a greater understanding of what the character’s traits are, why they act the way they do, and what the outcomes of those choices might be.” (Chemers)
- **Theme:** the central “moral, emotional, spiritual, or ethical” message or lesson of the work
- **Diction:** word choice and syntax designed to evoke a certain emotional response
- **Rhythm:** many ancient tragedies were sung through; this refers mostly to stanza organization, but in the modern era could refer to any musical or sonic portions that punctuate the action
- **Spectacle:** encapsulates most design elements of the production, including costumes, scenery, and stage effects

These elements were considered to be “constituent,” meaning that no tragedy of the time existed without each of them, and that they worked in tandem to communicate a central theme or construct an intended experience.<sup>6</sup>

**Modern Tragedy & How It Differs.** By the turn of the twentieth century, so dramatic and rapid was the sociopolitical change in the western world that many theorists supposed that the onslaught of various modern ideologies spelled the end for the tragic as a concept altogether.<sup>7</sup> Raymond Williams, in his 1966 work *Modern Tragedy* states that “to begin a discussion of modern tragedy with the modern experiences that most of us call tragic, and try to relate these to tragic literature and theory, can provoke literal amazement.” Williams goes on to insist that all that is consistent between ancient and modern tragedy is “the dramatization of a particular and grievous disorder and its resolution.”<sup>8</sup> The accuracy of his statement is subjective, but clearly defines a need out the importance of sociological context when considering this art form.

Cascetta disagrees with Williams, claiming that as a fundamental concept, the tragic should be considered an essential facet of the human experience, not reducible to a simple event but rather an always-possible occurrence.<sup>9</sup> So while she acknowledges that “The ideological matrix or the collapse of ideology led to reformulations of the basic concepts of tragedy: hero, limit, transgression, guilt, expiation, sacrifice, fear, pity, catharsis,”<sup>10</sup> she maintains “that there is, as we have seen in the [necessary] distinction between tragic and tragedy, a permanent core [to tragic tradition] philosophically definable, that is variously embodied in history, including modernity.”<sup>11</sup> She continues in her description of this core, refuting those that doubt the possibility of the tragic in modern time. She conjectures that the tragic “is a conscious relationship with destiny, which in ancient tragedy lies beyond mankind... while in modern tragedy it lies in the human heart.”<sup>12</sup> Here, Cascetta makes an important point of comparison: in ancient tragedy, the lessons were conveyed through punishments imparted on an individual from some outside force, usually fate,

family, or state. In modern tragedy, struggles can be and often are internal, or else external struggles are representative of an internal flaw, which is in fact the ultimate subject of the commentary. “While in ancient tragedy the theme of punishment prevails over suffering, in modernity suffering prevails, subjectively understood”<sup>13</sup>. And by this token, the concept of the tragic “lives suspended between an unresolved question and answer”<sup>14</sup>. The Tragedy as an art form seeks to put the audience in this unresolved space and asks them to reconcile with it, which is where dialogue begins.

**Bertolt Brecht.** Brecht’s epic theatre was formulated in the early-to-mid 20th century as a means of prompting ideological and social dialogue. “Brecht’s kind of theater is an intellectually ambitious one that aims at undermining the relationship between a complacent audience and a dramatic tradition based on entertainment”<sup>15</sup>. Application of Brecht’s principles is so wide reaching now, and his students so many, that in some ways the theory behind his work may seem unremarkable to the contemporary reader. Visionary directors like Jean-Luc Godard have even helped bring Brecht’s ideas from the stage to the cinema.<sup>16</sup> Thus, so accessible now is the theory which made him revolutionary that it is important to reiterate that at the time of his dramatic innovation, theatre was largely intended to be pure entertainment; escapist, elitist, and disconnected.

Dealing exclusively in tragedy, Brecht developed a dramatic theory based in Marxism, which was branded Epic Theatre. Robert Leach describes it so: “Instead of the synthesizing of form and content into the whole and rounded work, Brecht presents a spikier, looser number of components which interact dialectically but never synthesize.”<sup>17</sup> Brecht sought to imbue his work with not only provoking material and unique technique, but with highly intentional function

attached to every component, with affectation kept to a minimum and simple representation being the most important goal. Chemers states it succinctly: "the primary goal of Epic staging was to avoid the pretense of authenticity, which Brecht felt treated the audience like fools."<sup>18</sup>

Central to his brand of representation is the idea of "verfremdungseffekt," often translated as the "alienation effect." A second and more accurate translation is "making the familiar strange".<sup>19</sup> The intention of the "v-effekt" is to prevent the audience from becoming engrossed in the action of the play, so as to maintain self-awareness and a critical state of perception.<sup>20</sup> "Brecht was acutely aware that audiences can assume the vital role of [witnesses] only if they are simultaneously shaken from all pretenses of false complacency."<sup>21</sup> Some of his directorial tactics include:

- Lack of spectacle: minimal special effects or dramatized scenography
- Exposure of the theatre's technical aspects
- Episodic storytelling where each scene stands alone
- Announcing or displaying what is to happen in a scene before it starts
- Minimal sound effects, instead actors produce the effects on a microphone in view of the audience
- Frequent interruptions to the action, either with other scenes or songs
- Breaking the fourth wall by directly addressing or engaging the audience

All these are tied to the idea of representing action as opposed to embodying it. "It was more important for the actor to communicate the point of view of the play than to seduce spectators into an illusory belief in the reality of the characters' world."<sup>22</sup>

Suzanne Keen, in "A Theory of Narrative Empathy" defines empathy as such: "a vicarious,

spontaneous sharing of affect, [which] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state... mirroring what a person might be expected to feel in that condition or context, empathy is thought to be a precursor to its semantic close relative, sympathy."<sup>23</sup> Keen continues that "emotional contagion comes into play in our reactions to narrative, for we [are] story sharing creatures."<sup>24</sup> Quoting E.B. Titchener's *Beginner's Psychology*, she elaborates: "We have a tendency to feel ourselves into what we perceive or imagine."<sup>25</sup> Keen specifically references Brecht's disdain for the use of empathy in narrative works. However, Brecht understood the power of the empathetic viewer, and imbued his works with dialectic power by virtue of denying the viewer their usual jump from action to empathy to sympathy. The "emotional contagion" which Keen references is based on a tendency to reflect what we see unfold before us. Brecht knows this, and simply never puts it before us; the audience is denied emotional access to the work because of the alienation effect, and thus maintains a detached, and according to Brecht, critical state of perception.

Bertolt Brecht took issue with the increasing commercial spirit of the art form and called upon its sociological basis to inject new ideas that bridged even to the scientific, and especially to the political.<sup>26</sup> "Brecht focused on the representations which can provide a supportive tool to the understanding of the world and social reality... portraying the ability of the world to change, the human alterable nature."<sup>27</sup> Brecht is to be understood as one who recognizes the spectator and is able to transform them into observer and participant, awakening their activity, forcing them to make decisions in the context of a world-view which may shift.<sup>28</sup>

As discussed, modern and contemporary takes on the tragic signal a shift in subject, wherein "the pathos of the hero [gives] way to the



passion of the man without qualities."<sup>29</sup> The twentieth century tragedy is concerned with the common man, following trends of literature and art of the time. "It broke the isolation of the hero and grasped the tragic situation of man as part of a group, of a mass."<sup>30</sup> The work of Brecht embodies this notion and chooses to comment by presenting the grim realities of the masses rather than the escapades of the hero, whether morally stained or not. "Brecht does not pass judgment on his characters, he uses their gestures, copied from life and then interrupted, to stimulate us into at least reflecting on the problems which we often express through gestures."<sup>31</sup>

One area where Brecht's tragedies differ from both classical and other modern tragedies is the previously discussed source of the tragic force. Ancient tragedy dealt in punishment, from authority of the divine or political type. And while other modern tragedies commonly direct the audience inward for the source of the tragic, Brecht's interest in conflict theory often meant that his protagonists were not necessarily the source of their own tragedy but were made as examples of injustice, acted on by outside forces beyond their control.<sup>32</sup> An important distinction is that rather than being punished for acts of hubris or arrogance as the mythic heroes of ancient tragedies were, Brecht's protagonists are placed in a uniquely defensive light, not being acted on through any responsibility of their own but rather as a function of their sociopolitical context. This keeps Brecht squarely within the modern interpretation of tragedy.

## ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, & MEMORIALS

**Architecture's Sociological Power.** It is understood, as a foundational principle of this discussion, that architecture (and the other design disciplines which are encompassed within it) have the capacity to dramatically affect our world from a sociological standpoint, whether intended or not. Sylvie van Damme touches on this in her study "In Search of Landscape as a Medium for Integration," when she states that design "unifies a variety of ecological, aesthetic, social, and psychological aspects, and it philosophically supersedes the contradiction between natural sciences and humanities."<sup>33</sup> She continues by saying that it can be "a powerful medium for synthetic thinking and collaboration among different inhabitants, disciplines and forms of practices"<sup>34</sup> and advocates for design as a method of dialectic by virtue of its connective power between "people, themes, and places that deserve particular political and public attention."<sup>35</sup>

**Toward an Experiential Narrative.** Michael Hoffman, in his thesis work *Toward an Experiential Narrative*, explores methods by which a landscape can communicate the content of a narrative through "designed physical experience."<sup>36</sup> He posits that "an experiential narrative (in a landscape context) implies an empirical quality; something that is encountered firsthand—a lesson not simply observed, but actually learned through physical interaction with the site."<sup>37</sup>

An important, but familiar concept, that of parable, heavily related to theatre and Tragedy specifically, stems forth from Hoffman, with reference to an article by Roger Schank: "virtually all human knowledge is based on stories constructed around past experiences [and] new experiences are interpreted in terms of old stories."<sup>38</sup> Thus, when scaled up to the intellectual level of the community, the types

of unique spaces provided by memorials for psychological rationalization and confrontation with the past present an opportunity to re-orient toward a future that is divergent from the moment of the past which is commemorated.

Hoffman moves into the design portion of the thesis by articulating what he believes to be four useful strategies within commemorative landscapes, which are worked into the analysis of this project and are as follows:<sup>39</sup>

- **Text:** a common aspect of memorial design, communicating the name or event commemorated, history, lessons, or other information
- **Emblem:** sculpture or representative figurative visual imagery is employed to tell a story
- **Expression:** designer relies on characteristics of a landscape type or material to evoke a particular response in the visitor and facilitate the communication of a narrative
- **Abstraction:** narrative concepts are presented in a symbolic or non-realistic fashion

**Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories.** Hoffman builds his theoretical framework largely by leaning on Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton's *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*, from which he pulls the foundational line: "Narrative refers to both the story, what is told, and the means of telling, implying both product and process, form and formation, structure and structuration."<sup>40</sup> From them he also pulls an important set of strategies, or "tropes" for building narrative within the landscape: *metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony.*<sup>41</sup>

- **Metaphor,** as outlined in *Landscape Narratives*, operates "on the linguistic principles of substitution and similarity," and is best used as a tool to relate the unfamiliar

to known and understood concepts. Often this is achieved by placing particular elements in positions related to or opposite each other, so as to evoke comparison.

- **Metonymy** attributes meaning by creating associations between elements or concepts. This can happen both as a result of repeated verbal association (for instance, referring to the entire Vietnam military conflict as simply "Vietnam") or by contiguity, which is more common in the design practices because it is the basis of sequential narrative: elements being next to, before, or after each other constitute metonymic relationships that help us build association and discern causality, which can be an important part of an overarching narrative metaphor or theme, both in writing and landscape.
- **Synecdoche,** while technically a subset of metonymy and often used interchangeably to describe it, occupies a distinct role, one particularly important to the discussion of contemporary memorials: "the use of a part of something to represent the whole, or of the whole to stand for the part." It has specific power as a tool of memory, for it can summon an entire event or story using only a piece or fragment.
- **Irony,** although an extremely important narrative tool, will have a lesser role in this discussion due to the subject matter of the case studies, however when employed, it is a crucial method and will garner discussion. It is important to carefully define irony in this context as "incongruity or ambiguity between expectations and reality." A second useful definition is given, relative to the other three tropes, wherein it is defined as the only trope which takes a position "[on] the in-betweenness of things. It is an affirmation of both/and, as well as neither completely this nor that." While the use of the word "ironic" to describe some of the content of these projects is jarring, within this framework it is correct and appropriate.

Potteiger and Purinton also present five “practices” which can, in theory, be used to imbue a landscape with these “tropes,” which are *naming, sequencing, concealing/revealing, gathering, and opening*.<sup>42</sup>

- **Naming** is included as a simple but effective way of “anchoring” stories to a place.
- **Sequencing** begins to connect to the idea of metonymy, as it concerns adjacencies and associations formed by the ordering and placing of elements within a landscape, to ensure that all components are understood by what comes before and after.
- **Concealing and revealing** are common terms used in landscape design. For instance, elements of a landscape may be withheld or masked to heighten an approach. That type of methodology certainly applies to Potteiger and Purinton’s framework, however they elaborate on another important component to be concealed and revealed, which is information and/or opinions. This component will be particularly crucial in the case study analyses.
- **Gathering** also deals with both physical intervention and the psychological/informational realm. Landscapes, and for the purposes of this discussion, memorial landscapes, are important parts of the built environment, becoming sites for assembly, events or even protests. However, they can also fulfill an archival role, in which the gathering of information can create a place for collective memory, and community experience can be tangibly encapsulated within a single landscape.
- **Opening** also has a two-fold meaning. In the strictly architectural sense of the word, an “open” space might be one in which a spatial release could trigger moments of catharsis or awe within a landscape. However, Potteiger and Purinton attribute a second interpretation which deals largely with the

psychology and democracy of a place. They state that “the idea of open narratives derives from contemporary theories that stress the importance of the role of the reader in producing meaning; means for denaturalizing established ideologies; and the multiple, contextual, and changing nature of meaning.” In the context of memorials, this principle largely deals with whether the space chooses to prescribe the way in which an event is remembered (a “closed” narrative) or if it allows the visitor to formulate their own stance (an “open” narrative). The following descriptors<sup>43</sup> are useful in forming a clearer understanding of this dichotomy:

**Closed:**

represented experiences  
determined  
commodified  
private  
separately framed  
selected time frames  
scripted  
intended and encoded meanings  
author controlled  
story space

**Open:**

lived experiences  
indeterminate  
participatory  
public  
integrated  
layering of multiple times  
nonscripted  
possible and decoded interpretations  
reader interpreted  
discourse and intertextual space

Hoffman, in *Toward an Experiential Narrative*, agrees with Potteiger and Purinton’s suggestions about the relationship of a narrative, whether written, performed or designed, to its reader, audience, or occupant.<sup>44</sup> Although he

acknowledges that their theory sometimes shifts too much storytelling power from the designer to the landscape itself, he fundamentally agrees with their positioning, summarizing by saying that “it is important to remember two points: first, the designer—not the landscape—is the narrator of the tale, with the landscape serving as the medium. And second, because the landscape cannot tell a tale, the viewer or visitor of the landscape is not a receiver or interpreter of the tale, but is in a sense also the narrator of the tale, with the landscape in this case serving as the source of inspiration.”<sup>45</sup>

This position shared by Hoffman with Potteiger and Purinton is critical to the scope of this project, as it most concisely captures what is a vital connection between memorial design and theatre (and by extension, Tragedy): the importance of the second narrator, the visitor or audience, and thus the respect and constant attention that must be given to their perspective during the process of design or writing. This ethos of “open” design, and several other methodological parallels to Brecht, begin to emerge from the outlined frameworks and Hoffman’s critique. Though not means to the same immediate end, there is a similarity in the prompting of critical dialogue via psychological means, which bears examination and is foundational to this conversation.

**Contemporary Memorial Landscapes.** Similar to the Tragedy, commemorative processes have undergone a recent historical shift in approach. This turn is embodied by a noticeable decrease in the frequency of “monuments,” in favor of “memorials.” Youstra Attwa, Mohammed Refaat, and Yasmin Kandil identify and elaborate on this trend in their investigation “A study of the relationship between contemporary memorial landscape and user perception,” making a distinction between the two: “Monuments [are] figurative objects commemorating individuals or heroes, unapproachable and viewed from

far away. Memorials are the products of the collective memory of social groups or collective importance of an event, person, or circumstance, linking the past to the present and future.” While their description of monuments could be considered reductive, their definition of memorials is useful, and draws a natural comparison-by-association to the theoretical shift in tragic theatre: from ancient hero-centered tales to the every-man dramas of the contemporary era.

Attwa, Refaat and Kandil continue describing this shift in commemorative spaces by taking note of the change in the relationship between visitor and space “from a viewing perspective constructed as objects and figurative sculptures to one of the user’s engagement, by occupying, touching, hearing, and participating in acts of commemoration.”<sup>46</sup> This view on commemoration is shared by Melvin Charney, whose *Memo Series* made the case for commemoration as “no longer conceived as a localized monumental design object but rather as a personal experience shared with a vast community.”<sup>47</sup>

In their elaboration on this change, Attwa, Refaat and Kandil identify a significant methodological adjustment at the end of the nineteenth century, in which the spatial character of commemorative forms becomes closer to the ground, significantly less phallic in character, and often integrated with seating.<sup>48</sup> Less than half a century later, they identify World War I and II as reasons for memorials to be “Constructed for tragic reasons rather than honorary ones constructed earlier.”<sup>49</sup> Again, the parallels to the historical shifts in Tragic theatre are easily drawn, the major theoretical pivot surrounding the World Wars being a shared point of immense significance.

Attwa, Refaat and Kandil use this historical context to make the case for a specific category

of memorials, what they call Contemporary Memorial Landscapes,<sup>50</sup> of which the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the National September 11 Memorial are both examples. "CML" are architecturally identified as having these features and functions:<sup>51</sup>

- Urban Spaces with architectural landscape features
- Ranging in form and scale from a single object to panoramic viewsheds
- Presenting collective memory of social groups
- Providing symbolic meaning to the public

Furthermore, they specify that the contemporary memorial landscape "invites people to participate actively while providing passive user engagement."<sup>52</sup> Although they are less of a framework and more of a series of descriptions, this list draws immediate parallels to the five "practices" of Potteiger and Purinton.

The scholarship presented by Attwa, Refaat and Kandil also includes a model for analysis of these memorial spaces (see Figure 1).

This analysis is divided into two components: Urban Physical Configuration and User Sensual Experience. Urban Physical Configuration is further subdivided into components of a more architectural scale/nature, the Memorial Space Enclosing Elements: location, form, and surfaces, and then elements that they consider to be more sensory than spatial: "Elements Within the Memorial Space," water, plants, landform, and furniture.<sup>53</sup>

User Sensual Experience, although graphically presented as a separate category of analysis than Urban Physical Configuration, functions rather as a filter through which Attwa, Refaat and Kandil attempt to anticipate visitor's sensory responses to the elements already mentioned. An example of their application of this model is included

(Figure 2), in which Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is analyzed.

**Summary.** The expansive discourse on both modern Tragedy and Brecht, alongside the scholarly frameworks for memorial evaluation, as well as narrative understanding of landscapes, suggest compelling theoretical overlaps between the selected contemporary memorials and the Brechtian Tragedies of the twentieth century. This literature will be used as a conceptual groundwork on which to build both an analysis of the selected case studies, and a dialectic synthesis with Bertolt Brecht's practices, in support of memorials as "Architectural Tragedy."

