

When Our Silence Will Be More Powerful: Haymarket's Ephemeral Memorials

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On a warm and sunny September day in 2004, an unlikely group of historians, labor leaders, city administrators, anarchists, police spokespeople, and assorted progressives gathered at a nondescript intersection near Chicago's trendy West Loop Gate neighborhood. After more than a century, a central event in labor and radical history was finally getting an official monument. In the shadow of parked paddy wagons, workers in union T-shirts cheered, police officers clapped uneasily, and anarchists unfurled banners contesting the dedication of the Haymarket Memorial.

Heralded by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs as "a new way to do monuments at historic sites,"¹ the memorial's semi-abstract design resulted from months of discussion by union leaders, police representatives, and public art administrators eager to find a consensus solution for representing an event still divisive over 100 years after it occurred. Marking the precise location where anarchist organizers made revolutionary speeches at a rally for workers killed during the May, 1886 strike for an 8-hour day, the red-patina-ed, bronze sculpture depicts faceless, coverall-wearing workers speaking from a cart. An unusually lengthy text describes the story in bloodless and carefully worded language: the uneventful nighttime rally, the charge of the police line, the mysterious bomb, the death toll from the explosion and subsequent police violence, the unfair trial and execution of the rally organizers, and their posthumous pardon. In story after story in newspapers, city personnel, labor historians, and artist Mary Brogger reiterated the ambiguity of the monument, emphasizing that the wagon, representing the right of free

¹ Nathan Mason, curator of special projects for the Public Art Program of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs; quoted in Stephen Kinzer, "In Chicago, a Deliberately Ambiguous Memorial to an Attack's Complex Legacy," *The New York Times*, September 15 2004.

speech, could be seen as either being built or destroyed by the action of the workers. The monuments other ambiguities, perhaps more controversial than free speech, were left unmentioned: the abstracted workers recall both child-like figures and Socialist Realist monuments, the red color represent both violence and the international Left. The Haymarket memorial's studious neutrality of image and text claims to leave open the ultimate interpretation of the hotly contested event, shrugging off the traditional role of memorials to fix a state-sanctioned writing of history in stone and bronze. Rather than re-opening old wounds about what really happened that evening in May of 1886, the new monument promises reconciliation by focusing on the popular issue of free speech.

The idling paddy wagons were not the only dissonant notes in an otherwise well-orchestrated moment of historical healing. While words of congratulations and consensus from union leaders, historians, and bureaucrats boomed over the PA, a group of Chicago anarchists stood by with black flags, booing the police spokesperson, contesting the reformist narrative suggested by the memorial's text, and protesting their exclusion from the selection committee and speakers' list.² Together, anarchists and paddy wagons suggested that the moment of consensus was precarious, that the fault lines said to have been overcome by refusing to assign responsibility, make claims to truth, or closely analyze the politics at stake could reopen at any moment.

² Anthony Rayson, a member of the South Chicago Anarchist Black Cross, reported being invited to participate in the meeting to draft the monument's text, but said he declined to attend. Rayson spoke at the open-mic portion of the dedication ceremony, which was held immediately after the end of the official ceremony. Tom McNamee, "After 118 Years, Haymarket Memorial to Be Unveiled," *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 7 2004. Laura Crossett, *Report on the Haymarket Monument Dedication* (Chicago Indymedia, 2004 [cited September 16 2005]); available from http://chicago.indymedia.org/newswire/display_any/46079.