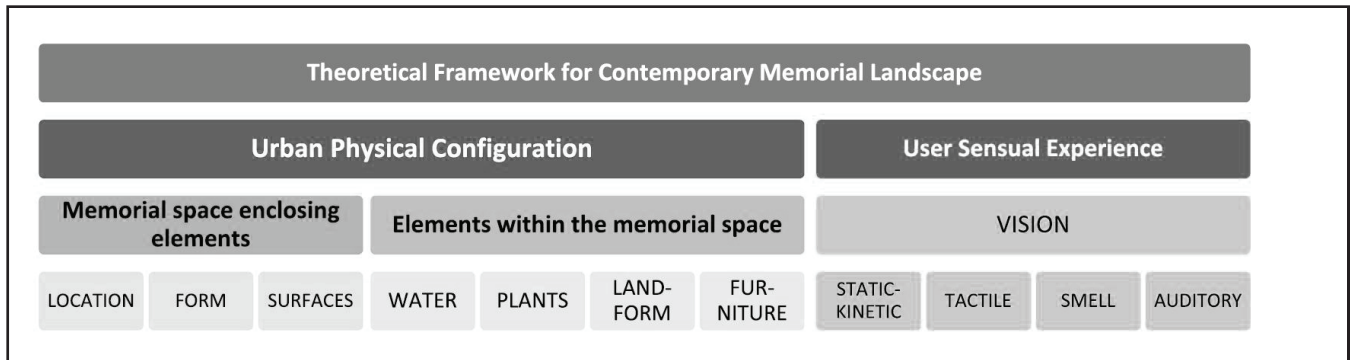


FIGURE 1: Attwa, Refaat, and Kandil's Framework for Analyzing Contemporary Memorial Spaces

**Table 3**  
Summary of MMJE urban physical configuration and user sensual experience.

Urban Physical Configuration				User Sensual Experience	
	Elements		Designers' intentions	User sensation	Triggered senses
<b>Memorial space enclosing elements</b>	Location	Same location as murdered Jews	Unique location, close to important building and berlin wall	-Recognized by passengers	<b>Vision</b>
	Form	Grid concrete blocks	-an uneasy, atmosphere and the form aims to represent a grid system that has lost touch with human reason. -resemblance to a cemetery -huge space	-Confusing for visitors. -Fear and remembering -Unclear -Dislocated	<b>Vision, kinetic</b>
	Surfaces	Concrete, grey	Create a lost space	Coffins, cemetery feeling	<b>Tactile, vision</b>
<b>Elements within the memorial space</b>	Water	none	To make user feel the grief and trauma	Lacks being livable	None
	Plants	none	User lacks sense of having a livable space	<i>Very dull</i>	None
	Landform	Leveling	allows visitor to view the blocks from different heights and the surrounding context.	Doesn't allow vision between the blocks	<b>Kinetic, static, vision</b>
	Furniture	Seats	no seats available	Blocks are used for seating	<b>Tactile</b>
	Information		Information center built underground of the memorial	Carrying names of victims and information	<b>Vision</b>
	Lighting				

FIGURE 2: Attwa, Refaat, and Kandil's analysis of Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

# Approach

**Overview.** Through formal analysis of the National September 11 Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a set of strategies will be catalogued and cross-referenced with psychological techniques utilized in Brecht's Epic Theatre. A script analysis of Brecht's celebrated tragedy *Mother Courage and Her Children* will follow. The themes and tactics compiled through this process will then be compared to the architectural methods employed in the contemporary memorial spaces.

**Memorial Analysis.** The analysis of the two memorials will be conducted using an integrated strategy which combines the set of theoretical frameworks outlined in the Background section:

- Attwa, Refaat and Kandil's "Theoretical Framework for Contemporary Memorial Landscape"
- Michael Hoffman's commemorative elements & methods
- Potteiger & Purinton's four narrative tropes & five narrative practices

Using the resultant model, a thorough understanding of the projects' architectural features, sensory effects, and psychological/narrative intent can be cultivated for comparison to Brecht's Epic Theatre.

## Building an Integrated Model for Analysis.

Effective analysis of the selected memorials requires a balanced model which evaluates their architectural expression as well as their narrative and dialectic intentions. The frameworks from Hoffman, Potteiger and Purinton, and Attwa, Refaat and Kandil provide strong foundations from which to build an integrated model. The following pages (Figures 3-12) demonstrate the process of constructing a streamlined, integrated model for analyzing the selected case studies.

**Script Analysis.** Methods of script analysis vary, however from a design perspective,

Rosemary Ingham's *From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections Between Scripts and Images* is an excellent resource for translating thematic content into a well-designed production. The approach she outlines is summarized into a series of interrogations for the script:

- Where are they?
- When are they?
- Who are they?
- What happened before the play began?
- What is the function of each character in the play?
- What kind of dialogue do the characters speak?
- What happens in the play?
- What is the play's theme?

This framework of examination will provide a complete understanding of the play and its themes. (See Appendix for the full analysis of *Mother Courage*, including the breakdown of each line of inquiry.)

# Formation of a Consolidated Framework

## step 1: compile

gather methodologies and frameworks of analysis from surveyed literature



### "Theoretical Framework for Contemporary Memorial Landscape"

Attwa, Refaat, Kandil

#### "Urban Physical Configuration"

#### "Space Enclosing Elements"

Location

Form

Surfaces

+

#### "Elements within the Memorial Space"

Water

Plants

Landform

Furniture

#### "User Sensual Experience"

primary

Vision

+

secondary

Static/Kinetic

Smell

Tactile

Auditory

## **"Toward an Experiential Narrative"**

Michael Hoffman

### **Commemorative Elements / Methods**

Text

Emblem

Expression

Abstraction

## **"Landscape Narratives"**

Matthew Potteiger & Jamie Purinton

### **Narrative Tropes**

Metaphor

Metonymy

Synecdoche

Irony

+

### **Design "Practices"**

Naming

Sequencing

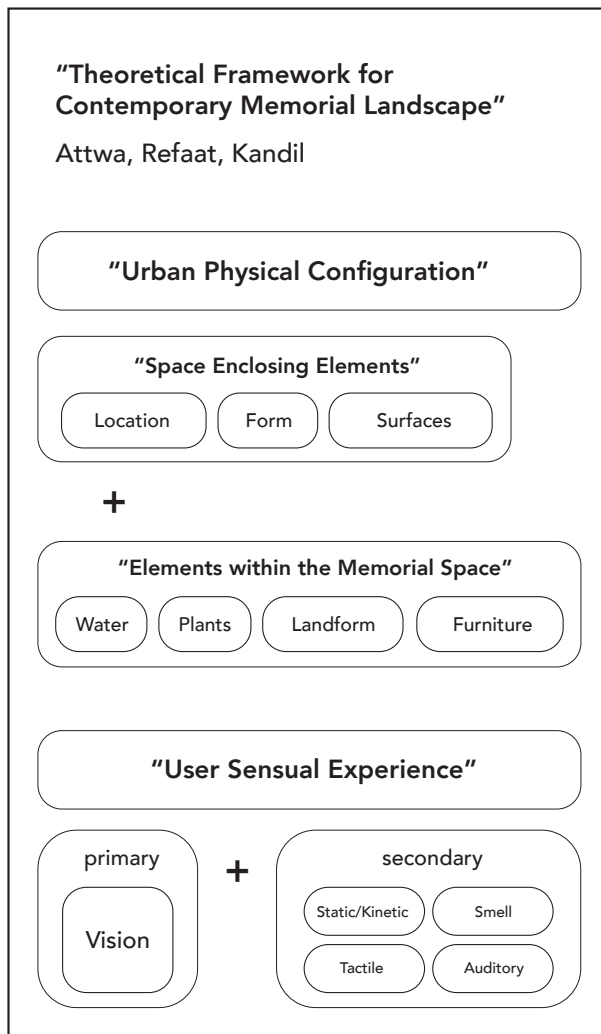
Gathering

Concealing / Revealing

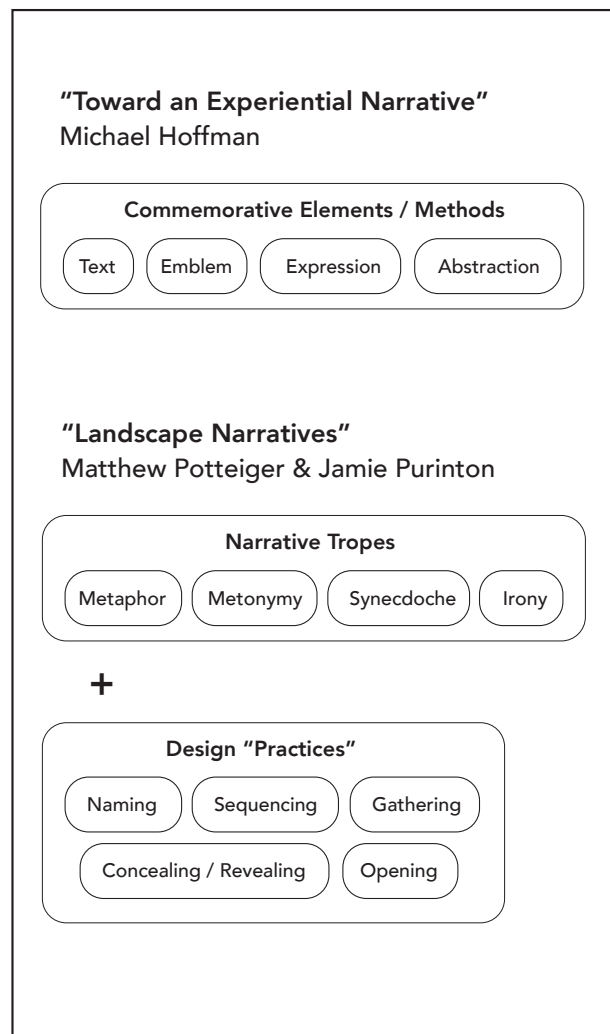
Opening

The compiled methods are organized into suggested uses based on their scope. Attwa, Refaat and Kandil's framework is a more expansive model for analysis, thus is adopted as a base, while the remaining two are intended to supplement this foundation.

## BASE FRAMEWORK



## SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORKS

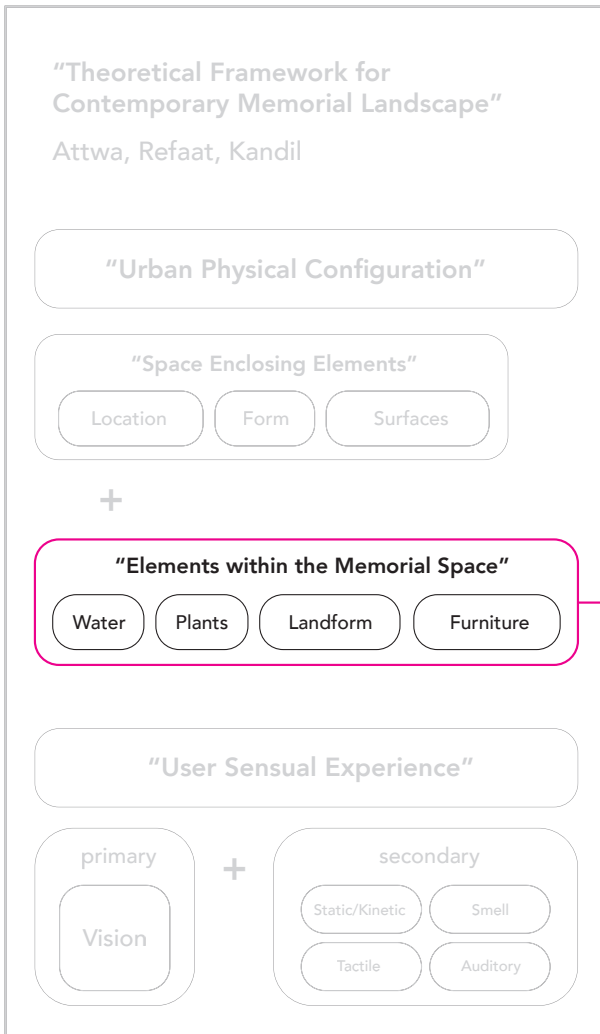


## step 2: relate

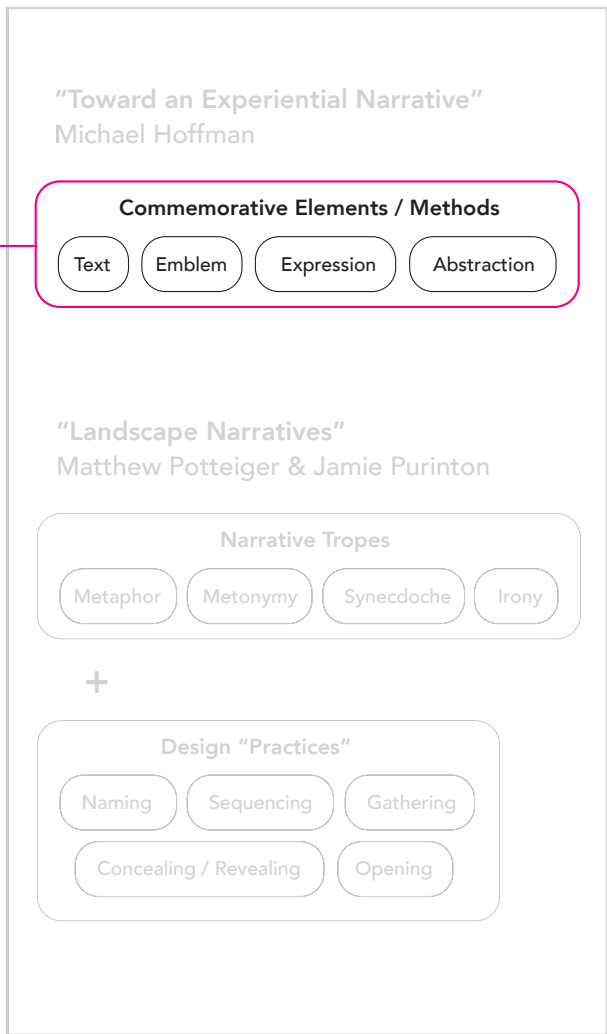
identify commonalities in scope and content within compiled frameworks

The "Elements within the Memorial Space" portion of the base framework addresses content which falls within the scope of Hoffman's Commemorative Elements / Methods.

### BASE FRAMEWORK

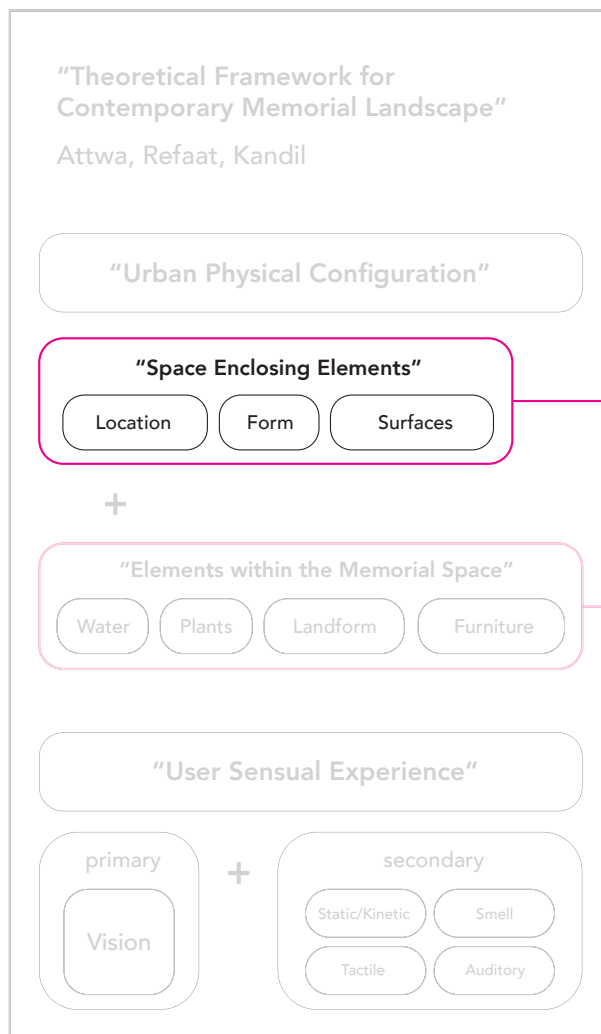


### SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORKS

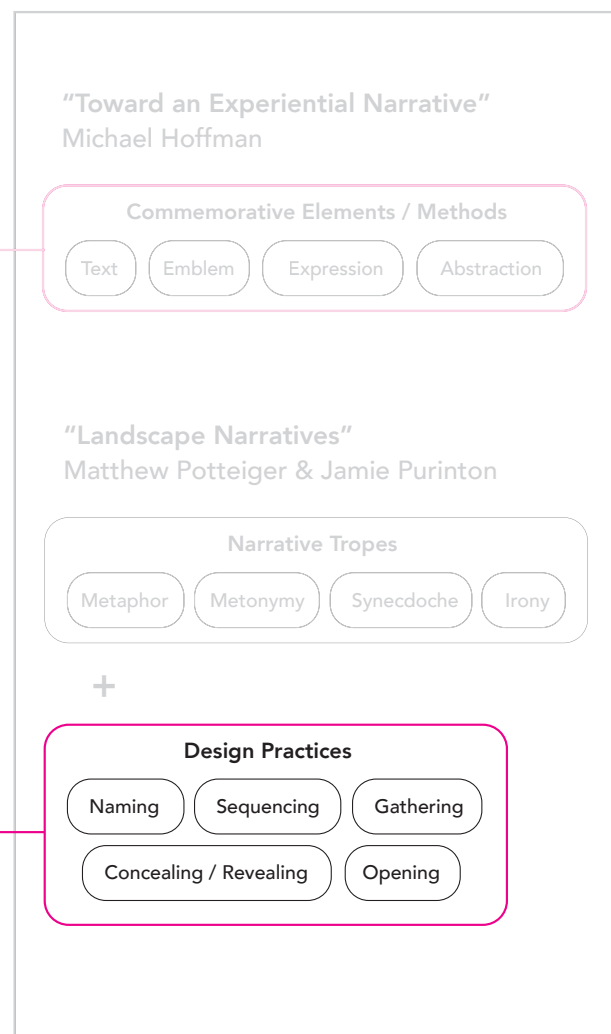


The components outlined within "Space Enclosing Elements" are a good start for a method of formal analysis, but combined with Pottegieer & Purinton's Design Practices, constitute a complete framework for architectural and landscape analysis, through the lens of narrative intent.

## BASE FRAMEWORK

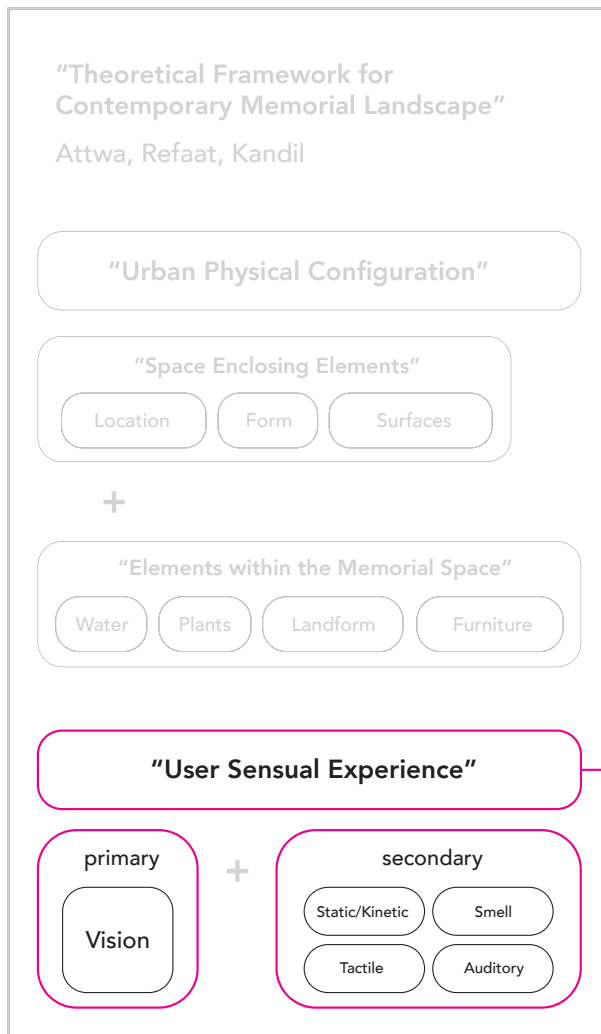


## SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORKS

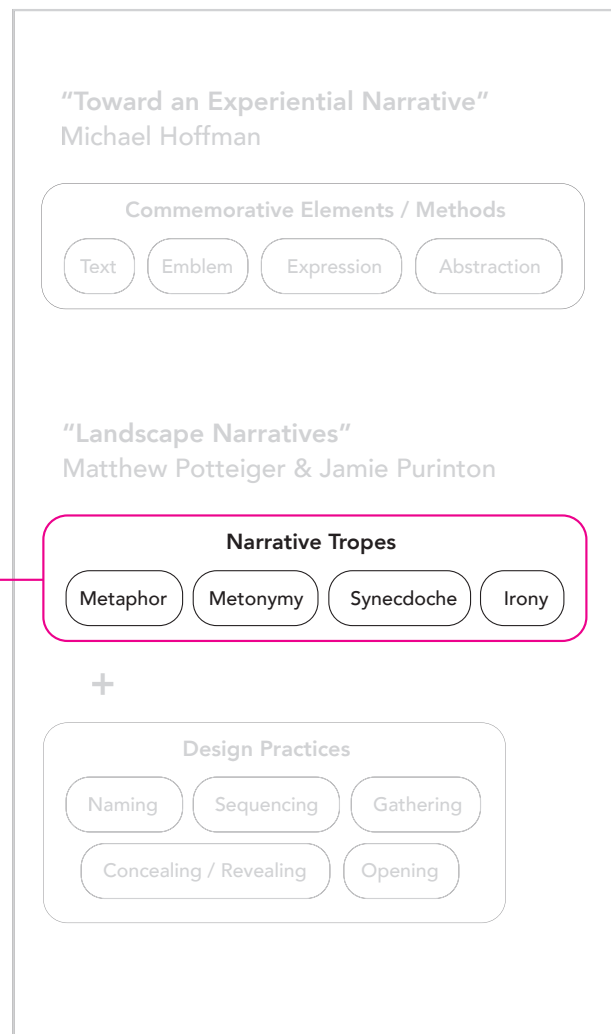


The sensory portion of the base framework and the Narrative Tropes component of "Landscape Narratives" establish two more lenses of analysis. These interrogate the intended effect of the design, and can be understood as "filters" through which to understand architectural expression.