Standing in the crowd at the dedication under a beating sun, I was not surprised that the lines of fissure emerging whenever official memorials are built refused to simply patch themselves with conciliatory goodwill in this particularly contested site. After all, the sculpture was not the first monument dedicated at the Haymarket site: an 1889 police memorial was repeatedly vandalized—including being bombed twice during the Vietnam era—until it was removed to the safety of the police training facility. Rather, what surprised me was the apparent consensus even on the part of the anarchists that a Haymarket memorial should be built on the site at all. The anarchists' grievances with the monument, which included its failure to condemn police violence, the project's \$300,000 of public and business funding, and the role of heritage tourism in the gentrification of the area, coalesced around objections that the memorial's free speech theme sidestepped the anarchist philosophy of the martyrs, as those executed for the Haymarket affair have come to be called. This list of criticisms nonetheless maintains the possibility of a perfect monument, one untainted by capitalist or state involvement and sending a strong revolutionary message. Arguably, an anarchist memorial already exists—the 1893 Haymarket Monument marking the martyrs' graves in Waldheim Cemetery in Forest Park, a Chicago suburb. Funded by donations raised by the Pioneer Aid and Support Association led by activist and Haymarket widow Lucy Parsons, the monument has long been a site of leftist pilgrimage, and dozens of radicals from Emma Goldman to Chicago neighborhood activists like Tobey Prinz have been interred nearby. As we shall see, a vibrant, performative memorial culture centering around the Waldheim

monument already exists.³ Given the linkage between monuments to hegemonic regimes of both bourgeois capitalism and totalitarian communism, the anarchists' apparent belief that a suitably revolutionary monument could be built on the Haymarket site is all the more striking.⁴

Given what Andreas Huyssen calls the present “hypertrophy of memory,” evidenced by scores of planned monuments, new museums, bestselling memoirs and entire cable channels dedicated to history, perhaps it is to be expected that anarchists, labor historians, city officials, union leaders, and the police all share the belief that a built monument on the site could and should capture the heritage of the Haymarket affair, while still disagreeing as to what precisely that heritage might be.⁵ However, what has always struck me as most interesting about Haymarket is that a wide variety of formal memorials and informal practices in Chicago and all over the world have long memorialized the event while maintaining only the most tangential relationship to the site where it occurred. Soon after the executions, May Day became closely associated with labor issues, becoming International Workers' Day in commemoration of the Haymarket

³ The Waldheim memorial has sometimes highlighted antagonisms between labor leaders, who stage commemorative events at the monument and successfully lobbied for the statue to be named a national historic landmark, and Chicago anarchists, who wish to maintain the autonomy and anarchist character of the site. L. Lingg, *Haymarket Martyrs Monument Desecrated* (Chicago Indymedia, May 02 2001 [cited September 17 2005]); available from http://chicago.indymedia.org/newswire/display_any/1809. Note that many statement attributed to anarchists are referenced via anti-authoritarian and participatory Internet sites like Indymedia. These sites allow anonymous and pseudonymous postings, such as the afore-cited “L. Lingg,” who borrowed his nom de plume from one of the Haymarket martyrs. See also Crossett (2004), Kelland (2005).

⁴ For a varied account of the ideological dimension of monumental public art, see W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsest and the Politics of Memory*, ed. Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries, *Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Affair, and actions like the 1894 Coxey's Army march of the unemployed on Washington were scheduled to coincide with the anniversary of Haymarket.⁶ As early as 1895, Samuel Gompers reported that portraits of the martyrs hung in nearly every union hall in Europe; in Mexico, Diego Rivera included the martyrs' execution in a mural in the Palace of Justice; and in turn of the century Spain, special *retratos*, or portrait cards usually depicting saints, were printed with the likenesses of the Haymarket Martyrs and distributed on May Day and November 11, the anniversary of their execution.⁷ Internationally, the memory of Haymarket proliferated in artwork, narrative, political action, and experience without making any claims on its site. Indeed, the power of faraway memorials seemed enhanced by the emptiness of Haymarket Square; unencumbered by a monument to bind the story to its origin, the Haymarket idea was free to spread from worker to worker and struggle to struggle, like Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, transformed into a near-mythic signifier of both oppression and resistance.