## BASE FRAMEWORK



## SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORKS



## step 3: consolidate

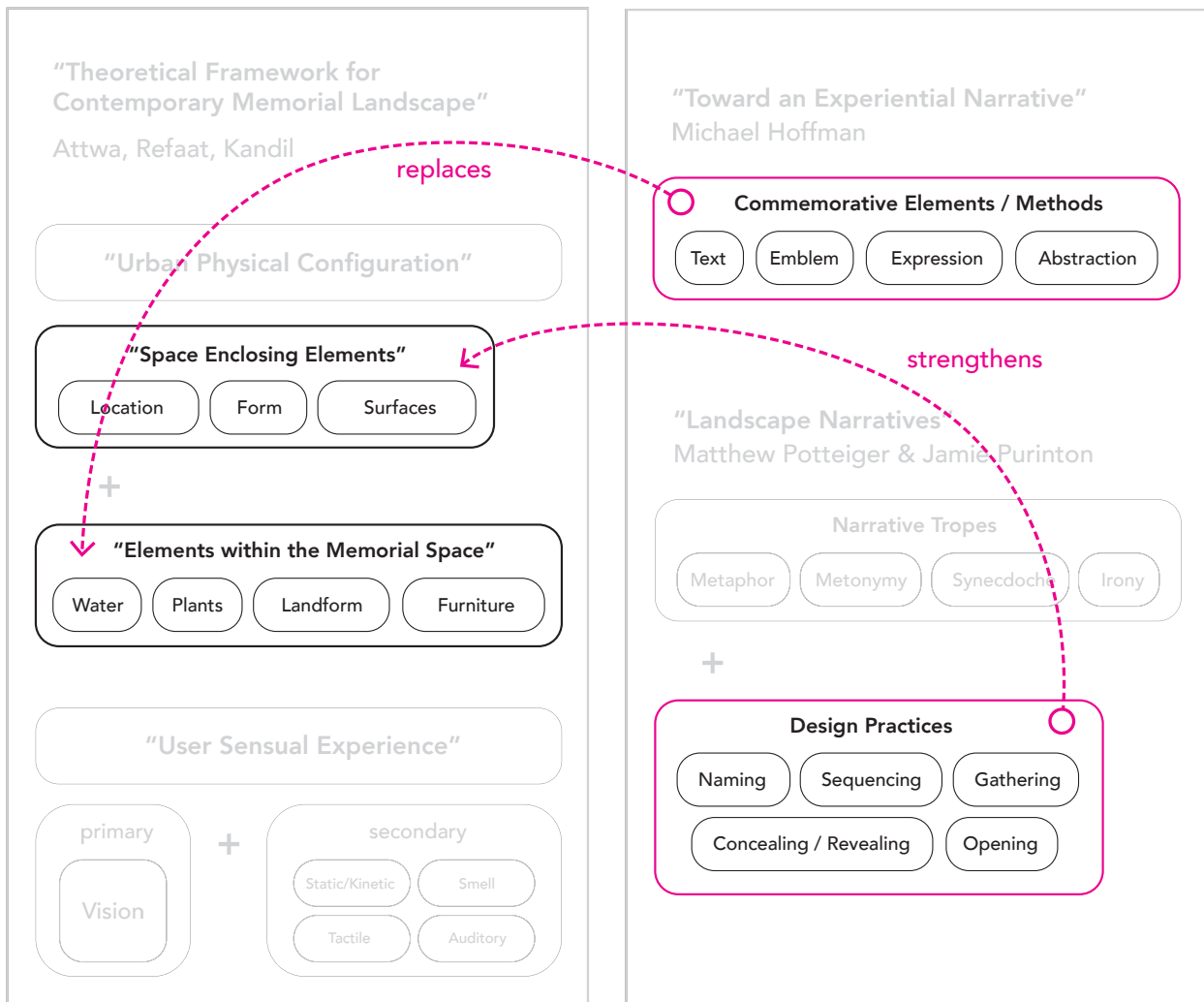
adapt, substitute, and clarify based on the highlighted relationships to reach an integrated, streamlined model for analysis



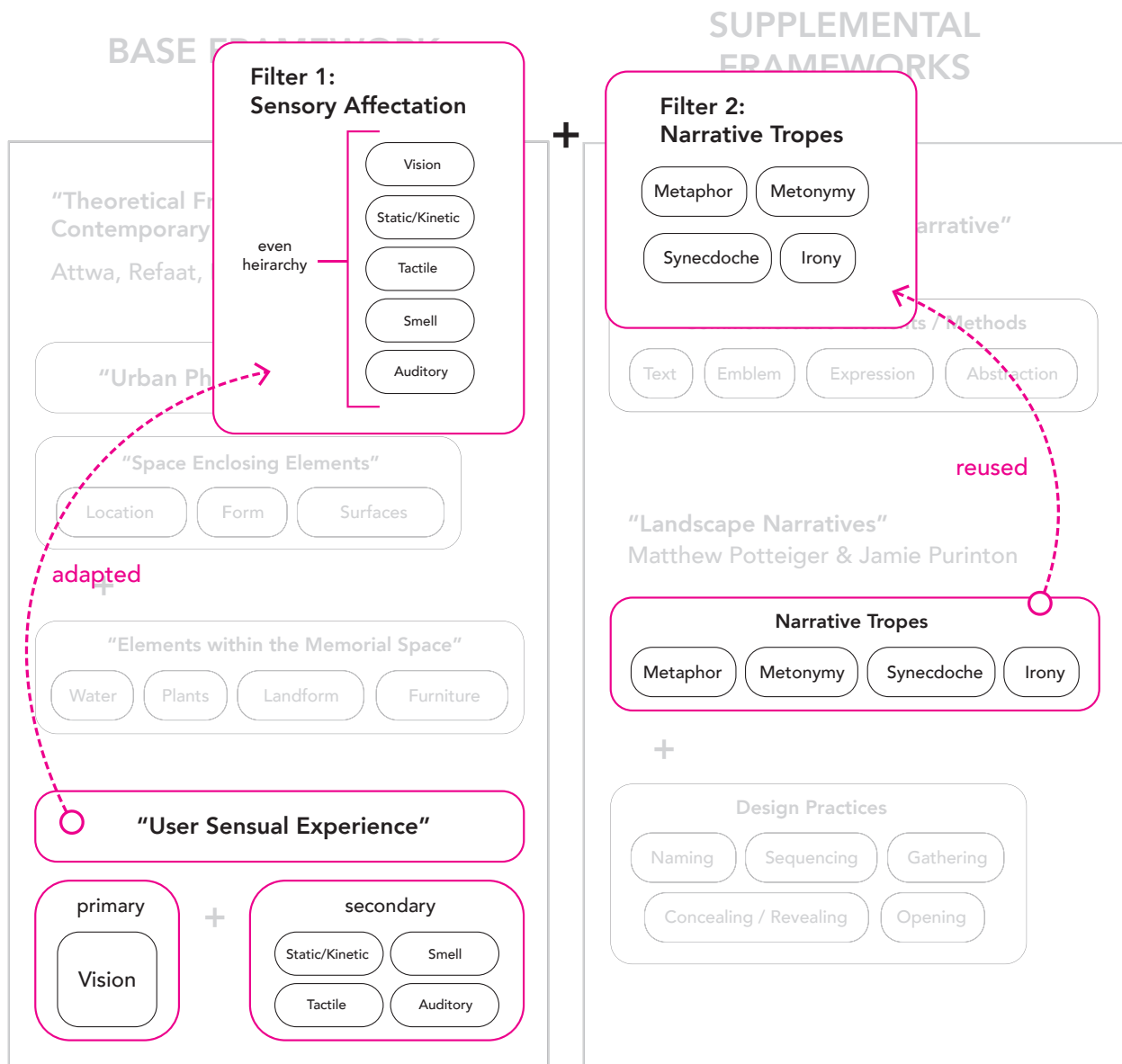
Hoffman's Commemorative Elements / Methods take the place of CML's original list of elements, to avoid over-specificity and unnecessary prescriptiveness in the analysis. Potteiger & Purinton's Design Practices are added to the existing list of "Space Enclosing Elements" to achieve a more complete framework.

### BASE FRAMEWORK

### SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORKS

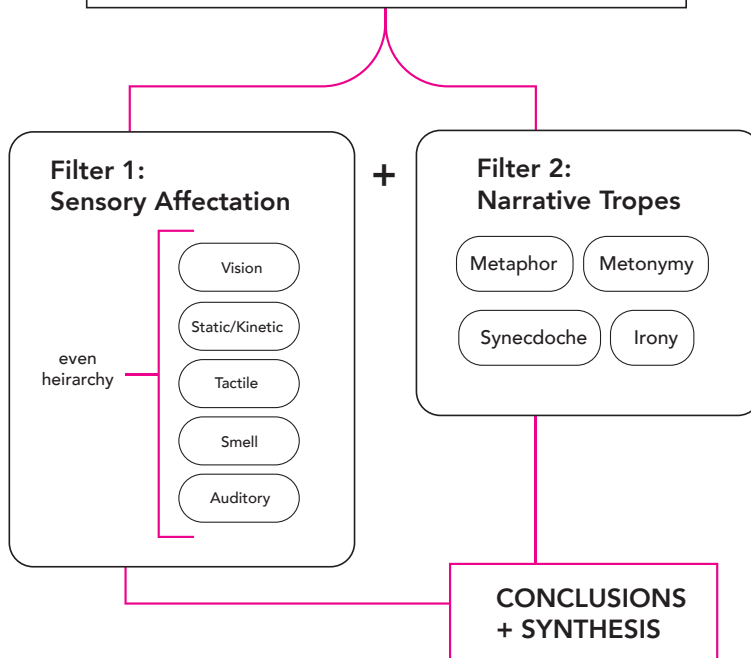
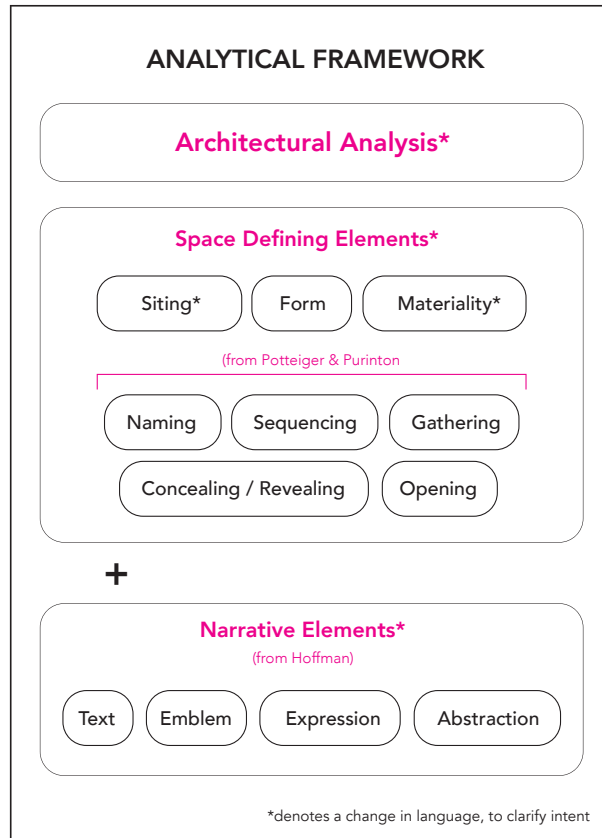


The non-architectural categories are pulled from the framework and repurposed as filters to be retroactively applied after formal analysis, to facilitate a multi-faceted understanding of the projects.



# final framework

the resulting model will allow for clear analysis of the selected case studies, giving sufficient attention to both their architectural expression and narrative intent

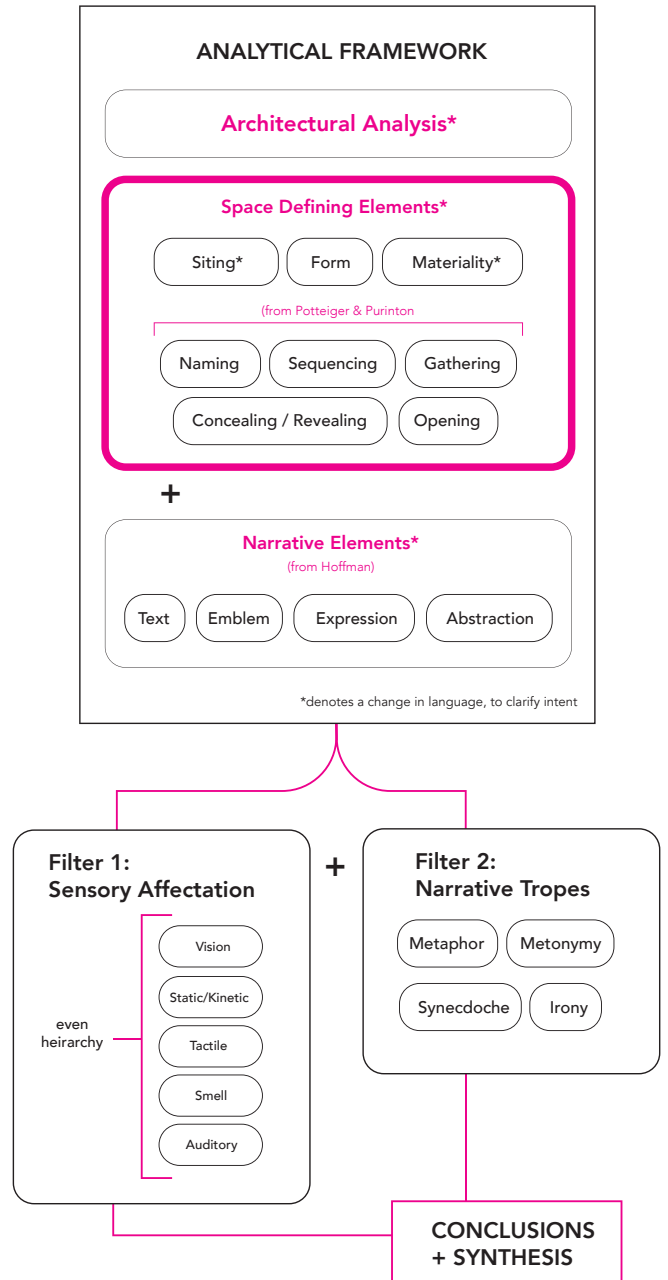


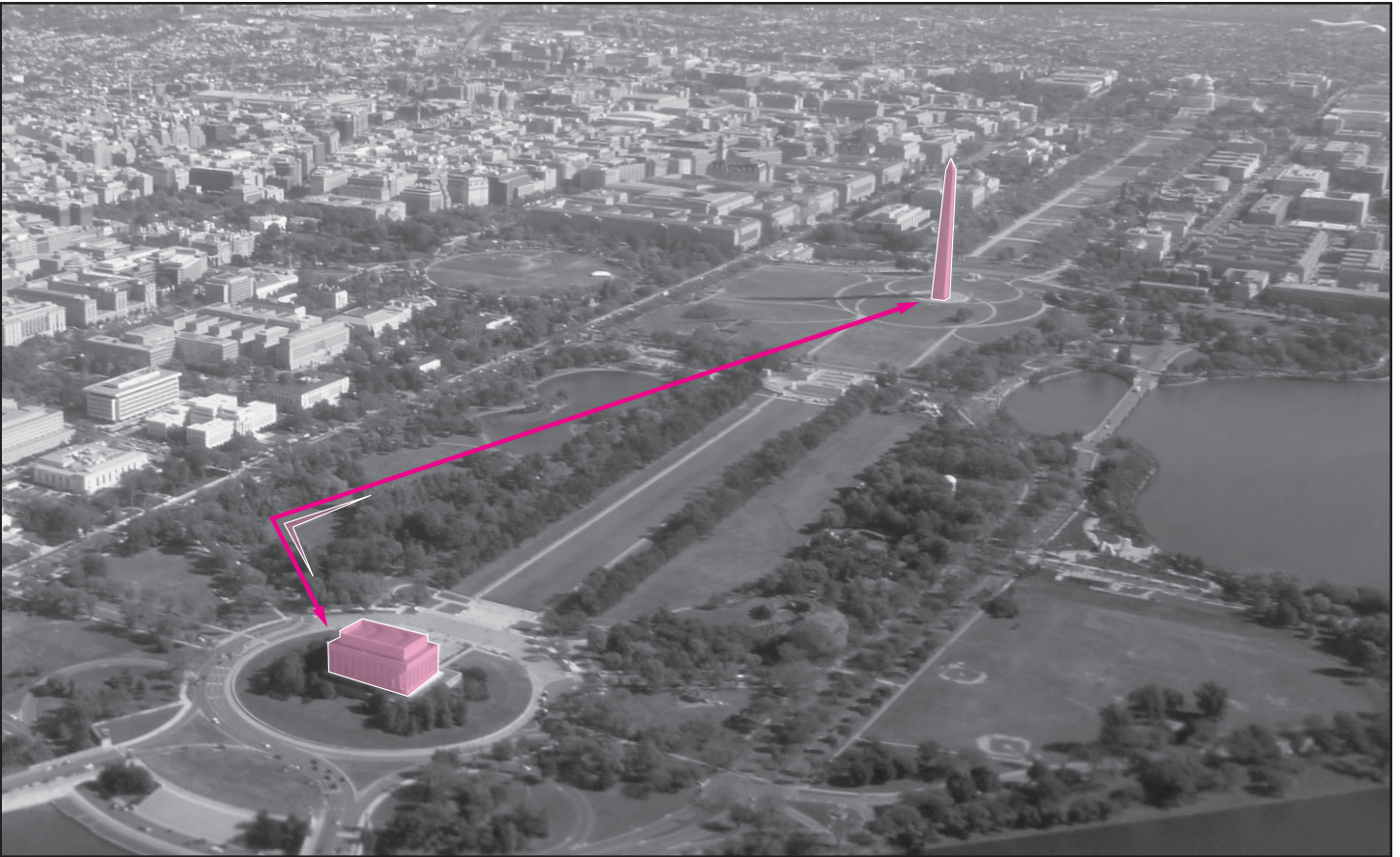
# Architectural Analysis

## VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

**Context.** The need for a memorial to the Vietnam military conflict was recognized by Jan Scruggs, a Vietnam veteran, in 1979. His hope was for an intervention which would reconcile the veterans with the American citizens who had opposed the war. A design competition was announced in summer 1980 and concluded by May 1981; Maya Lin's entry was unanimously selected from 1432 entries by an eight-person jury. The project was dedicated in 1982 and proved highly controversial. In 1984, a small statue addition was erected, along with a flagpole, to appease those who considered the design offensively abstract. This analysis focuses only on the architectural portion designed by Maya Lin.<sup>54</sup>

**“SPACE DEFINING ELEMENTS”** The following pages constitute part 1 of the analysis, highlighted below. Diagrammatic vignettes accompany some of the analysis points.





**Figure 3:** Siting creates Relationships

**Siting.** The Vietnam war memorial is sited in Washington, D.C. within the National Mall, adjacent to its primary axis. The monument's design is simple and restrained, and in forty years since its dedication it has become familiar to most: two walls of polished black granite emerge from a depression in the land. Roughly ten feet high at their meeting point, they taper to the East and Southwest. If approached from the Northwest, the memorial is scarcely visible. Maya Lin's formal language turns the walls of the memorial into proverbial arrowheads, pointing towards and creating an implicit relationship with the memorial's two important neighbors, the Lincoln memorial, and the Washington monument: a conscious effort to prompt comparison and dialogue in the mind of the visitor.

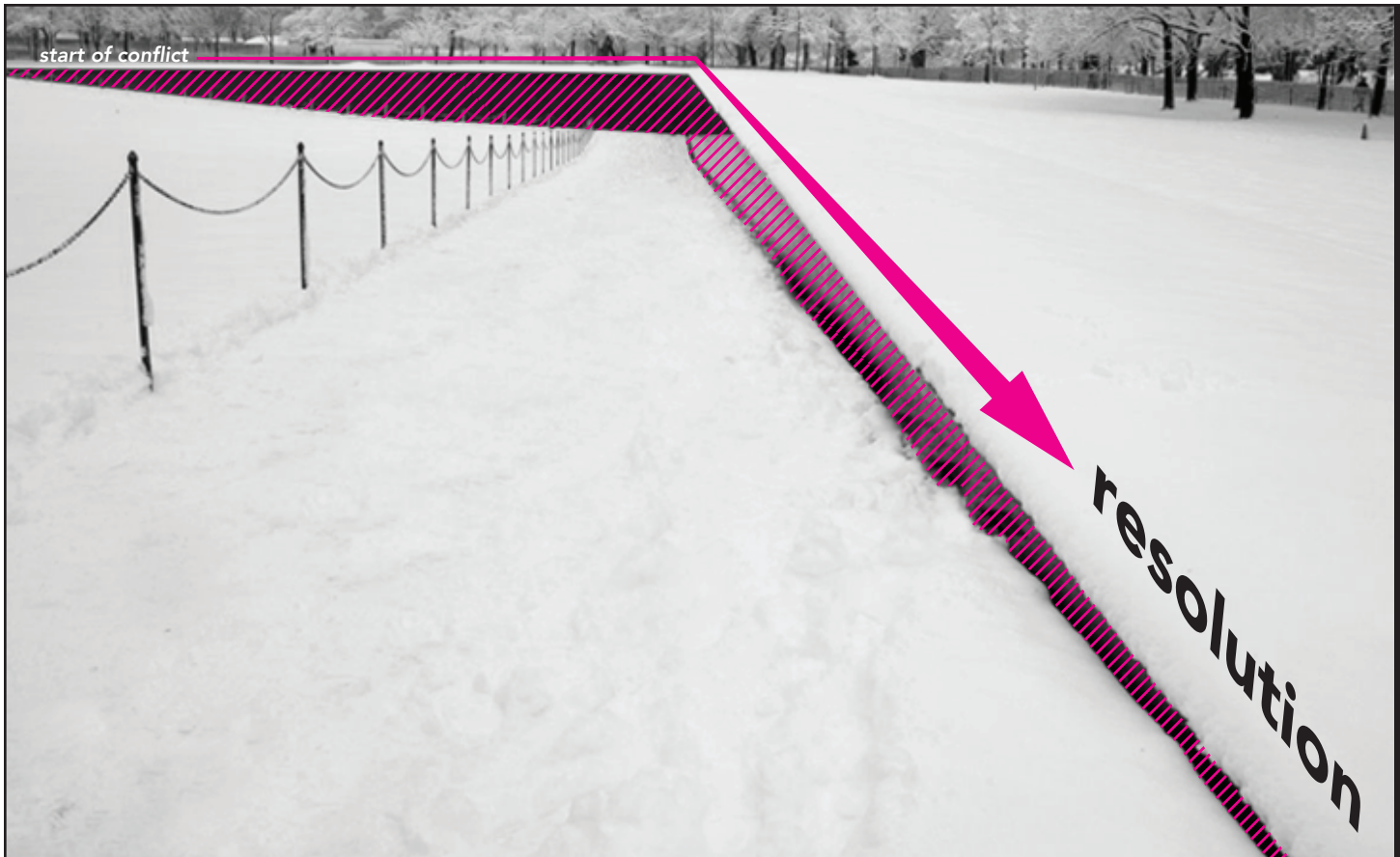


Figure 4: Form as Abstraction

**Form.** The memorial uses its form as a symbolic abstraction of the war's action. The tapered height of the wall, working with the descent upon entry and ascent when exiting, are a subtle representation of the military effort. The scale of the engraved text relative to the wall is an important component. The blocks of names, even from a distance, can still be read as figures on a dark ground, meaning that the scale of loss is perceivable even if one avoids approach or direct engagement.





Figure 5: Materiality yields Reflection

**Materiality.** The walls of the Vietnam memorial lend it its most recognizable quality. The polished black granite, which the veterans' names are etched into, sets the memorial apart from any other monument in the national mall, drawing automatic contrast and immediately provoking dialogue relative to its phallic and neo-classical neighbors. Its reflectivity means that as visitors read the names on the wall, their own reflections are silhouetted, as a backdrop to the memorialized. The description of her design as a scar on the landscape (Lin) remains an apt description of the wall as an abstraction of its subject matter.



Figure 6: Naming at Multiple Scales

**Naming.** The naming of the memorial is straightforward but important: “Vietnam Veterans Memorial.” Unlike memorials for other wars, this space is named specifically for the Veterans. No explicit signage exists within the original 1982 memorial space, and the only text aside from the names is the larger numbers which denote the years. The individual naming of each veteran is what lends the memorial its commemorative power.

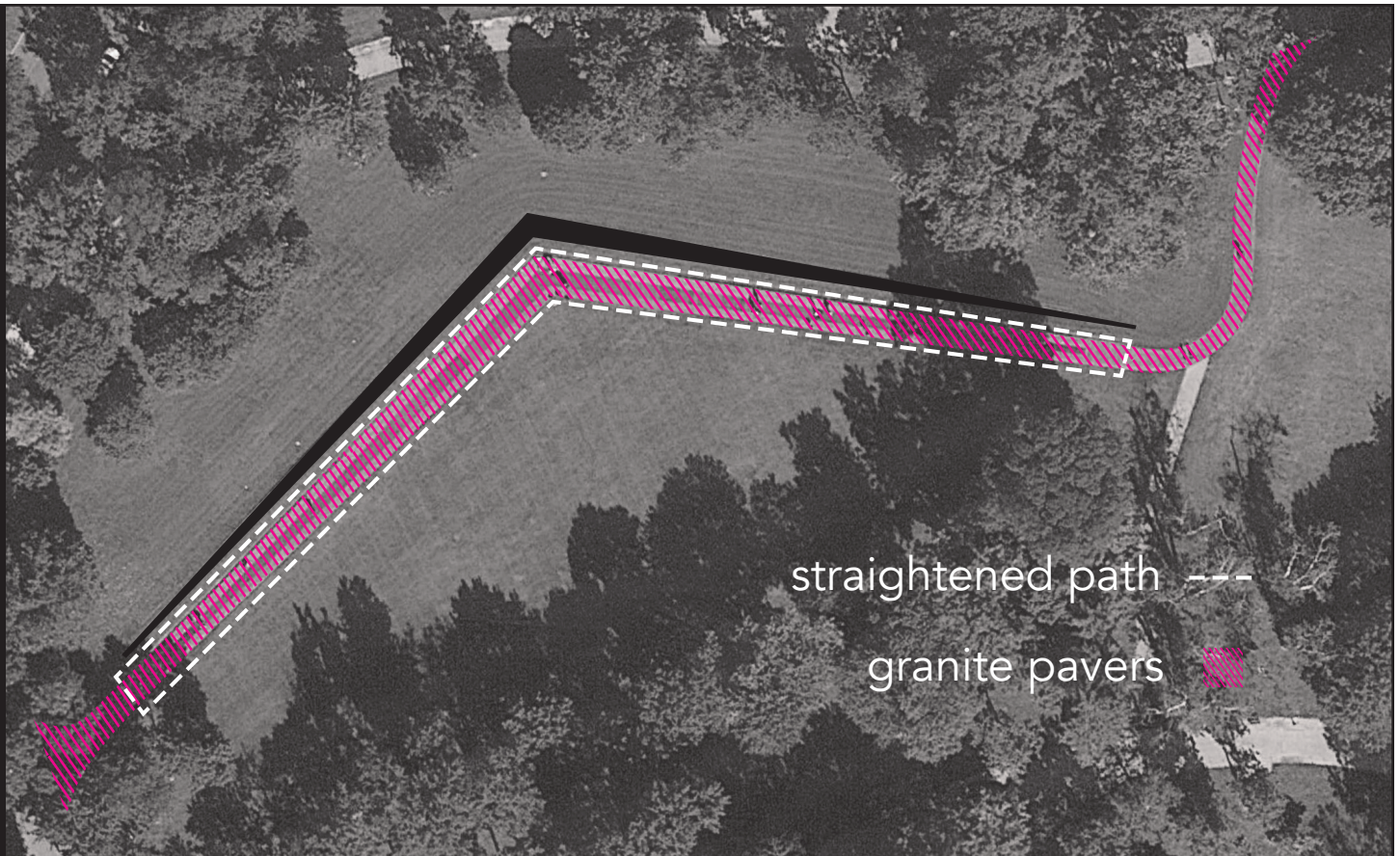


Figure 7: Ground Condition as Sequence

**Sequencing.** The Vietnam memorial is situated on a small plot at the west end of the national mall. Arrival is not explicitly sequenced, i.e., visitors are not forced to approach the site from any certain angle. However, the design does announce “arrival” in subtle ways. The paved asphalt paths which encircle the site and connect it to the neighboring monuments are winding and organic, slipping through the tree groves which surround the lawn. Both the language and material of the path change when the visitor approaches the actual memorial space. The paths straighten, adopting a distinctly linear language, and hug the walls at a consistent width, providing some contrast to the paths that bring the visitor to the site. Lin creates understood “thresholds” to cross at either entrance by changing the ground material from

asphalt to a stone paving system, providing a suggestion of entry and exit and defining the boundary of the memorial’s site in plan. It is worth noting that on the eastern side of memorial space, the material change happens well before the path straightens, thus a visitor approaching from that side is aware of entering the memorial’s greater site before they reach the actual wall. The southwestern material change happens at the same point that the path changes, thus the sequence changes slightly based on the approach, but does not change the experience of the actual memorial space, which is consistent from either side once the paving straightens.



Figure 8: Individual Experience

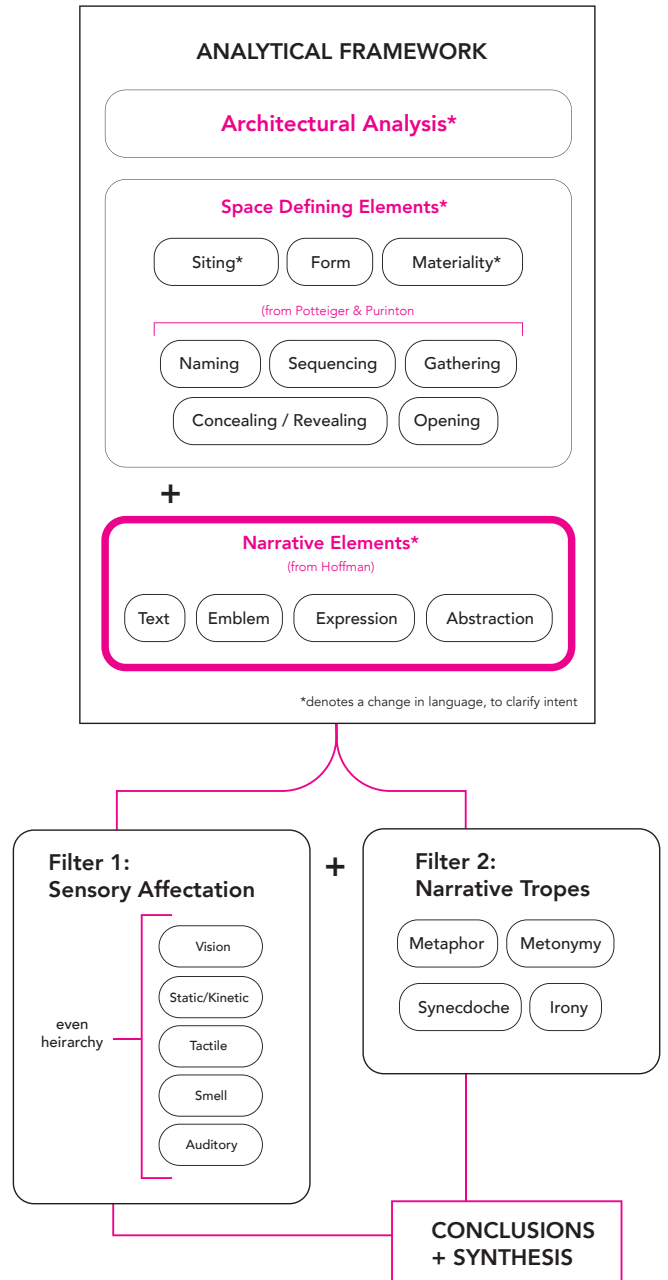
**Gathering.** The walls serve a pragmatic function as living record of dead and missing Vietnam veterans. It's symbology even allows for updates to the status of veterans missing-in-action or prisoners of war, if returned alive or positively identified as having died. In this way, it simply gathers information for public consumption and display, aiding the collective memory of the Vietnam conflict. Spatially, although the memorial does not have any discreet architectural spaces for congregating, it creates de facto gatherings by virtue of the experience it offers. The etched names tend to slow or even stop circulation through the memorial, especially for visitors who are searching for an individual name. For this reason, small groups are common to see along the walls. In turn, the dimension of the path is such that visitors occupy close

quarters, especially when moving in opposite directions. In this way, even the lone visitor is forced into a shared experience when viewing the wall. This creates an important psychological effect that has to do with the scalability of experience: most visitors will experience the space and subject matter both as an individual and part of a collective.

**Revealing/Concealing.** As previously stated, depending on arrival angle, visual access to the sunken walls of the memorial varies greatly, meaning that the memorial could either gradually come into view or slowly disappear, depending on the path of arrival or departure. The surrounding tree groves preceded the memorial's opening, and though they define the space it occupies, the canopy is high enough that they do nothing to mask the project visually as one approaches. Although Maya Lin's project is one of the simplest memorial spaces ever conceived, and intentionally offers little in terms of architectural dramatics, its choices in terms of the information it chooses to withhold is what made it uniquely controversial in 1982. The pioneering design is notably neutral, offering no political posturing related to the United States' role in the conflict or on the outcome. The choice to "conceal," or more accurately omit, polarizing information/opinions is one reason Lin's proposal has become a canonical and timeless precedent for memorial design, ushering in entirely new strategies of commemoration.

**Opening.** The “opening” component of the analysis is heavily related to the “revealing/ concealing” portion. By creating a neutral space for reflection and reconciliation, Lin contributed one of the first American examples of memorials which could be defined as “open” in Potteiger and Purinton’s dichotomy. The space is participatory and “nonscripted,” allowing for varied interpretations and changing discourse, which have certainly manifested over the forty years since its opening. The memorial has remained appropriate even as the dialogue surrounding the United States’ involvement in Vietnam has continually evolved and shifted, a strong testament to its dialectic sensitivity.

“NARRATIVE ELEMENTS” Part 2 of the analysis follows, examining the project through Hoffman’s theoretical lens.



**Text.** The employment of text is incredibly important to the Vietnam war memorial's power as a commemorative space. The importance of the names as both an impactful field condition and an archival document has been stated. However, the ordering of the text also plays an important role in Maya Lin's concept: the first and final deaths of the conflict, sixteen years removed from each other (1959 and 1975), are presented next to each other at the meeting of the two walls, where the memorial's depth is greatest. Lin describes the move as "thus closing the circle of the time span of the war." If the journey along the walls of the memorial is abstracted into a narrative journey, the choice to divide the chronology (or action) in half and bring the first and final moments together is a significant and powerful one: it presents the information in an unnatural way and provokes the viewer to formulate an opinion on whether the conflict was of an appropriate length, and whether they believe the deaths, from first to last, were justified or necessary.

**Emblem.** The Vietnam Memorial's original design does not include examples of "emblem" as Hoffman defines it.

**Expression.** The material expression of Maya Lin's proposal is supportive of her concept, which was "cutting into the earth and polishing its open sides, like a geode;" she relies on the reflectivity to achieve her described goal: "I wanted the memorial to create a private and personal connection with each viewer to those names." Functionally, Lin intends to prompt a substitution of the self for the memorialized within the visitor, stemming from narrative empathy.

**Abstraction.** The shape of the wall, especially when combined with the chronology of the two halves, can easily be interpreted as an abstraction of the war's narrative action. As the visitor progresses along the path, dipping below

the ground level and gradually reaching the point where the two sides meet, the depth of the wall increases: an abstraction of the war's "rising action" and mounting death toll (represented literally by the etched names). The wall's apex implies the height of the conflict, and the ensuing turn presents a figurative "denouement" The long ascension, from the deepest part of Lin's depression in the landscape, provides an equal-and-opposite representation of the war's slow resolution. The process of viewing becomes participatory, a lived experience in the abstract, but indeterminate and neutral in its discourse.



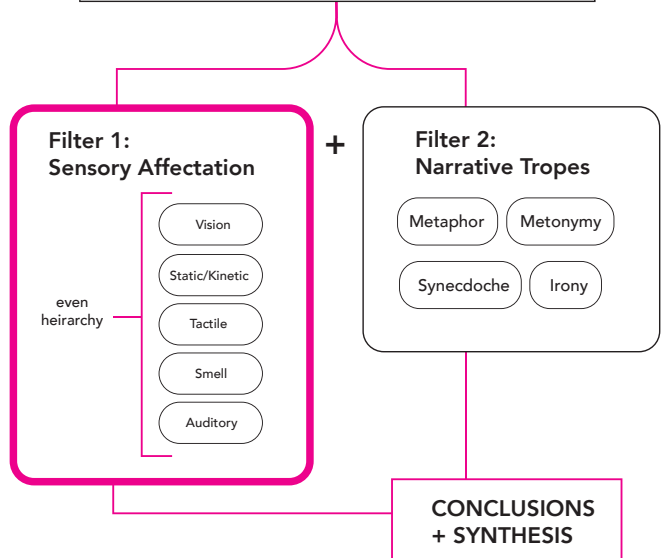
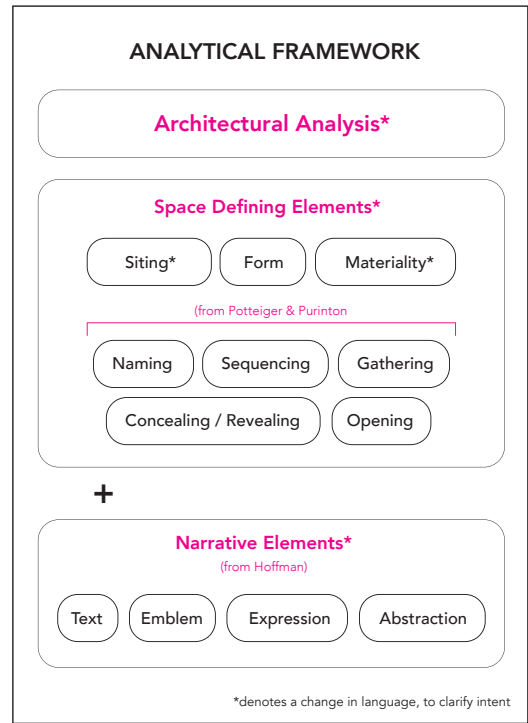
**Visual.** A significant effect of the memorial's siting strategy is their reflectivity, resulting in the layering of the visitor's reflected silhouette beneath the commemorated names. The walls face the southern sky, thus for most of the year (weather being a factor) at least one of them is receiving direct light. This creates beautiful and well-documented visual scenes, especially at sunrise and sunset.

**Tactility.** Perhaps the most important sensory feature is the tactile difference between the engraved names and the polished granite finish on the rest of the wall. It is extremely common to see visitors placing their fingers on the letters, with varying levels of emotional response. Additionally, the change in ground material from asphalt to stone pavers is a tactile signal of entry.

**Auditory.** As is the case with many memorials, the site is a contemplative and emotional space and thus imposes a silence in most visitors within its immediate surroundings.

**NOTE: Smell** and **Static/Kinetic**, although included as components of the framework, are not significant parts of this memorial experience and are not discussed here.

# Filter 1 : Sensory Affectation



**Metaphor.** The memorial is functioning as an extended metaphor for changes in warfare, including its goals and the relationship of governmental figures to the military. Lin ensures, through creating the association to the neighboring memorials, that there will be an internal comparison of the wars which Washington and Lincoln were involved in with the Vietnam conflict. The intent is that the visitor recognizes the incongruity between the contemporary and historical commemoration and is able to form their own opinion on whether the change is appropriate, and by extension ponder a larger relationship to warfare, culture, and leadership. Lin also uses the scale of the wall as metaphor, allowing it to represent the entire political narrative of the war in the abstract.