Closer to home, Haymarket has been most often remembered by strategic omission and anxious overcompensation; hence, the first of May in the United States is officially "Law Day" or "Loyalty Day," not Labor Day.⁸ While such clearly ideological

⁶ Further evidence of the influence of the Haymarket memory on Coxey's Army is Lucy Parsons' address to the marchers. Caroline Ashbaugh, *Haymarket Widows* (The Lucy Parsons Project, [cited October 2 2005]); available from http://www.lucyparsonspj.org/aboutlucy/ashbaugh_widows.html.

⁷ For a discussion of international memorializing of Haymarket, see James Green, *The Globalization of Memory: The Enduring Memory of Chicago's Haymarket Martyrs around the World* [talk] (May 1 2005 [cited September 17 2005]); available from www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/green.html.

⁸ By congressional and presidential proclamation, May 1st is both Law Day and Loyalty Day across the United States. Growing directly from "Veterans of the Haymarket Riot" parades marched by Chicago police until the 1960s, Law Day is celebrated to "give special emphasis to all law enforcement personnel of the United States, and acknowledge the unflinching and devoted service law enforcement personnel perform as such personnel help preserve domestic tranquility and guarantee the legal rights of all

designations of the calendar have been nearly as infuriating to radicals as the erection of a police memorial at the site, the convenient scheduling of patriotic theme days demonstrates that the Haymarket legacy is still important enough, and its memory strong enough, to attempt to contain, cover, or erase. Recent online projects by the Chicago Historical Society and the Library of Congress, as well as the designation of Haymarket as a topic in the Chicago school history fair, suggest that what is at stake is not really whether Haymarket will be completely forgotten or universally remembered on its home turf.⁹ Rather, as the anarchists demonstrating at the monument's dedication clearly understood, the question is less whether than how Haymarket will be remembered. Of course, the kind and purpose of remembering is certainly an issue whenever a historical monument, designation, plaque, or event is planned, as demonstrated by the excellent and growing body of literature around the ideological dimension of public memory and monument-building. Because of Haymarket's empty site, however, there has always been an unusually strong *performative* element to remembering it: marching on May Day in Seoul, exchanging *retratos* in Madrid, a pilgrimage by train to Forest Park. These kinds of ephemeral, experiential, decentralized, and above all performative commemorations of

individuals of this Nation." *Law Day USA*, SJ Res 52, 1989. When President George W. Bush proclaimed Loyalty Day in 2003 by writing "Throughout our history, honorable men and women have demonstrated their loyalty to America by making remarkable sacrifices to preserve and protect these values," he still seemed to be buttressing a particularly nationalistic variety of loyalty and sacrifice against a threat somehow still posed by the example of the Haymarket martyrs. George W. Bush, "Loyalty Day 2003," (Washington, DC: The White House, 2003).

⁹ See Library of Congress, *Chicago Anarchists on Trial: The Haymarket Affair* (Library of Congress, 2000 [cited September 17 2005]); available from <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ichihtml/hayhome.html>, Chicago Historical Society, *Dramas of Haymarket* (Chicago Historical Society and Northwestern University, 2000 [cited September 17 2005]); available from <http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/>.

Haymarket exist as an implicit counterpoint to—and sometimes an explicit critique of—the impulse to build a monument on the site.

Dialogue, Intervention, Social Sculpture and the Performative Memorial

While the legacy of Haymarket has been lately claimed by both Chicago labor and anarchist groups in celebrations of May Day and Labor Day, the sites associated with Haymarket also see year-round commemoration.¹⁰ A visit to the Waldheim Monument is de rigueur for leftist tourists and residents alike, and every visitor will encounter traces of others who came to pay their respects in the form of graffiti, wreaths, movement buttons, and other ephemera. This leftist pilgrimage started almost as soon as the Waldheim Monument was built in 1893, with the commuter train providing convenient transportation to the suburban cemetery. More recently, formal and informal May Day and November 11 observances have perpetuated this tradition. The Illinois Labor History Society, which successfully placed both the Waldheim monument and Haymarket Square on the National Register of Historic Places, has held May Day observances at the cemetery, sometimes clashing with anarchists wanting to maintain independence of the site from State recognition.¹¹ More informally, bike rides have been held for several