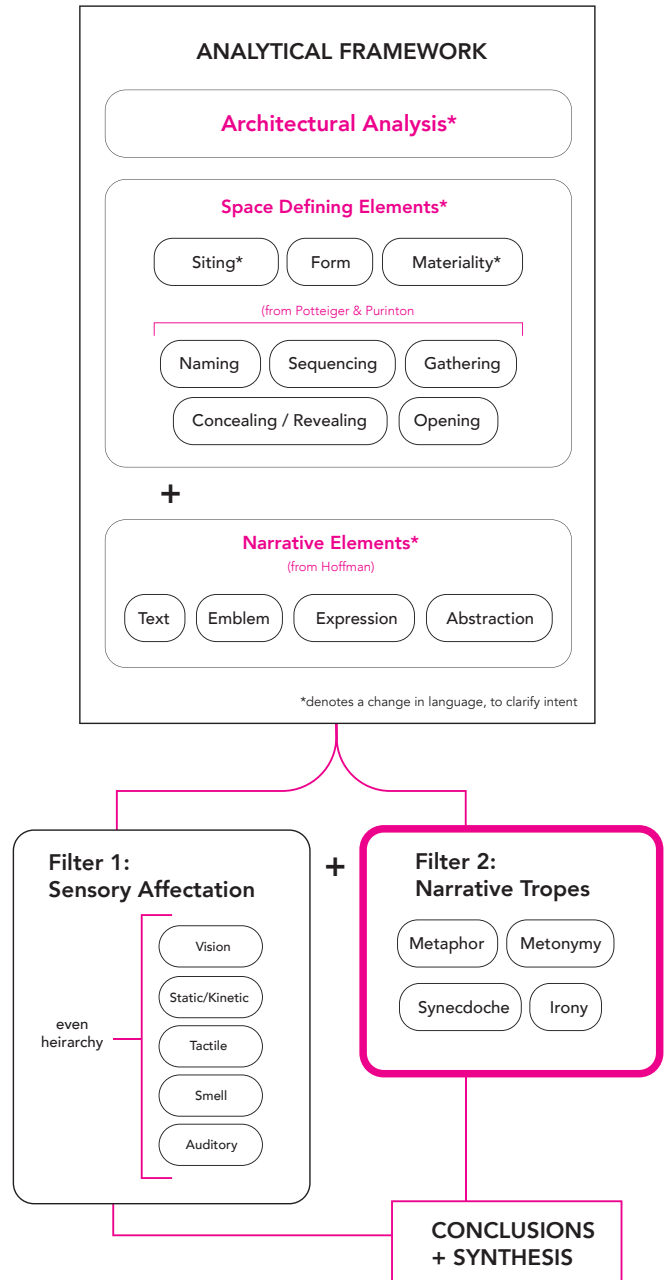
**Metonymy.** Through visual association via the memorial's siting and design, the monuments of the past, dedicated to our country's epic heroes (Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument), are thrown into harsh relief with the commemoration of modern war, which memorializes every soldier. According to Marita Sturkin in "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the memorial "stands in opposition to the codes of remembrance evidenced on the Washington Mall." Lin uses siting as a form of metonymy, invoking the psychological connection via distinct architectural association. A second instance of metonymy comes from the reflective superimposition of the names of the memorialized on the silhouette of the visitor. The intended result is a self-awareness in the viewer as they take in the subject matter, creating an implicit association between themselves and the commemorated dead, and evoking an internal dialogue on the nature of warfare and personal sacrifice.

**Synecdoche.** The over-58,000 names on the wall also serve as a strong example of two-way synecdoche, in which a single observable name can become representative of every other

death, especially if the visitor shares a personal relationship to it. However, viewing the names as an overwhelmingly vast list can also create the inverse effect, where the "field condition" of every name may bring to mind the death of the individual, even as an abstract concept.

**Irony.** Maya Lin, in 1982, was employing a highly respectful brand of irony, by expressly subverting all expectations for the articulation of a veteran-based memorial. The controversy which defined the memorial's early years stemmed from its potency and neutrality, uncommon at the time but adopted by many in the wake of the Vietnam Memorial's success.

## Filter 2: Narrative Tropes



# Architectural Analysis

## NATIONAL SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL

**Context.** The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation launched an international design competition in April 2003, for a permanent memorial on the site of the World Trade Center. Of 5201 submissions, the thirteen-person jury selected the entry “Reflected Absence” by Michael Arad and Peter Walker in January 2004. The memorial opened ten years after the attacks, on September 11, 2011. This analysis focuses on the surface-level memorial space only, not the greater museum complex.<sup>55</sup>

**“SPACE DEFINING ELEMENTS”** The following pages constitute part 1 of the analysis, highlighted below. Diagrammatic vignettes accompany some of the analysis points.

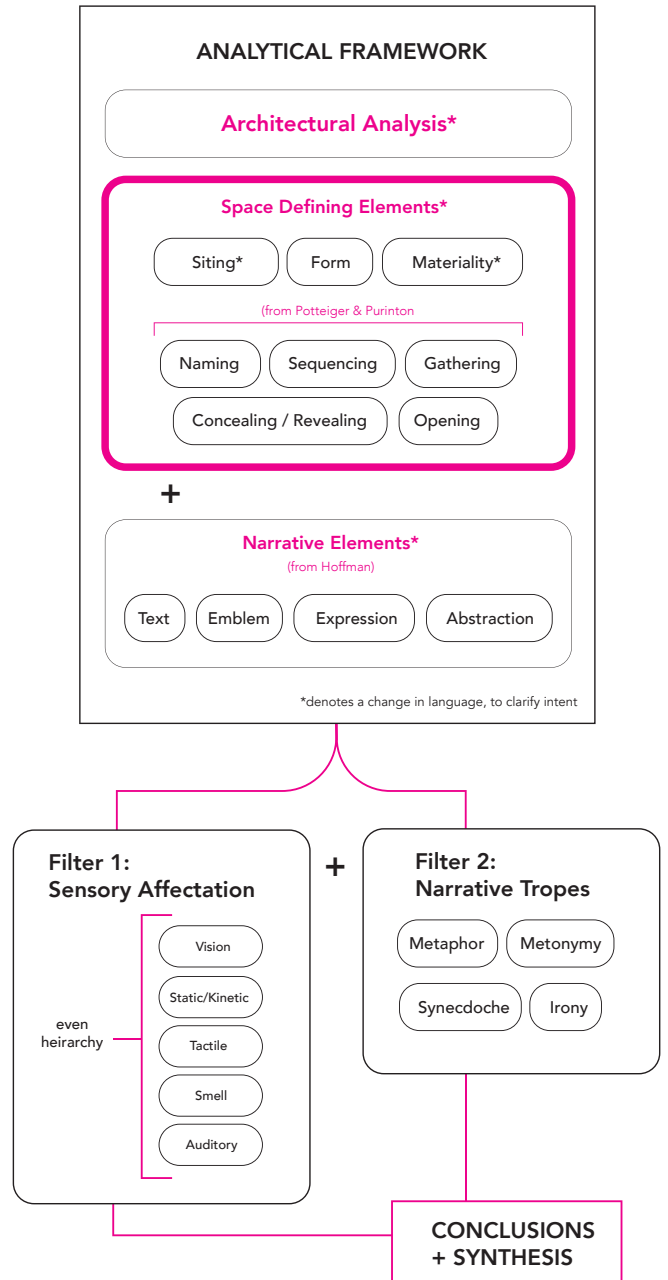




Figure 9: Voids in Downtown New York

**Siting.** Relative to the Vietnam memorial, the siting of the September 11 memorial holds a more distinct contextual weight. The realization of the memorial space on-site at Ground Zero holds immense significance, and the gravity of visitation is perhaps slightly more, given the strong memory associated with the location. Of even greater significance is the siting of the memorial's two reflective voids at the exact foundation points of the North and South towers. The implication of missing volumes is heightened by the natural tendency to direct the eyes upward to the skyline, where a distinct vertical absence will exist in contrast to the increasingly dense downtown context, forever.

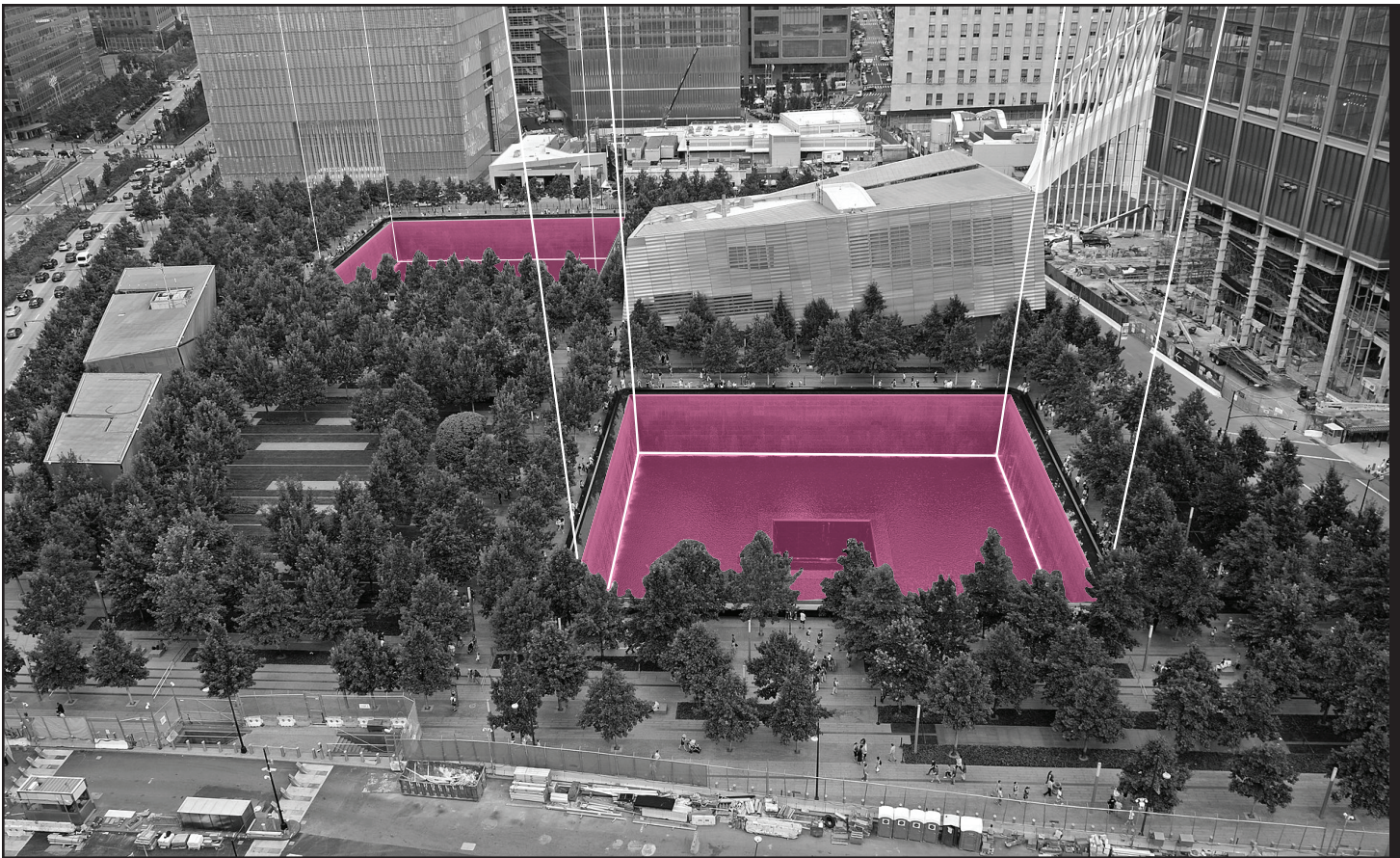


Figure 10: Implied Volumes

**Form.** The form may be the most important factor in Michael Arad's concept, formally called "Reflecting Absence." The sense of absence derived from the missing volumes at the foundation level is difficult to capture in image form, where the sensory experience is totally lost. Nearly thirty feet deep and 192 feet square, there is a distinct difference from the Vietnam memorial, where the reflection of loss is at the human scale. Here, the "reflected absence" is at the scale of the skyscraper.





Figure 11: Reflected Skyline

**Materiality.** Like Vietnam, the most important material properties of this design come from its moments of literal and implied reflection. The calmer, reflective pool at waist level, before the first thirty-foot cascade, reflects the surrounding skyline in much the same way that the Vietnam memorial silhouettes its visitors. At Ground Zero, the names hold slightly less weight relative to the overall design, but this is not to say that they are secondary. The “absence” quality carries to the articulation of the name, which are cut from the bronze panels, which gives them a tactile presence and allows the reflected light from the pools at night to subtly backlight them, while they can also hold items like roses or flags on days of celebration or as tributes from visitors.



Figure 12: National Memory at the Scale of the Individual

**Naming.** The naming of the space as the “National September 11 Memorial & Museum,” is important, for it communicates the collective ownership of the space, and consequently the memorialized event. The September 11 attacks, as a moment in time, are unique because the joint memory is nearly universal for anyone that was old enough to remember it, and so fundamentally did it change the domestic and international landscape in the years since that even those that were too young to have explicit memory of it (myself included) feel a possession of and emotional connection to the event. The naming of this as a “National” memorial, though it may seem like the default naming convention, holds great weight for an event as etched in the national consciousness as September 11, 2001. Beyond this, the strategy for expressing the

individual names shares much of its significance with the Vietnam memorial; although the scale and organization differ, the presence of every name in the bronze plates lends immense power to the space.



Figure 13: Layered Landscape

**Sequencing.** Like the Vietnam memorial, the location of Ground Zero does not lend itself to a controlled, choreographed approach. Thus, the landscape designed by Peter Walker fulfills a different function, which is to provide a sensory experience which prepares the visitor to approach and engage the waterfall pools. No matter where one enters the complex, one must circulate through at least two, usually more, planted rows of trees. Additionally, the trees create an auditory and sensory cushion as one gets further from the street, and the canopies are low enough that the space addresses and reflects the human scale. These factors working together allow a nearly universal quieting to take place from any angle of approach, whereby the noise from passing streets is gradually cut out and the cascade of the waterfall implies the

presence of the voids, before the visitor engages the bronze plates bearing the names of the memorialized and finally understands the scale of the volumes missing from the ground; the magnitude of which is not apparent until you are upon it, adding drama to the moment of arrival.



Figure 14: Collective Archive

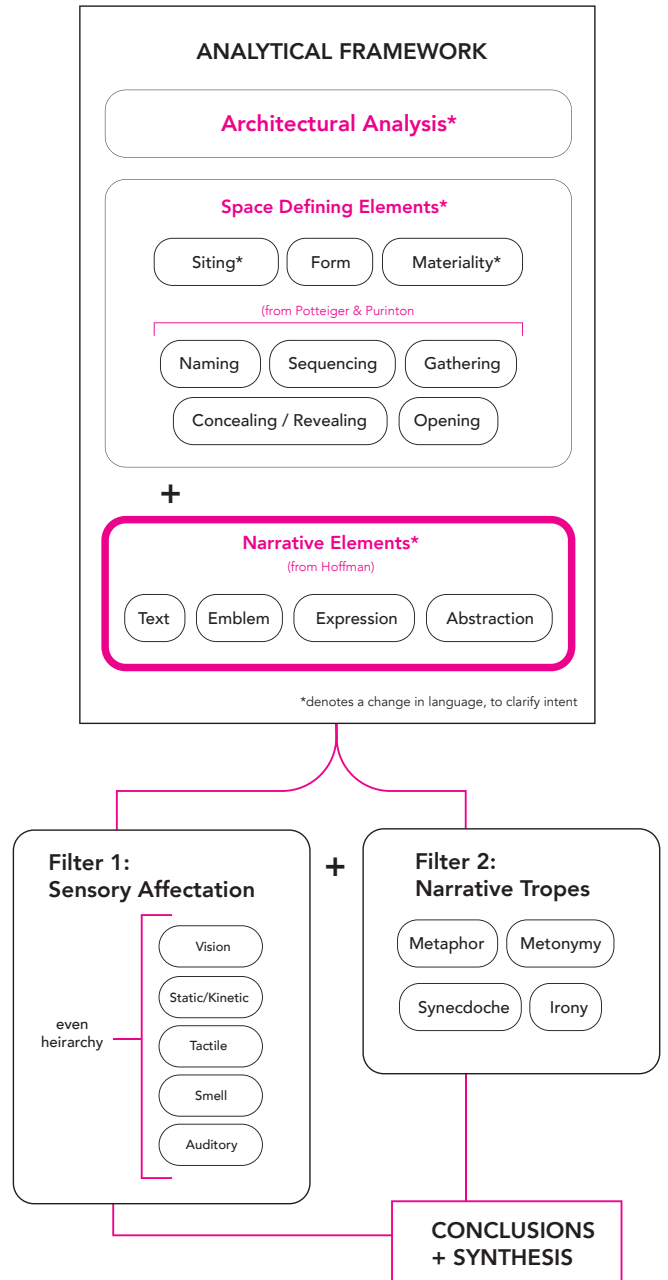
**Gathering.** The 9/11 Memorial is a strong example of Potteiger and Purinton's narrative practice of Gathering on both the architectural and cultural fronts. The landscape plan allows enough intermittent space in plan for congregation, and includes public furniture built into the landscape as well as ample green space, a commodity in downtown New York City. However, like in Vietnam, the memorial contributes the most as a gathering place for memory. Within a city that already exhibits a kind of shared consciousness, the significance of a place for community healing contributes again to an experience that is scalable: the memorial can literally be experienced as an individual, but the communal stake in the process of reconciliation means that any engagement is unavoidably a part of an understood collective response. In

addition, the memorial functions as an archive in the same way the Vietnam memorial does, a permanent record of the memorialized which has a place within public consciousness.

**Revealing/Concealing.** The September 11 Memorial uses the Reveal/Conceal convention, in both the architectural and political sense, to its advantage. The void spaces at the sites of the North and South towers happen entirely below the ground plane, save the bronze parapets which bear the names of the commemorated victims of the attacks. The visitor cannot perceive the size or depth of these missing volumes until they are feet away, and when standing at the edge, it is still impossible to see the bottom of the second waterfall cascade, and even upon arrival the depth of the void remains concealed entirely. Furthermore, the political context of the September 11 could not be more contrasting with the polarizing climate surrounding the Vietnam conflict, indeed, the months after the attacks were some of the most unified moments in recent national memory. However, patriotic trends notwithstanding, Michael Arad and Peter Walker's memorial landscape is void of political posturing, even when upward gestures of enthusiastic defiance and rebuilding could have been the default response (arguably, this is what the neighboring Freedom Tower has come to embody). This is an impressive and poignant display of restraint and sensitivity, following Maya Lin's example in the power of objective and neutral commemoration. It is worth noting that the architectural promenade and subject matter of the accompanying museum are slightly less impartial in their presentation of material, but not in a commodified or scripted manner. Regardless, this discussion is focused only on the ground-level memorial space.

**Opening.** The memorial landscape, like Maya Lin's proposal, gains its dialectic power from its neutrality and restraint. The September 11 Memorial is also a place that offers a participatory experience of reflection and reconciliation. It is another publicly integrated space which is open to dialogue and interpretation from all sources, without choreographing or prescribing any response from the visitor. The intent of the space is to present loss at its literal scale, and to provide a landscape in which many can participate in the collective process of interpreting the tragic subject matter without peripheral or spatial messaging designed to affect interpretation.

“NARRATIVE ELEMENTS” Part 2 of the analysis follows, examining the project through Hoffman’s theoretical lens.



**Text.** Here again, there is successful use of text at the point of contact between viewer and memorial. The names as void in the bronze parapets creates a point of tactile and visual registration, and the scale and spacing of the text, combined with the perceived scale of the memorial space overall, allows the visitor to extrapolate the large number of victims represented on the parapets.

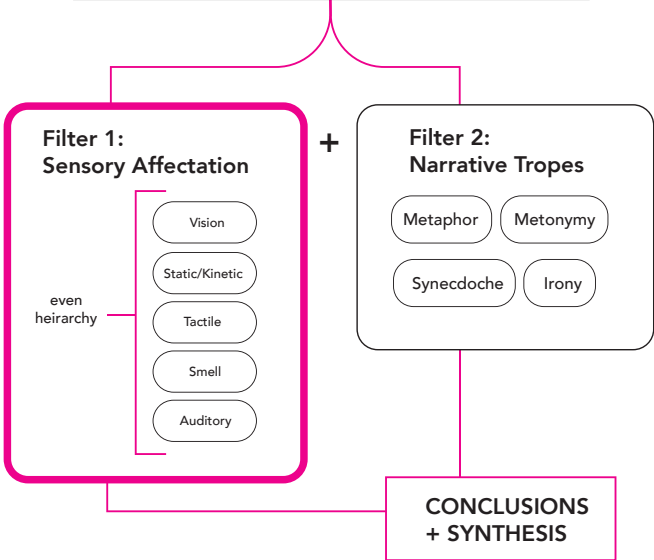
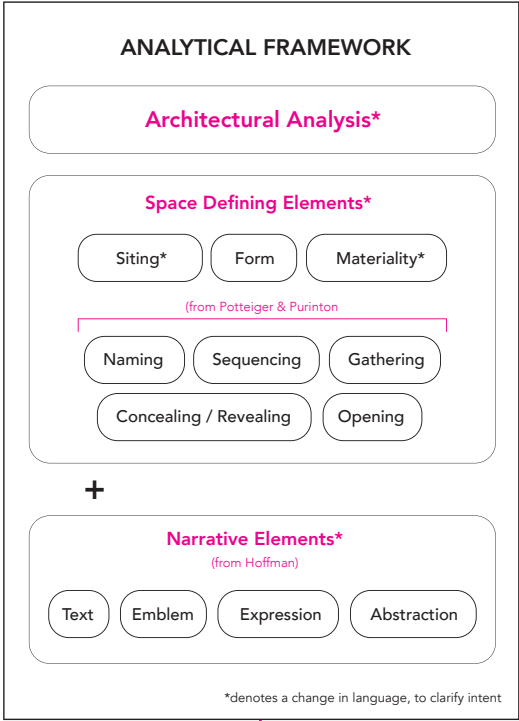
**Emblem.** The September 11 Memorial design does not include examples of representational “emblems” as Hoffman defines them.