¹⁰ Anarchists have traditionally rallied and toured various sites associated with the Haymarket on May Day, often receiving less than welcoming responses from the police. In 2001, Chicago's May Day celebration was larger than usual, linked with international events opposing neoliberal globalization. In the post 9-11 era, however, May Day events in Chicago seem to have fractured, splitting into smaller, anarchist-flavored gatherings, activist conferences, and union rallies. For more information on recent Chicago and International May Day celebrations, see postings published by Infoshop.org and Chicago Indymedia. For more information about historic union celebrations of May Day and Labor Day in Chicago, see Nathan Godfried, W.C.F.L.: Chicago's Voice of Labor, 1926-78, ed. Robert W. McChesney and John C. Nerone, The History of Communication (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

¹¹ According to labor historian William Adelman, during 1986 Haymarket centennial events co-sponsored by the Illinois Labor History Society (ILHS) and the Chicago Historical Society, anarchists draped the memorial in a black protest flag, then tackled ILHS director Les Orear to the ground when he attempted to

years, originating at Haymarket Square and traveling the 10 or so miles to Waldheim for a “May Day Anarchist Picnic” at the gravesites.¹²

Impermanent memorial events like political rallies, bike rides, pilgrimages, and picnics are new ways of inhabiting both the city and history, however much official memory has attempted to pave over or edit out the radical imaginary. These assemblies of people become visible ways of writing Haymarket into the spaces of a city that for more than a century refused to acknowledge it and into the political consciousness of a present that would consign not only anarchism but also unionism into the dustbin of history. Ephemeral memorials are also notably social events. Group bike rides and picnics are open-ended affairs, permitting comradeship, conversation, argument, and reconciliation. These events are not so much tours or lectures, with the implication of an omniscient guide, as encounters in which leadership is fluid and fleeting if it must be present at all. While programmed gatherings like labor rallies and dedication ceremonies are a bit more structured, they are similarly open to participation and contest, as conflicts between the ILHS and anarchist groups over the years demonstrate. All these ephemeral memorials require activity on the part of participants to interrelate with others present and to respond to the common experience.

remove it. According to the “L. Lingg,” fifteen anarchist protesters were “threatened and assaulted by trade union goons” during the dedication of the site as a Historical Landmark. See Lara Kelland, “Putting Haymarket to Rest?,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class Histories of the Americas* 2, no. 2 (2005), and Lingg, *Haymarket Martyrs Monument Desecrated*.

¹² M, *Remembering Haymarket: May Day in Chicago* [newswire post] (Chicago Indymedia, April 26 2005 [cited September 18 2005]); available from http://chicago.indymedia.org/newswire/display_any/56444.

Considered in this light, temporal memorials share several characteristics with the concept of “Social Sculpture” formulated by the late German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s. Social sculpture is an interdisciplinary and often immaterial artistic process in which people and ideas are brought together to collectively refigure histories and social relations in more democratic and sustainable ways.¹³ Dialogical art is a more contemporary cousin of social sculpture that seeks to create situations for respectful and transformative intersubjective encounters that suspend alienation, injustice, and oppression.¹⁴ More confrontational but often lighthearted interventionist art seeks to disrupt routinized expressions of Capital with actions occurring outside and in opposition to conventional understandings of history, public space, and economics.¹⁵ Social sculpture, dialogical art, and interventions are all ‘public’ in an expanded sense; rather than merely being outdoors or free (though they often are), they deal with issues of broad public concern, disrupt conventional forms of public address, and incorporate the ‘viewing public’ into the making of the work of art. Taken together, these three artistic methodologies describe and critique existing Haymarket memorial events as well as point