**Expression.** In Hoffman’s framework, the strategy of “expression” relies on the implicit qualities of a landscape type or material to communicate a narrative. The September 11 Memorial recognizes itself as a memorial space of reconciliation and long-term community healing. Its extensive use of trees and plantings within the space, punctuated by the auditory background of the cascading waterfalls within the voids constitutes an oasis within downtown New York City. The material choices and plant life aid the process of reckoning and healing while providing an integrated space whose qualities are in demand for the downtown area.

**Abstraction.** The spatial conception of the memorial’s concept, “Reflecting Absence” is in the symbology of the voids as representative of the North and South towers which once stood in their place. The significance of the empty spaces in the ground and in the skyline, for most are enough to mentally invoke the entire narrative from the morning of September 11, 2001.



# Filter 1 : Sensory Affectation



**Visual.** Like the Vietnam memorial, a significant component of the project is its reflectivity, wherein the pools reflect the skyline and, by association, what is missing from it, thus the proposal's title Reflecting Absence. The water provides the calm reflective surface before spilling over the edge and down into the void, where the water is disturbed and the reflection is distorted. The bronze parapets also have a mild reflective quality which carries the concept all the way to the visitor's contact point, although the reflections are only suggestive silhouettes in the dark metal. In addition, the trees create a visual barrier between the memorial spaces and the streetscape beyond; the parallax phenomenon creates a shifting visual density as the user moves through the landscape.

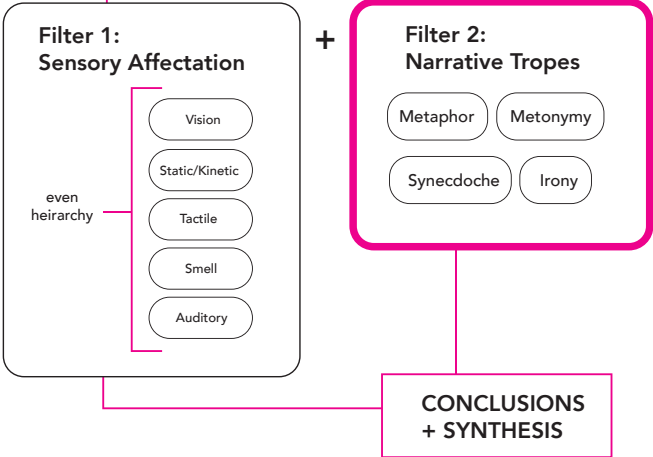
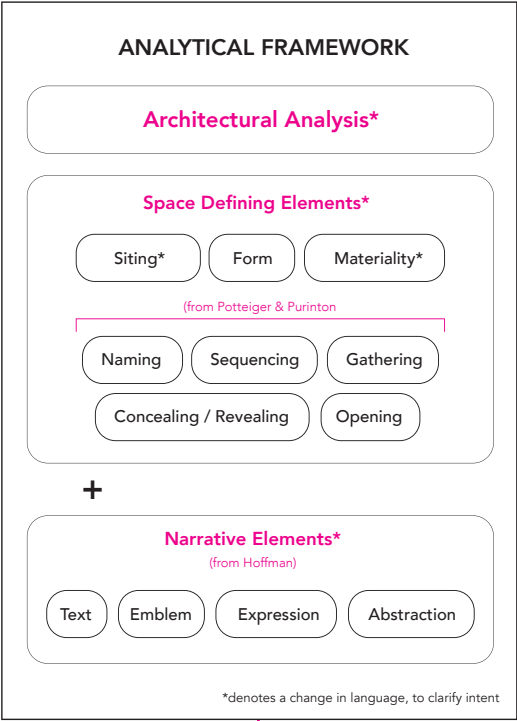
**Tactility.** Varying ground treatments across the landscape signal multiple uses for the space, particularly where the trees pull apart in plan to create gathering and recreational spaces of both hardscape (concrete) and softscape (grass), suggesting different uses. However, the most important tactile moment of the memorial is, like Vietnam, the articulation of the names of the memorialized. Their expression as voids in the bronze parapets allow for them to be experienced through touch as well as vision, and at the smallest scale, they carry the overarching theme of a carefully considered absence as a dialectic tool to recognize and consider tragic loss.

**Auditory.** The project's layout provides an auditory gradient as the visitor approaches the void spaces from the neighboring streets. The low tree canopy provides a buffer zone, and as the street noise moves to the background, the cascading waterfall creates an auditory cue which accompanies the approach to the bronze parapets at the edge of the voids. In this way, sound aids the street-to-void sequencing and helps to announce arrival, regardless of the viewer's entry point.

**Smell.** Whereas this sensory facet is not a factor of experience at the Vietnam memorial, the intensely metropolitan context of the September 11 Memorial means that a gradient of smell also helps signal a shift in spatial character. The oasis of trees within the context of Downtown New York provides a noticeable change in air quality, and the volume of cascading water at the voids themselves provides a familiar and fresh scent that, in conjunction with the improvement in air quality, dramatically increases the quality of the space relative to its surroundings, with a bolstering effect for the conceptual underpinnings of collective healing.

**NOTE: Static/Kinetic,** although included as a component of the framework, is not a significant part of this memorial experience and is not discussed here.

# Filter 2: Narrative Tropes



**Metaphor.** The entire complex is built on strategies of orchestrated absence, using scale and shape to lend spatial presence to things which are no longer there. This concept hinges on the underpinnings of metaphor as a narrative tool: substitution and similarity. The visitor is able to clearly recognize, because of the scale and siting of the voids, that they are representative of the North and South towers, and thus internally substitute the memory of the original complex with the new reality as they participate in the constant process of commemoration and contribute to the collective memory of the place.

**Metonymy.** The strongest narrative function of the landscape is to utilize metonymy by expressly giving the landscape's voids a distinct spatial presence, with the intention of implicitly building an association with what once stood there, and invoking the memory of the attacks in those that do remember September 11, 2001. The visual access to the pools also places the reflected skyline into this dialogue, furthering the narrative of a permanent absence within the cityscape. The narrative intent is to maintain a constant dual awareness of both what was and what is, as the viewer grapples with the memorial's tragic subject matter.

**Synecdoche.** The employment of synecdoche as a narrative trope here is the same in concept as in the Vietnam memorial. The bronze parapets, and the array of names registered on them, hold dialectic power as a public archive, but also as a representation of the magnitude of loss, and a reminder of each individual victim. However as in Maya Lin's project, the association works both ways. The contemplation and engagement with a single name is able to summon a memory, in the abstract, of every victim, thus the part represents the whole as much as the whole calls to mind the part. The September 11 Memorial takes this narrative tool one step further though, as a result of its scale. The voids themselves are able to act as a complete representational tool

for the "whole" of the tragedy, able to invoke the entire narrative of events and each victim with their presence alone, at a scale greater even than the collective list of the memorialized. One can imagine them working this way when viewed from a neighboring building, as opposed to engaging them at the ground level where the parapets are the point of engagement.

**Irony.** Potteiger and Purinton description of irony as a narrative acknowledgment of a "both/and" condition, or something that is "neither completely this nor that" seems to be an appropriate way of understanding the strategies employed by Arad and Walker here. Although this is perhaps not a traditional way of defining irony as a tool, and it is certainly not employed as a method of critique in the memorial, the awareness that the project lends the viewer is as a result of spatial duality which constantly embodies past and present. The narrative intent of the landscape is to constantly maintain a memory of something that was, but is no longer, while presenting a new landscape which can aid in the process of commemoration while possessing its own spatial value.

# Summary + Thematic Analysis

## **MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN**

**Scene Summaries.** A brief summary of each scene follows, along with a short description of the scene's narrative and dialectic importance within the body of the play. The descriptions and stage setting from Brecht is included for each scene; the descriptions would be displayed for the audience to read before the action of the scene begins, providing advance knowledge of what is about to unfold, thus their inclusion here. (See Appendix for the full assessment of the play's text, using Rosemary Ingham's method of script analysis, lifted from *From Page to Stage*.)

## Prologue.

We are given our first look at Mother Courage, her sons Eilif and Swiss Cheese and her dumb daughter Katrin, and the wagon which serves as the central set piece for each scene's action. Together, Mother Courage, Eilif and Swiss Cheese sing "The Song of Mother Courage," which tells the audience that Mother Courage earns her living by selling provisions to the military

## Scene 1.

*(Spring, 1624. In Dalarna, the Swedish king Gustavus is recruiting for the campaign in Poland. The canteen woman Anna Fierling, commonly known as Mother Courage, loses a son.)*

*(Highway outside a town. A Top Sergeant and a Recruiting Officer stand shivering.)*

In Scene 1, the Sergeant and Recruiting Officer discuss the necessity of war and the order which it offers to a populace which is otherwise prone to wastefulness and disarray. As Mother Courage and her children approach with the wagon and identify themselves, the military men become intrigued by her sons, and attempt to recruit them for military service, met with a strong rebuttal by Mother Courage. However, the Sergeant distracts Mother Courage by purchasing some drinks, and the Recruiting Officer is able to convince Eilif to enlist and slip away with him while Mother Courage is busy, although Katrin attempts to alert her but of course is unable to speak. Mother Courage dismisses the loss unceremoniously: "When a war gives you all you earn, one day it may claim something in return."

**Narrative Significance:** The conversation between the Sergeant and Recruiting Officer has an air of ironic absurdism to it, which amounts to commentary from Brecht on war being a means to an end for those in power, including a tool for profit and a method of control. Scene

1 also offers the first look at Mother Courage's tendency to put business first, sometimes allowing it to come before the immediate needs or well-being of those around her (ref).

## Scene 2.

*(In the years 1625 and 1626 Mother Courage journeys through Poland in the baggage train of the Swedish Army. She meets her brave son again before Wallhof Castle. Of the successful sale of a capon and great days before the brave son.)*

*(The tent of the Swedish Commander, and the kitchen next to it. Sound of cannon. In the kitchen.)*

Scene 2 sees Mother Courage haggling with the Cook, who the audience sees for the first time, over the sale of poultry, a capon. Her shrewdness and opportunism as a businesswoman are exhibited, for as soon as the Commander arrives with the Chaplain and Eilif, demanding meat for dinner, Mother Courage increases the price directly to the Cook's face. From the kitchen, Mother Courage recognizes Eilif, and she and the cook listen to him recount his tales of cunning from the battlefield from the kitchen. Eilif sings "The Fishwife and the Soldier" which describes a soldier which is eager to go off to war but is warned of its dangers. He doesn't heed the warning and in the long run is killed by the war effort, metaphorically represented by an icy sea. Mother Courage joins him for the third stanza of the song, and they are reunited briefly.

**Narrative Significance:** Scene 2, beyond briefly introducing us to the important characters the Cook and the Chaplain, serves as a point of ironic foreshadowing and commentary on war, for "The Fishwife and the Soldier" is directly representative of Eilif's path. His bravery and enthusiasm for the war effort eventually lead to his execution for military acts in peacetime; essentially a technicality.

### Scene 3.

*(Three years pass, and Mother Courage, with parts of a Finnish regiment, is taken prisoner. Her daughter is saved, her wagon likewise, but her honest son dies.)*

*(A camp. The regimental flag is flying from a pole. Afternoon. Mother Courage's clothes-line is tied to the wagon at one end, to a cannon at the other. She and Katrin are folding the wash on the cannon. At the same time she is bargaining with the Ordinance Officer over a bag of bullets. Swiss Cheese, wearing his Paymaster's uniform, looks on. Yvette Pottier, a very good-looking young person, is sewing at a colored hat, a glass of brandy before her. Her red boots are nearby; she is in stocking feet.)*

At the outset of Scene 3, we learn that Swiss Cheese has become paymaster for the Finnish regiment due to his honesty, but also his simplicity. He leaves with the Ordinance Officer, and Mother Courage predicts that if he makes no mistakes, the war could make him a living, which leads to a discussion between Mother Courage and Yvette, a prostitute who has now married a military officer, about the war ruining her ability to love. Yvette sings "The Camp Follower's Song," which gives us a glimpse into her past in which, during a spring and summer of offering her services to an army regiment she fell in love with a man she calls "Peter Piper," but he left with his regiment in the fall and she was ruined. Briefly, Katrin demonstrates an interest in Yvette's red boots, presumably not knowing what they represent.

The Chaplain and the Cook from Scene 2 enter—they are part of the protestant Finnish regiment—discussing the merits of war and whether religious ends justify the means, while both flirting with Mother Courage. The Chaplain insists that the Swedish king's religion makes their conflict a holy war, while the Cook offers a critique of that stance on the basis of the mass plunder, rape, etc. that goes on. The Cook sings

"Luther's Hymn," a short piece which states that although God is a mighty ally, during war there is no force stronger than Satan.

Suddenly, a surprise attack by Catholic forces disrupts the scene. The Ordinance Officer reappears and runs off accompanied by a soldier, and the Cook follows them, promising to return. Shortly after Swiss Cheese follows clutching the regiment's cashbox, which he hides in the wagon as the group, now with Chaplain in tow, retreat.

A blackout signals a passage of time, and three days later the scene re-opens on camp. Briefly, the Chaplain discusses his plight as a Protestant cleric who must deny his status as a religious man to survive, later even uttering the phrase "God bless our Catholic flag!" Two men approach. They are spies, recognizing Swiss Cheese as an officer for the protestants, and retreat. Swiss Cheese then leaves to hide the cash box but is captured by them. They are questioned and deny knowing him.

Another blackout ensues, and the scene resets with Mother Courage, the Chaplain and Katrin forming a plan to get money to pay for Swiss Cheese's release by pawning the wagon to Yvette and her Colonel husband, but they can't succeed in getting an immediate payment. Mother Courage sends Yvette to bargain for Swiss Cheese's life, but doesn't want to lose much money and lowballs the offer, although she acknowledges to Katrin that she'll pay a full ransom if that's what it takes. However, she continues to haggle, not wanting to lose all she has, and the regiment loses patience, executing Swiss Cheese by firing squad. The cruel irony of his name becomes clear to the viewer. The sun sets and rises again, and they bring Swiss Cheese's body to see if he can be identified. Mother Courage again denies knowing him.

**Narrative Significance:** This is by far the longest scene in the play, and has immense

dialectic power. The dialogue by Yvette on love in the face of wartime and the debate between the Cook and Chaplain on the merits of religious war are both instances of Brecht offering his perspectives on its perverse and all-encompassing nature. The punctuation of these conversations by song which distill the commentary is an excellent example of Brecht's alienation effect, these songs are meant to directly address the audience, with the intent of building a dichotomy between life during war and life outside of it and allowing the audience to draw their own conclusions. The Chaplain's denial of his religion in the interest of his survival is also the beginning of Brecht's critique of religion, and its questionable role in waging war. This commentary continues to develop in the following scenes.

The second half of this scene, in which Swiss Cheese is executed, is the strongest display of Mother Courage's ethical quandary, the recurring theme of her will to survive and provide resulting in the death of her children. Her insistence on haggling the price of her son's life so as to not go completely broke is meant to disturb and alienate the audience, and her subsequent refusal to identify him as her own furthers the effect, denying the audience any catharsis for his unnecessary death. Here, Brecht is leveraging his Epic Theory as much as possible.

#### **Scene 4.**

*(Mother Courage sings The Song of the Great Capitulation.)*

*(Outside an officer's tent. Mother Courage waits. A Regimental Clerk looks out of the tent.)*

Mother Courage is waiting to lodge a complaint with the captain of the oppositional Catholic regiment which executed Swiss Cheese and captured them in Scene 3. She continues to insist that she is innocent and was not sheltering Swiss Cheese, but is encouraged to keep quiet if she wants to keep making money as their only source

of goods. A young soldier approaches, agitated and ready to fight the captain, who let the young man swim into the river to retrieve the cashbox that Swiss Cheese had abandoned, but took the money for himself. Mother Courage sings "The Song of the Great Capitulation," which describes the process of being worn down by life, watching the fire of youth die and proverbially "falling in line," finally understanding one's place as part of a larger machine. The young soldier is convinced to swallow his pride, and Mother Courage follows suit, deciding not to complain to the captain and accept her new lot as prisoner of war, but making money.

**Narrative Significance:** This short scene's primary focus is the song which interrupts the action, through which Brecht addresses the audience, forcing an internal dialogue on the apparent futility of seeking justice in the context of a system which is designed for the success of the already powerful. Here, Brecht's ties to Marxism and his subscription to conflict theory collide reveal themselves, offering a critique of class separation and prompting the audience to consider the morality of the situation, and subtly forcing the question "how could this be better, or even just different?"

#### **Scene 5.**

*(Two years have passed. The war covers wider and wider territory. Always on the move, the little wagon crosses Poland, Moravia, Bavaria, Italy, and again Bavaria. 1631. General Tilly's victory at Leipzig costs Mother Courage four shirts.)*

*(The wagon stands in a war-ruined village. Victory march in the distance. Two Soldiers are being served at a counter by Kattrin and Mother Courage. One of them has a woman's fur coat about his shoulders.)*

This short scene opens on two soldiers trying to secure a drink, but unable to pay because they arrived too late to the battle to plunder anything. The Chaplain stumbles onstage, begging for



help to attend to a wounded family in a nearby farmhouse. He brings a woman and peasant to the wagon, wanting to dress their wounds but Mother Courage has no bandages and denies him use of her shirts. The soldiers offer short commentary on the inability of cannons to tell Protestant from Catholic. Kattrin helps the Chaplain, who overpowers Mother Courage and uses the shirts as bandages. Kattrin runs in the house to save a baby, and is overjoyed at the small moment she is afforded to care for it. The soldiers attempt to steal away with the bottle, but Mother Courage catches them and forces them to pay with the fur coat: "it's stolen goods anyhow."

**Narrative Significance:** This scene is the first instance of Kattrin working as a narrative foil for Mother Courage. The stinginess and unrelenting business-first attitude of Mother Courage persists, and would spell the doom of the peasant family, as it did Swiss Cheese, if not for the intervention of Kattrin and the Chaplain. Kattrin, however, not only stands up to her mother but finds immense fulfillment in a brief caretaker role, placing her in full ethical opposition to her mother. This is a continuation of an ongoing theme: Kattrin's demonstrated virtue, which was first displayed when she attempted to save Eilif from recruitment in Scene 1.

### Scene 6.

*(The Catholic General Tilly is killed before the city of Ingolstaadt and is buried in state. Mother Courage gives her views of heroes, and the Chaplain sings a song about the duration of the war. Kattrin gets the red boots at last. The year is 1632.)*

*(The interior of a canteen tent. The inside part of the counter is seen at the rear. Funeral march in the distance. The Chaplain and the Regimental Clerk are playing checkers. Mother Courage and Kattrin are taking inventory.)*

At the counter, a soldier approaches in search of drink, briefly singing "Battle Hymn" which describes a soldier's need for drink and sex while on the campaign. This prompts a discussion of how long the war will go on, and the Chaplain advises Mother Courage to continue to stock her wagon. He sings "The Army Chaplain's Song," which discusses war's ability to persist eternally, but also the human ability to find whatever they need during it: including food, drink, sex, sleep, and even salvation. But the song ends with a caveat: if humanity couldn't find a way to get on during war, the war would have to stop, but since they can, it drags on, thus why should it end, if it gives us purpose and peace doesn't?

The Chaplain begins to chop firewood at Mother Courage's request, and he confesses that he would like something more from their relationship, but she denies him, insisting that her only intent is to get by. Kattrin stumbles in with a head injury, but Mother Courage consoles her by offering her Yvette's red boots, which are ignored. Mother Courage tells the Chaplain that she doesn't believe Kattrin will be able to find a husband with the scar that will form, and reveals that the war also took her voice when she was young.