¹³ David Bellman, "Beuys' 'Social Sculpture' in Historical Perspective," in *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, ed. David Thistlewood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Citing theoretical precedents including the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Jurgen Habermas, critic Grant Kester coined the term ‘dialogical aesthetics’ to describe artwork that employs mutual conversation as a locus for meaning-making. Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces: The Role of Dialogue in Socially-Engaged Art," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, ed. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

¹⁵ According curator and critics Nato Thompson and Gregory Sholette, interventionist artworks share a conceptual heritage with the Situationists and Henri Lefebvre, with a similar emphasis on dialogue and collaboration as a form of meaning-making. Nato Thompson and Gregory Sholette, eds., *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (North Adams, MA: MASS MoCA Publications, 2004).

towards a kind of memorial performance informed equally by vernacular practices and contemporary politicized art practices.

Haymarket Interventions

On May 1, 2002, Chicago artist Michael Piazza organized the “Haymarket 8 Hour Action Series,” a day-long observance that celebrated the radical local heritage of May Day with a diverse group of artist- and activist-led actions. Assembling at the site previously occupied by the police monument, the artists laid down a large, round orange tarp to act as a stage for such events as a talk by labor historian William Adelman, musical performance, games, and street theater.

While the content of the event was relatively straightforward, the symbolism operated in unexpectedly political ways. Anticipating the use of the free speech metaphor in the official 2004 monument, the round, orange tarp acted as both a platform for free speech (and play) and a big, highly visible target. While the ambiguous Brogger wagon implies that free speech might be itself either constructive or destructive, Piazza’s tarp-stage-target suggested that the danger of speech is external attack. In the post-9-11 era, and just a few months after the passage of the PATRIOT act, Piazza’s symbolic choice was much more oppositional, while the official monument’s position seems a variant on the slogan “loose lips sink ships.” By scheduling the event to coincide with a nine-to-five workday, Piazza also aligned the action series with the primary demand of the 1886 strike that led to the Haymarket: the eight-hour day. This association with the strike, as well as with the May Day holiday, was echoed by the modification of nearby “No Parking” signs to “No Working” notices. Significantly, the Brogger monument never mentions that the rally at Haymarket was connected to the campaign for a reduction of working hours, an omission all the more striking when considered in light of the

contemporary erosion of the eight-hour day for millions of workers.¹⁶

As part of 2001's Haymarket Eight Hour Action Series, Brian Dortmund organized what was to become the first in an annual series of artist-initiated May Day bike rides. Like the other memorial bike rides, Dortmund's group begins annually at the Haymarket site and travels ten or twelve miles to the Waldheim monument. From year to year, however, Dortmund has subtly re-worked the tradition, focusing on a different element of the heritage of the radical labor movement and adding new layers of complexity to the traditional pilgrimage to historic and religious sites. In 2004, Dortmund made Velcro-closure ties that could function as either armbands or cuff protectors for riders. The bands, embroidered with the year and the text "Haymarket Heritage," operated simultaneously as self-consciously kitschy leftist souvenirs and emblems of solidarity for the bike riders, raising their visibility as a purposeful collective moving through the streets. As if adjusting to the dedication of an official Haymarket memorial, the 2005 ride de-centered Haymarket itself and visited places related to working class history more broadly defined, including the site where the Chicago fire started, the bridge that saw police-demonstrator brawling during the railroad strike of 1877, the McCormick Reaper Works, and public housing developments currently threatened by demolition and redevelopment.

In contrast to Brogger's memorial, which frames Haymarket as a *particular* site touching on a number of very *broad* political questions, Dortmund's bike rides link

¹⁶ Much has been written on the decline of the eight-hour day. In 2002, for instance, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 11 million workers routinely work 60 or more hours per week, as cited in Jane Slaughter, "Is It Time for the Eight-Hour Workday?," *Labor Notes*, August 2002.