**Narrative Significance:** This scene fulfills a few important dialectic functions. Brecht's first point of commentary comes from the Chaplain's song, which identifies to the audience the self-sustaining quality of war, but also the paradoxical nature of its motivators, including religion. Second, the Chaplain's expression of interest in Mother Courage is another look at the moral ambiguity at the center of his character, who continually preaches religion, and indeed demonstrates good deeds, but in this scene advocates for both endless war and a relationship which would be outside the confines of marriage. The audience is presented with these actions at face value, and the Chaplain receives no punishment for

his moral transgressions, thus the viewer may formulate their own opinion on his role, and by representative extension, religion's.

### Scene 7.

*(A highway. The Chaplain and Katrin are pulling the wagon. It is dirty and neglected, through new goods are hung around it.)*

Mother Courage offers one quote: "I won't have my war all spoiled for me! Destroys the weak, does it? Well, what does peace do for 'em? Huh?" She then sings a reprise of "The Song of Mother Courage" from the Prologue.

**Narrative Significance:** Although only seconds long, this scene offers a powerful metaphor via the visual state of the wagon: totally worn out but carrying brand new goods. The visual of the Chaplain and Katrin pulling the wagon as Mother Courage walks beside, hoping that the war will not end, is telling.

### Scene 8.

*(In the same year, the Protestant king fell in the battle of Lutzen. The peace threatens Mother Courage with ruin. Her brave son performs one heroic deed too many and comes to a shameful end.)*

*(A camp. Sumer morning. In front of the wagon, an old woman and her son. The son drags a large bag of bedding. Mother Courage is inside the wagon.)*

Mother Courage refuses to buy a bag of bed feathers from an old woman and son. In the distance, bells and voices begin to declare peace in the land. Mother Courage is visibly distressed, for she has just stocked up on supplies on the Chaplain's advice. Suddenly, the Cook approaches, fulfilling his promise of return years later. Mother Courage inquires about Eilif and the Cook says he was also on his way there. As he and Mother Courage catch up, it is clear that he is broke after his regiment disbanded,

thus he is there for resources, but is still his same flirtatious self with Mother Courage. He scolds the Chaplain for giving Mother Courage advice on her business, while offering advice of his own, and the fight escalates to a near-physical altercation, when suddenly Yvette approaches, though fat and aged significantly, and recognizes the cook as the "Peter Piper" from her past, and begins to curse him in front of everyone including Mother Courage, who opts to go to market to sell her surplus and pulls Yvette with her.

The Cook and Chaplain are left alone, realize their lot is similar, and both agree to leave the wagon and go their separate ways before Mother Courage returns. Just then, Eilif arrives, escorted by two soldiers who are going to execute him for raiding a family's house. He explains that it is all he had ever done, but now it is a crime punishable by death since peace has come to the land. He ultimately asks that the Cook and the Chaplain tell her nothing, and is led away to his death. The Chaplain follows him, suggesting that he could need a priest.

Mother Courage comes back, having learned that the war has been back on for three days. The Cook tells her Eilif was there, but bends the truth by saying that he was the same as before, and was simply performing more heroic deeds. The three depart, singing "The Song of Mother Courage" as the Cook and Katrin pull the wagon.

**Narrative Significance:** In this scene, the similarities between the Chaplain and Cook are brought into focus, and the critical dialogue surrounding them and the institutions they represent becomes clearer: the military and religion are both in the war for questionable, and almost certainly profit-driven reasons, according to Brecht's commentary. Eilif's death comes quickly and without warning, and is a tool that Brecht uses to comment on the absurdity of the

line between war and peace: Eilif is arrested and killed for something which he was celebrated for in wartime. Unbeknownst to anyone except Mother Courage, who is conducting business, again, the war has resumed and Eilif should not be executed. This is another scene which alienates the viewer, for Eilif's death is unjust and frustrating, but Mother Courage doesn't even learn of it, thus any catharsis is denied, and the scene is treated casually. In addition, the Chaplain's exit is his final in the play. He never returns to the action, yet his exit holds little to no significance for the other characters.

### Scene 9.

*(The religious war has lasted sixteen years, and Germany has lost half its inhabitants. Those who are spared in battle die by plague. Over once-blooming countryside hunger rages. Towns are burned down. Wolves prowl the empty streets. In the autumn of 1643 we find Mother Courage in the Fichtelbirge not far from the road the Swedish army is taking. Winter has come early and is severe. Business is bad. Only begging remains. The Cook receives a letter from Utrecht and is sent packing.)*

*(In front of a half-ruined parsonage. Early winter. A grey morning. Gusts of wind. Mother Courage and the Cook at the wagon in rags.)*

The Cook tells Mother Courage that his mother has died, and he has gotten word that he can take over her inn, and wants her to join him. However, he refuses to have Katrin go with them, as three would be too many. As the Parson wakes, they sing "The Song of the Wise and Good," which describes the futility of virtue. The Parson offers them soup, and she and the Cook go to retrieve it. Katrin attempts to quickly pack a bundle and leave, thinking she is being abandoned, but Mother Courage catches her, telling her that she couldn't be parted from her wagon, although she just divulged to the Cook that she is tired of wandering. However, she won't be parted from Katrin, so they dump the

Cook's things and leave him there.

**Narrative Function:** This scene's main purpose is the singing of "The Song of the Wise and Good" as a commentary on the seeming uselessness of virtue in wartime, which as "The Fishwife and the Soldier" did for Eilif, foreshadows Katrin's cause of death in the near future.

### Scene 10.

*(On the highway, Mother Courage and Katrin are pulling the wagon. They come to a prosperous farmhouse. Someone inside is singing.)*

They hear from the road "The Song of Shelter," which describes scenes of comfort, stability and safety.

**Narrative Function:** This brief vignette is meant to be a moment of pure contrast, fueling an internal dialogue in the viewer regarding the cause of their plight and ways that it could have been different.

### Scene 11.

*(January 1636. Catholic troops threaten the Protestant town of Halle. The stones begin to talk. Mother Courage loses her daughter and journeys onward alone. The war is not yet near its end.)*

*(The wagon, very far gone now, stands near a farmhouse with a straw roof. It is night. Out of the wood come a Lieutenant and Three Soldiers in full armor.)*

This scene sees the soldiers ambush the peasants' home. Mother Courage is in town conducting business, leaving Katrin to watch the wagon. During the ambush, the soldiers demand directions to the local town, which their regiment is going to raid. The peasants have no choice, they cooperate, but Katrin sneaks away and grabs a drum from the wagon. Climbing on the roof, she begins to bang the drum to warn the nearby town. The soldiers attempt to

stop her, but cannot, so they shoot her. But she was successful in warning the town before her death, as the alarm bells can be heard in the distance. Her death was not in vain, but once again Mother Courage's efforts to support them pulled her away in the crucial moment, and her last child met their demise as a result.

**Narrative Function:** This scene is the fulfillment of "The Song of the Wise and Good," in which the payment for Kattrin's virtuous acts is finally revealed: death. It is yet another alienating moment for the audience in which the death of Mother Courage's child feels avoidable, yet it is presented in dismissive fashion, with the Lieutenant simply stating "So that ends the noise." Brecht's ultimate goal, by presenting the third child killed as a result of their virtue (after Eilif's bravery and Swiss Cheese's honesty) is to call into question not the morality Mother Courage, but the context in which she exists. Holding true to the theory of the modern tragedy, even within the bounds of his own Epic Theatre, Brecht does not punish characters because they deserve it, but calls into question the validity of their socio-political landscape by making them functional demonstrations of a system where any virtue becomes a sentence for death and/or suffering.

### **Scene 12:**

*(Toward morning. The drums and pipes of troops on the march, receding. In front of the wagon Mother Courage sits by Kattrin's body. The Three Peasants of the last scene are standing near.)*

Mother Courage sings Kattrin a lullaby of sorts, before coming to terms with her death. She leaves the Peasants, who ask if she has anyone left. She affirms, unknowingly, that she still has her son Eilif. Leaving money for the expense of Kattrin's burial, she picks up the wagon herself and leaves with the final regiment, who are singing "The Song of Mother Courage" as they depart the town.

**Narrative Function:** The final scene settles nothing, but leaves Mother Courage alone with nobody left, yet doing exactly what she has always done, which is follow the war, as she has to. This is a strong moment of commentary to finish the play on, as the action offers the viewer no resolutions. As a modern tragedy, the play does not deal in punishment, but rather suffering. Mother Courage's external trials and loss function as a critique of the system she exists as a piece of.

# Synthesis, Discussion

## PARALLELS

From the thorough analysis of two memorials and Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*, significant theoretical parallels and methodological practices have emerged between the design of contemporary memorial spaces and the conception of the modern tragedy – specifically Brecht's Epic Theatre: at their core, each medium has the capacity to drive dialogue via selective and measured treatment of narrative elements relative to their own medium.

The programmatic requirements of memorials necessitate an understanding of the past, relative to a perceived collective future, and must form an ideological bridge from one to the other within the mind of the viewer. Brecht asks the same of his audience in perceiving the tragedy of *Mother Courage*, just as the Ancient tragedies sought to explore human nature via tales of tragic heroes. The two mediums, like most forms of storytelling, use narrative tropes to achieve

this goal, of the types defined by Potteiger and Purinton. Metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony have important roles in each medium, as outlined in the preceding analysis, and form the psychological foundation on which an evolving dialogue can be formed.

Beyond these core tenets of narrative practice, there are three significant points of methodological interest bridging the two analyzed mediums: Scalable Experience, "Open" Dialogue, and the Self-Aware Audience.

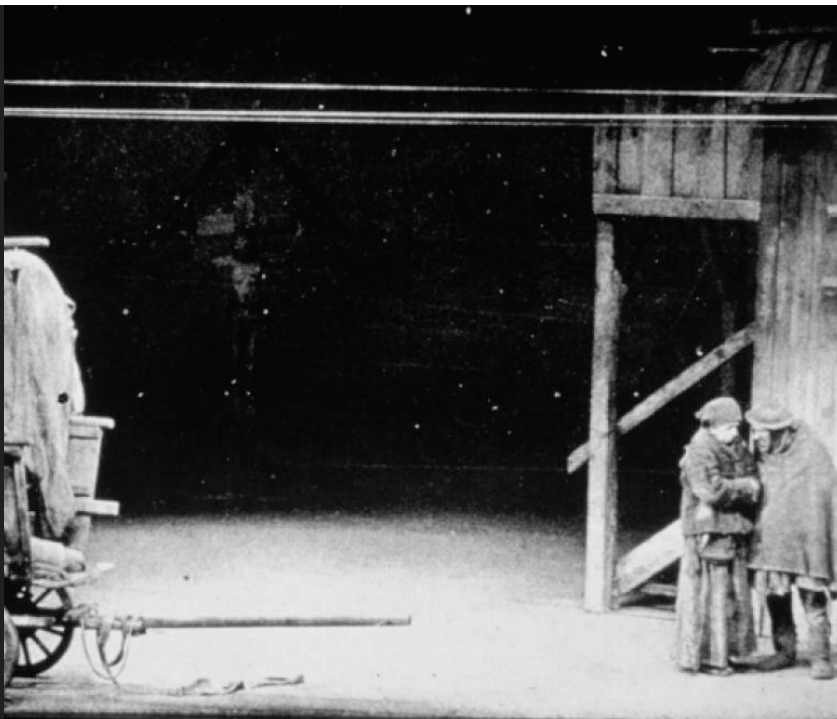


Figure 15: 1949 East Berlin production of *Mother Courage*

**Scalable Experience.** Although this component is true of most theatre, the scalability of the experience is nevertheless an essential component of the Tragedy and a shared trait with memorial landscapes.

The modern tragedy, and particularly Brecht's Epic Theatre, *Mother Courage* included, was designed as a spectacle which could engage the minds of the audience. The revolutionary notion that theatre could serve as a tool for critical dialogue, even political theory in Brecht's case, would naturally rely on the individual audience members to craft the internal dialogue based on the familiarity or unfamiliarity of the unfolding action (recall Pottle and Purinton's conjecture that narrative relies on both the communicated content and the method of telling). However, for Brecht's theory (and indeed any Tragedy, back to the Ancients) to truly possess any relevance as a methodology, a jump from individual pondering to collective adoption and action is essential.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the National September 11 Memorial were also designed to accommodate perception and engagement at the national, local and individual scales. Herein lies part of their power as a driver of dialogue around historic events, for interpretations, opinions and responses across these scales of interaction vary widely. The enduring power and relevancy of these spaces can be partially attributed to the dual consideration of the individual experience and collective reception.

In each case, individual perception of narrative intent is crucial for the successful communication of the subject matter. Yet in both cases, there is an equally important role the individual must play as part of a participatory collective; the response to the narrative within the design or performance is important at both scales.





Figure 16: Helene Weigel performs Mother Courage's "Silent Scream"

**"Open" Dialogue.** Potteiger and Purinton's concept of the "open" landscape as a dialectic tool is present in both the analyzed memorial spaces, and reflects a fundamental quality of all critical theatre, but especially modern Tragedies like *Mother Courage*. It is important to note that while these are good examples of "open" dialectic tools, they are not necessarily neutral ones. Brecht's Epic Theatre is of course a highly politicized methodology, actively engaged with Marx's political theories. However, even apolitical statements from the designers of the memorials are making a statement through silence, which is why the reception of the Vietnam memorial was particularly wrought with controversy.

Although each is clearly tied to unique and intense political moments within the history of the United States, neither the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or the National September 11 Memorial offers explicit political posturing or provides pre-determined interpretation of the commemorative subject matter, even in "silence." The spaces are participatory and unscripted, affording the viewers control of their interpretation at the individual, and subsequently collective level.

This is reflective of Brecht's "functional" view of tragic storytelling, which saw characters and events as purely representational means to portray a set of scenes which could spark an internal dialogue in the viewer. *Mother Courage* as a functional character, according to Brecht, is not to be blamed for the death of her children or the loss of her friends. The events that unfold around her over the course of the war, including the demise of her three children, are to be seen as representative of a larger context which is to be looked at with a critical eye, rather than the traditional tragic hero. (See Appendix for detailed script analysis and section V. for functional analysis of all characters.)

**The Self-Aware Viewer.** Each memorial case study suggests a shared interest with Brecht in creating a viewer that is aware of themselves relative to the narrative being communicated. As discussed by Hoffman, Potteiger and Purinton, the importance of the viewer as a second narrator means their perspective must be fully considered.

Brecht's Epic Theatre suggests that the most effective "second narrator" or audience member, even within the scope of Tragedy, is one that is emotionally detached from the narrative and thus can form a critical understanding of the content. Thus is the reason for the alienating effects employed in both the design (see accompanying image, Figure 17) of the production and the playing of the action (see scene summaries and Appendix for further breakdown of each).

While the memorial case studies contrastingly deal in emotion and empathy by design, the psychological and narrative strategies still share a goal with Brecht's theory: to ensure the visitor understands their own relationship to the narrative and thus interprets the content through that lens, forming a grounded opinion on what stands before them, constructed from a foundation of agency as both an observer and an understood part of the narrative content.



**Figure 17:** 1949 production visible backdrop hardware and mounted letters announcing the scene's setting



# Conclusions, Continuation

**Conclusion: "Memorial as Architectural Tragedy".** Soren Kierkegaard succinctly posits that "The idea of the tragic is still essentially unchanged, just as weeping still continues to be equally natural to humankind."<sup>56</sup> The parallels in terms of theory and practice are distinct and compelling, but a shared foundational component of memorial architecture and modern tragedy, which give the discussed methods their potency, is subject matter. Annamaria Cascetta states that "If the sense of the tragic is a permanent structure of human consciousness, tragedy is a form into which that structure has historically been translated."<sup>57</sup> This is true too of the memorial typology, which is simply a spatial tool for translating the same fundamental human structure of the tragic. Each medium grapples with pain and loss and seeks to provide dialectic opportunities through which the audience can better understand humanity's relationship to suffering.

## FOR THE FUTURE

**Relating to the Field.** Advocating for the contemporary memorial as a tragic architectural typology, which has a unique spatial relationship to history, narrative, and emotion, as well as a distinct power to create dialogue at the individual and collective scale, has the potential to change the way in which designers approach the conception of spaces of commemoration.

As the field continues to move forward, an increased acknowledgment and inclusion of narrative as a spatial tool for discourse could have the capacity to increase architecture's role as an archival medium, while creating new spaces of collaboration and theoretical overlap between architects and other disciplines like writers and performers.

**Further Development.** The extent of this project was limited by its development during the Coronavirus pandemic. The analysis was

limited to projects that I had personally visited, and though opportunities to see staged productions of Brecht's work are already limited, any possibility of engaging the Epic Theatre as a live audience member effectively disappeared for me at the onset of the pandemic. Future study of this topic should include both a wider range of memorial spaces, a survey of modern tragedy's other theorists, and attendance of live performances.

In the future, the scope of this line of inquiry could also expand into other architectural types that exhibit narrative-adjacent theories, or otherwise spatial storytelling methods.

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# Image Credits

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FIGURE 8: "Visitors gather at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the day of the state funeral service for the Unknown Serviceman of the Vietnam Era"; Image Courtesy of the National Archives

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FIGURE 16: Image by Ruth Berlau, Berlin Ensemble 1949; Theatre Journal vol 36, no. 1; Johns Hopkins University Press

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# Appendix

## MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN ANALYSIS

Using the methods prescribed in Rosemary Ingham's *From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections Between Scripts and Images*

### I. Where are they?

*In what country, city, place, building, room, etc.?*

The action unfolds during the Thirty Years War, and the canonical Eric Bentley translation of Brecht's original text defines "THE PLACE" as Sweden, Poland and Germany. However, the location of Mother Courage's action has been neither explicit nor consistent over the course of its recent stagings.

*How do the characters describe the place they are in?*

The play uses Mother Courage's peddling wagon as a grounding set-piece for most of its action, and does very little to describe details of its actual geographic setting, other than defining the overall country each scene takes place in. The non-specific language relative to the very immediate localities has been a crucial contributor to this play's universality.

*Is there any special significance to the place they are in?*

The setting of the play is not crucial to the action, and thus holds almost no significance. Again, this has been a huge contributor to this play's adaptability to any era. Recent showings have not ascribed any geography to the action.

### II. When are they?

*In what day, month, year, century, season, time of day, etc.?*

The play's action unfolds over the course of roughly twelve years. Though the lack of specificity means that this could be twelve years placed at any time in history, the Eric Bentley translation defines the opening scene as happening in 1624, and by following the described time gaps, the final scene can be extrapolated as happening in 1636.

*Do the characters have anything specific to say about when they are?*

Occasionally, the characters will verbally signal the passage of time. For instance, this quote from Mother Courage: "My eldest. It's two years since I saw him. He must be high in favor –the Commander inviting him to dinner!" However, Brecht's strategy of providing scene descriptions for the audience to read provides most of the temporal context for the play. These usually provide not only clues to the setting, but short scene descriptions: Three years pass, and MOTHER COURAGE, with parts of a Finnish regiment, is taken prisoner. Her daughter is saved, her wagon likewise, but her honest son dies. These types of scene descriptions are a crucial part of the "alienation effect" which keeps the audience from becoming emotionally invested in the action by knowing what is coming.

*Is there any special significance to when they are? Is it, for instance, a national holiday?*

The only significance of the play's temporal context is of the twelve episodic scenes relative to each other. Most scenes are separated by years; very few are situated sequentially.

### III. Who are they?

a) *How is this character related to other characters in the script?*

b) *What are the character's roles in life? Include jobs and professions as well as social and*

economic classes.

c) What does the character think of the other characters?

d) What does the character think of themselves?

e) Under what form of government does the character live? What are their attitudes about their form of government?

f) What role does religion play in the character's life? Which religion? What are their attitudes about religion?

g) What are the character's prevailing attitudes towards sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they live within or rebel against these attitudes?

These character analyses focus only on Mother Courage, the Chaplain, and the Cook. While Mother Courage's three children and Yvette are distinct and important characters, this discussion will not require a full character analysis to understand their narrative role within the play's framework.

## MOTHER COURAGE

a) Mother Courage is the central character; the only one to appear in every scene. She is the mother of Eilif, Swiss Cheese, and Katrin. She is an acquaintance and confidant to Yvette the prostitute, and a love interest and support system to both the Chaplain and the Cook.

b) Mother Courage, as a central point of the play, is in the "war" business, selling goods to mostly military personnel, and thus forced to follow the conflict. In the opening scene, the war is described by the Sergeant as her source of income:

*Sergeant: "Tsk, tsk, tsk; call yourself Mother Courage and then get scared of the war, your breadwinner?"*

She is also implied to be poor by early dialogue which betrays a severe stinginess, but also a resourcefulness and disrespect for authority and protocol:

*Swiss Cheese: "They call her mother courage because she drove through the bombardment of Riga with fifty loaves of bread in her wagon!"*

*MC: "They were going moldy, I couldn't help myself." -Scene 1*

*MC: "And here's a document saying my horse hasn't got foot and mouth disease -too bad he died on us, he cost fifteen guilders, thank God I didn't pay it." -Scene 1*

c) Mother Courage distances herself emotionally from other characters, although she does explicitly attempt to protect her children from being recruited/affected by the war effort. This is an important point of irony, because eventually her questionable devotion to making-ends-meet and arguable maternal shortcomings will cause each of them to die a war-related death. This crucial fact notwithstanding, she does maintain a loosely protective tone throughout the play, particularly toward Katrin who is unable to speak for herself:

*MC: "The soldier's life is not for sons of mine!" -Scene 1*

*MC: "Eilif, Swiss Cheese, Kattrin! So shall we all be torn asunder if we let ourselves get too deep into this war!" -Scene 1*

*(looking at Kattrin)*

*MC: "That is not a captivating young person. That is a respectable young person." -Scene 3*

Outside of the occasional defensive measure on behalf of her children, she maintains an extremely business-like view of everyone in her life, and betrays little emotion throughout the play's action, even in the face of distressing or emotional circumstances:

*MC: "Don't forget they made you paymaster because you're honest and so simple you'd never think of running off with the cash. Don't lose that underwear." -Scene 3, to Swiss Cheese*

*MC: "My dear Chaplain, be sensible, I do like you. All I want is for me and mine to get by in this war. Now chop the firewood and we'll be warm in the evenings." -Scene 4*

*(Speaking of Kattrin's desirability, after obtaining a wound which will scar her face)*

*MC: "She's finished. How would she ever get a husband now? And she's crazy for children. Even her dumbness comes from the war. A soldier stuck something in her mouth when she was little." -Scene 4*

*(after watching Kattrin die)*

*MC: "Here's a little money for the expenses. I hope I can pull the wagon by myself. Yes, I'll manage. There's not much in it now." -Scene 11*

These interactions reveal a strong detachment to even those closest to her. This trait contributes to the alienation of the audience, for cathartic expressions of emotion or even acknowledgment of trauma are denied when they are most expected.

d) Mother Courage is aware of her role in life and is pragmatic about it. She trusts only her own judgment, frequently to the detriment or demise of others.

e) The play's action takes place in multiple countries, thus there is not one clear governmental power it unfolds under. The abstracted presence of "the War" takes the de facto place of any government, giving it nearly character-like status within the text. Mother Courage's relationship to the War is the central theme of the play and driver of dialogue. She frequently curses the war for the hardship she faces:

*MC: "I'll never see Swiss Cheese again, and where my Eilif is the Good Lord knows. Curse the war!" -Scene 6*

And yet the war, as previously stated, is her breadwinner; she is entirely dependent on its persistence to make a living. At one point, well before the play's conclusion, peace is declared in their current location, and Mother Courage's response is one of exasperation, since her goods will no longer be in demand:



*MC: "Dear old peace has broken my neck. On the chaplain's advice I went and bought a lot of supplies. Now everybody's leaving, and I'm holding the baby." -Scene 8*

f) Mother Courage is dismissive of religion. Although she flies the Protestant flag on her wagon, and is technically registered with the second Protestant regiment, it is simply a tool by which she can gain favor with the troops that keep her in business, and it is demonstrated as having no meaning to her:

*(as Catholic forces near, threatening an attack)*

*Chaplain: "For Heaven's sake, that Protestant flag!*

*MC: (taking the flag down) "I've had it twenty-five years, I don't notice it anymore." -Scene 3*

g) Mother Courage has no stake in traditional family structures or ethics around sex, the dialogue makes this clear at the play's outset, when she describes that her three children all come from different fathers of different stations and nationalities, with varied morals.

*MC: "Must they all have the same name? This boy, for instance, I call him Eilif Noyocki –he got the name from his father who told me he was called Koyocki. Or was it Moyocki? Anyhow, the lad remembers him to this day. Only the man he remembers is someone else ... So we all have our own names." -Scene 1*

## THE CHAPLAIN

a) The Chaplain fills a role as both admirer and parasite of Mother Courage. Brecht is known to have described her as a "feedbag" for both the Chaplain and Cook. He shares little-to-no relationship with Mother Courage's children, except as an extension of her. He and the Cook begin the play as members of the Finnish military, meeting Mother Courage at nearly the same time:

*MC: "I must get you two something to drink, or you'll be making improper advances out of sheer boredom." -Scene 3*

b) The Chaplain is named by his role. He fills a religious role for a Finnish, i.e. Protestant, regiment of the military conflict. The complications of war eventually force him from this position, as he is travelling with Mother Courage when they are attacked by Catholic forces, which kill Swiss Cheese. He is forced to hide his own religion to avoid a similar fate, and from this point, his role is thematically defined by moral and political quandary, frequently contradicting his strong moral foundations and allowing Brecht to comment on religion's relationship to war:

*(in a heated argument)*

*Cook: "One up for me. Anyway, Chaplain, cockfights are unbecoming to your cloth!"*

*Chaplain: "If you don't shut your mouth, I'll murder you, cloth or no cloth!" -Scene 8*

c) His travels with Mother Courage create a dependency in him that eventually causes an attempt at romantics, but as has been discussed, she keeps those close to her at a pragmatic arms-length.

*Chaplain: "Mother Courage, I have often thought that –under the veil of blunt speech—you conceal a heart. You are human, you need warmth."*

*MC: "The best way of warming a tent is to chop plenty of firewood."*

*Chaplain: "Seriously, my dear Courage, I sometimes ask myself how it would be if our relationship should be somewhat more firmly cemented." -Scene 7*

His growing affections toward Mother Courage predictably create a rift between him and the Cook, and by the end of the play they are far from amiable, becoming enemies over affections that are not reciprocated toward either of them, as well as the resources that Mother Courage offers.

d) The Chaplain, at the outset of the play's action, sees himself as an advocate of the divine, thus his opinion of himself is largely based on what he believes God's opinion to be, and it is clear in his perspective on the war:

*Chaplain: "My dear Cook, you talk as if dying for one's beliefs were a misfortune –it is the highest privilege! This is not just any war, remember, it is a religious war and therefore pleasing into God." -Scene 3*

Although, as discussed in section b, his loyalties are forced to adjust, and by extension his framework for communicating his faith. Though never explicitly stated, his actions begin to reflect a weakening foundation and thus a shifting view of himself, especially in his pursuits of romance with Mother Courage and his verbal aggressions toward the Cook, also mentioned in section b.

e) See Mother Courage, part e for political context.

The Chaplain's relationship to government, and by extension the War, is synonymous and interchangeable with his relationship to God and his religion. When he is suddenly forced to hide his religious affiliation due to a surprise attack by the enemy Catholic forces, his devoutness soon begins to fade:

*Chaplain: "That is a calumny! The Swedish king puts religion first!" -Scene 3*

*Chaplain: "What about me? I can't even hold service here. It is written: "Out of the abundance of the heart the tongue speaketh" –but woe is me if my tongue speaketh!" -Scene 3*

*(as a Protestant hiding his religion)*

*Chaplain: "God bless our Catholic flag!" -Scene 3*

f) See part e.

g) The Chaplain's stances on sex, marriage, etc. are implied to be traditional at the start of the play; based on his position within a religious structure he is likely a cleric. However, some of his first dialogue constitutes a transparent pass at Katrin (fended off by Mother Courage, see quotation in Mother Courage part c):

*Chaplain: "...and who is this captivating young person?" -Scene 3*

This constitutes an early clue at the Chaplain's somewhat malleable code, and his aforementioned

pass (see part c) at Mother Courage later in the play's action, though notably less crass, is a continuation of this theme, which bolsters Brecht's questioning of religion and its role in wartime.

## THE COOK

a) The Cook and Chaplain have a similar relationship to Mother Courage. As discussed in The Chaplain part a, she functions as a "feedbag" for each of them for some portion of the play. Like the Chaplain, the Cook shares essentially no meaningful relationship or interaction with Mother Courage's children, except because of his interactions with her. The Cook's affections for Mother Courage are implied from the beginning, but they are never stated to her as forwardly as the Chaplain's are:

*Cook: (lighting his pipe) Innocent dreams! I dream of a fair lady dispensing brandy! Stop embarrassing me! The stories you were telling on the way over still have me blushing." -Scene 3*

b) The Cook is also named for his profession. His specific station, within the narrative the play, seems to only be significant by virtue of it necessitating transactions with Mother Courage and thus creating their dynamic interactions. The narrative function of his profession is to provide commentary on the military's role in war, and how it may be similar to religion's:

*Cook: "Chaplain, peace makes me sick! It's the lot of mankind to perish by fire and sword! Oh, how I wish I was roasting a great fat capot for the Commander..." - Scene 10*

c) The Cook's feelings are the mirror image of the Chaplain's: an affinity for Mother Courage and a mounting rivalry with the other individual:

*Cook: "How could you listen to a windbag like the chaplain? If I'd had the time I'd have warned you against him. But the Catholics were too quick for me. Since when did he become the big wheel around here?" -Scene 8*

d) The Cook is acutely aware of his social station as a cog in the proverbial war machine, but seems to be resigned to it. He comments frequently on the profit-driven war effort, acting sometimes as a mouthpiece for Brecht's own thoughts:

*Cook: "And King Gustavus liberated Poland from the Germans. Who could deny it? Then his appetite grew with eating, and he liberated Germany from the Germans. Made quite a profit on the deal, I'm told." - Scene 3*

e) See Mother Courage part e for political context.

The Cook willingly occupies a role in the military war effort which he proclaims to be a profit-driven scheme. It is strongly implied that his stance is a disapproving one, thus his willingness to participate suggests a higher loyalty to the pay which it secures him.

*(speaking of the Swedish king)*

*Cook: "I don't eat his bread: I bake his bread." -Scene 3*

f) The Cook seems to strongly disapprove of religion's role justifying the war effort, if not its larger institutions. His eternal critiques of the Chaplain in the back half of the play, including a previously-referenced (see part c) description as a "windbag" imply an overall skepticism of those associated with religious structures:

*"Cook: "I see that. In one sense it's a war because of all the cheating, plunder, rape and so forth, but it's different from all the other wars because it's a religious war and therefore pleasing unto God. At that it does make you thirsty." -Scene 3"*

g) The Cook is described by the Chaplain as a "Don Juan." He is eventually revealed to be a former adulterer, and the man that broke the prostitute Yvette's heart in her youth.

*Yvette: "...The whole regiment knows me. I should have stayed home when my first was unfaithful. But pride isn't for the likes of us. You eat dirt or down you go."*

*MC: "Don't start in again about your friend Peter Piper and How It All Happened –in front of my innocent daughter."*

*Yvette: "She's the one that should hear it. So she'll get hardened against love." – Scene 3*

*(introducing Yvette to the Cook)*

*MC: "He's a friend of mine, Yvette."*

*Yvette: "He's Peter Piper, that's what." -Scene 9*

#### **IV. What happened before the play began?**

It is 1624, and the Thirty Years war has been raging for approximately six years already at the opening of the play. The audience is informed by the scene summary that "the Swedish king Gustavus is recruiting for the campaign of Poland." No other information is offered.

#### **V. What is the function of each character in the play?**

##### **Principal Characters:**

Who is the protagonist?

Note primary action(s)

Who is the antagonist?

Note primary action(s)

What are the functions of the other principal characters?

##### **Secondary Characters:**

What is the function of each?

##### **Crowds and functionaries:**

Note functions

**\*Note:** Given that Brecht's Epic Theatre does not follow typical plot structures or use traditional narrative archetypes, it is antithetical to define roles such as "protagonist" and "antagonist," as all characters are simply meant to serve a specific narrative function in the mind of the audience; they are not to be related to or identified with.

### ***Mother Courage (a – primary)***

Mother Courage is the play's central character, the play's action follows her journey. Mother Courage is functionally representative of the futility involved in "getting by" during wartime and in a system which is designed to benefit those on top of the socio-political ladder. Her constant focus on business, in the interest of providing for herself and her children, ultimately leads to the demise of all three. It is important to note that as a modern tragic hero, she is not meant to be held responsible for the suffering of herself and those around her (this would be closer to punishment, which Ancient Tragedy dealt with) but rather a demonstration of a flawed system which she is forced to participate in.

### ***The Chaplain (a – primary)***

The Chaplain is part of the military unit which is with Mother Courage and Kattrin with their wagon preceding scene 3. However, they have encountered Mother Courage years before in passing, in scene 2. He finds himself joining them long-term for safety and resources after his regiment is surprised by Catholic forces and he must hide his station. Eventually, he falls for Mother Courage. Functionally, he is a commentary on religion's frequently profit-based intentions behind being involved in and perpetuating wars.

### ***The Cook (a – primary)***

Also part of the Chaplain's military unit, the Cook encounters Mother Courage in scene 2 and meets her again in scene 3 preceding the attack. He shares the Chaplain's interest in Mother Courage and they find themselves in opposition over pursuing her affection, which neither of them receive. His function is to provide commentary on the hypocrisy of military conquests that are exclusively profit-centered, which he verbally criticizes throughout. Additionally, he represents those that have no loyalty to the causes they serve, rather only seek to make money.

### ***Eilif (b – secondary)***

Mother Courage's brave son, Eilif, is recruited by the Swedish military in scene 1. Functionally he exists to comment on the concept of military "bravery," and the contrast between what is acceptable in the name of war and damnable in any other context. He is put to death for raiding civilians to feed his men, something he receives accolades for earlier in the play. Mother Courage misses his final visit because she has gone to the market to attempt to re-sell items. "Eilif" is a Norse name for "immortal."

### ***Swiss Cheese (b – secondary)***

Mother Courage's honest son, Swiss Cheese, becomes a paymaster for the Second Protestant Regiment. He is put to death by firing squad for not giving up the location of his regiment's cashbox. His narrative function is two-fold: 1) he serves as a dialogue on the reward for virtue in a war setting – nothing; 2) his death furthers the commentary on Mother Courage's incessant profit-seeking, as she has a chance to save him, for a price, but inexplicably tries to haggle the price of her son's ransom, causing the enemy to lose patience and shoot him. "Swiss Cheese" is a cruel but intentionally ironic name from Brecht, as he is killed by firing squad.

### ***Kattrin (b – secondary)***

Mother Courage's daughter, Kattrin, is dumb. A victim of war violence at a young age, she lost her ability to speak. She is virtuous and exhibits protective motherly traits towards both her brothers: Eilif

when he is being manipulated into joining the military and Swiss Cheese when he is being captured by a Catholic unit. She even finds momentary happiness caring for the baby of an injured family. These caring actions contrast Mother Courage's unrelenting focus on business and getting by, but her inability to speak to alert her mother of the dangers befalling her brothers contributes to their demise, and Katrin's prolonged suffering. She functions as both a commentary on the futility of virtue in war, and as a foil to Mother Courage's questionable maternal instincts.

***Yvette Pottier (b-secondary)***

Yvette is a prostitute who, like Mother Courage, follows the military regiments in their war effort to make her living. Yvette is actually able to secure a fortune by marrying a Colonel, which we learn upon her return to the play's action in scene 3, however she has paid a proverbial price for her fortune, as she has grown fat and disfigured as a result of her marriage. This is her primary narrative function, as a commentary on class conflict and opportunism related to war and profit. However, a subplot involving the Cook, her previous lover who abandoned her and left her hardened to love before eventually meeting her again through Mother Courage, is another commentary from Brecht on the uselessness of virtue or attachment in wartime.

***Recruiting Officer (c – functionary)***

The recruiting officer convinces Eilif to join the military in scene 1. He and the Sergeant also open the play's action with an excellent satirical exchange on the benefits of an ongoing war effort.

***Sergeant (c – functionary)***

The Sergeant distracts Mother Courage while the recruiting officer speaks to Eilif about the benefits of military service.

***Commander (c – functionary)***

The commander allows us to see how far Eilif has risen within the military ranks between scene 1 and 2.

***Ordinance Officer (c – functionary)***

The ordinance officer haggles with Mother Courage at the beginning of scene 3; their interaction gives us a glimpse into her cunning as a business dealer

***Catholic Sergeant & One Eye (c – functionaries)***

These two emerge during the ambush by the Catholic forces in scene 3, and capture Swiss Cheese before he is eventually killed at the end of the scene, after which the Catholic sergeant gives the order for Swiss Cheese's corpse to be dumped in a ditch, after Mother Courage denies knowing him.

***Soldier #1 (c – functionary)***

Briefly struggles with the Ordinance Officer to retreat from the Catholic ambush with a cannon, which is eventually handed over to Mother Courage in the interest of a hasty retreat.

***Colonel (c – functionary)***

Yvette marries the colonel, and this relationship allows for the critical dialogue prompted by Yvette's new station (see Yvette).

***Regimental Clerk, Older Soldier, Younger Soldier (c – functionaries)***

These three interact with Mother Courage as she attempts to file a complaint with their Commander, and listen to her sing “The Great Capitulation”

***First Soldier (#2 overall), Second Soldier (#3 overall) (c – functionaries)***

These soldiers have finished overtaking a town and are drinking at Mother Courage’s wagon, causing considerable damage and offering commentary by noting that cannons don’t distinguish between Catholics and Protestants.

***Peasant, Peasant Woman (c – functionaries)***

These are part of a family whose house is burning because of the siege (see First Soldier, Second Soldier). Katrin finds a moment of happiness caring for their baby after rescuing it from a building. Their injuries provide a moment of commentary, for as the Chaplain tends to them, all Mother Courage can think about is the shirts he is ruining as he treats their wounds.

***Singing Soldier (#4 overall) (c – functionary)***

This soldier sings the Battle Hymn, a song which prompts a significant moment of commentary in scene 6, a discussion of war’s capacity to satisfy all needs: bread, drink, sex, sleep, and salvation.

***Old Woman, Young Man (c – functionaries)***

These two are haggling at the wagon at the opening of scene 8 when the town’s bells begin to ring. They recognize it as an announcement of peace in their locality and leave, distressing Mother Courage, whose livelihood has suddenly disappeared.

***Soldier (#5 overall), Other Soldier (#6 overall) (c – functionaries)***

Lead Eilif to execution in scene 8 after arresting him for raiding a peasant family.

***Lieutenant, Three Soldiers (#7, #8, #9 overall) (c – functionaries)***

Ambush a small family in the final scene, looking for a path to the nearby town which their regiment is planning to raid.

***Old Peasant, Peasant Woman, Young Peasant (c – functionaries)***

Are raided by the lieutenant and three soldiers and threatened with death and ruination. When Katrin begins to make noise to warn the town, they aid the soldiers in their failed attempts to silence her. The Young Peasant momentarily revolts and encourages her and is killed, as is she.

**VI. What kind of dialogue do the characters speak?**

*Realistic*

*Naturalistic*

*Literary*

*Poetry*

*Other*

Mother Courage and Her Children has seen many translations from Brecht’s original German, so it is difficult to determine whether the play’s dialogue could be considered “realistic.” Furthermore, the play was written in the mid-twentieth century but takes place in the sixteenth century, meaning that

there is already a degree of linguistic adaptation “built in” to even the German text. It also utilizes song frequently, but not in traditional musical fashion, instead dialectically, thus the songs must be considered, punctuating spoken dialogue with poetic language. Recent translations of the script by Tony Kushner and David Hare have imbued the work with modern and provocative language to engage contemporary audiences, but the analyzed Eric Bentley translation takes a neutral approach. The language is not difficult to understand or follow, however cannot be accurately described as realistic or naturalistic given that many moments are crafted with the intention of alienating the audience.

### **VII. What happens in the play?**

*Briefly describe the principal event in the play. What sets the play in motion?*

*Construct an action chart (timeline) for the play. Start with what happened before and go up through the end of the play.*

In service of Brecht’s “alienation effect,” the action is broken up into disjointed episodes. The scenes do not flow one into the other, and the audience can only understand the passage of time through verbal cues and the provided scene summaries. This means that the play does not have one “principal” event, but rather a series of scenes which all contribute to its dialectic tone. It is precisely the lack of hierarchy within the play’s action that gives it power as a source of commentary. No specific triggering event is described for the play’s events, but the war is understood to be the reason for every scene that unfolds.

See “Summary + Thematic Analysis” section for scene summaries.

### **VIII. What is the play’s theme?**

Mother Courage and Her Children is a play about war and its complex social, political, and economic underpinnings. Bertolt Brecht offered this work as a critique of, among other things, class inequities and the futility of virtue and persistence of poverty in wartime. The play offers strong critiques of organized religion’s role in the military effort, heavily implying that religion is used as a justification for a war that is truly profit-driven. Above all, this play critiques a sociopolitical structure which thrives on and rewards greed, classism, and iniquity, with the suffering of Mother Courage and her Children as a narrative tool to demonstrate it.