Haymarket to very *specific* struggles while claiming the *general* city, and by implication the world, as its site. The rides themselves enact the subaltern condition of radical history, becoming a floating, activated location for performing an insurgent and critical heritage which conventional monuments must suppress in favor of a vision of perpetual progress and historical consensus.

Similarly, my own 2004 project *Unstorming Sheridan* braided together a number of histories ordinarily considered separately. Beginning at the Brogger memorial, I biked 27-miles north to a former military base founded immediately after the Haymarket affair for the purpose of stationing federal troops near enough the city to put down the first evidence of an armed insurrection. Now a luxury housing development, the base is a palimpsest of changing responses to the populist threat: violent military suppression and protective suburban bunkering. While tracing this link by bicycle, I broadcasted a highly distorted, instrumental *Internationale* over a Clear Channel-affiliated radio station, with my 1-watt signal disrupting Clear Channel's multi-megawatts for a few seconds at a time as car stereo receivers passed. By bookending this small-scale act of present-day civil disobedience with Haymarket-related sites, the piece proposes the contemporary city—as both physical and media landscape—to be a site for distributed, active, and mobile remembering that intercuts and interweaves change and difference across space and time.

With none of the authority of bronze statues or celebratory atmosphere of collective bike rides, *Unstorming Sheridan* is a humble and reflective memorial.¹⁷

¹⁷ A follow-up to *Unstorming Sheridan* included a group bike ride, without transmitter, from Haymarket to Fort Sheridan on May 1, 2005. A full discussion of this project component is beyond the scope of this paper but documentation can be found online at: <http://www.readysubjects.org/sheridan/unstormingsheridan.html>

Contradicting the legitimacy and permanence suggested by the bronze and concrete of the Brogger monument, the impermanence and ultimate ineffectiveness of all these “monuments” reflect the Left’s perpetual difficulty being heard or remembered in light of the incredible power of Capital. At the same time, they refuses to allow a fetishized Haymarket site, stripped of content and context, to become central to a nostalgic radical memory. Instead, Haymarket is placed alongside other events, locations, histories, and practices as part of a frame for contemporary poetic and political action.

Memorial Tactics and Monumental Strategies

So what, then, of the sculpture now standing at Randolph and Des Plaines in Chicago’s former Hay Market? If the monument had been less costly, administered differently, and staked out more political turf, would it have functioned any more successfully, as the anarchists’ critiques suggest? Or is there something about *any* attempt to build an official monument to an oppositional movement that is bound to fail? In its zeal to build permanent and legitimate markers for labor struggles, has the Illinois Labor History Society consigned Haymarket’s legacy to become, to quote Robert Musil, “as invisible as monuments?”¹⁸

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau discusses the creative use of space and language as forms of resistance against a hegemony that constructs and regulates them. He differentiates between ‘tactics’ of the weak and ‘strategies’ of the powerful, arguing that the tactical response of the marginalized performs subversive

¹⁸ “The most important [quality of monuments] is somewhat contradictory: what strikes one most about monuments is that one doesn’t notice them. There is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments,” Robert Musil, in Burton Pike, ed., *Robert Musil: Selected Writings* (New York: Continuum, 1986).

action in a theater of *time*, while the strategic acts of the powerful project control over the dimension of *space*.¹⁹ Performative memorial actions that unfold over time rather than make claims to space therefore represent a tactical *subversion* of a spatial regime that would deny the importance of the Haymarket, while the desire of the ILHS to build a city-sponsored monument on the site can be read as a desire for labor history to be *incorporated* into the spatial regime, thereby gaining the power and legitimacy associated with spatial control. Seen this way, the frequently shrill and occasionally adolescent complaints of the anarchists about co-optation come into focus as hallmarks of a radically different relation to power, one that does not aspire to possess it but hopes to constantly disrupt it. If this is really the project of the contemporary Chicago anarchists, then one must wonder how *any* kind of physical monument would be acceptable, given the ways it inevitably arranges space around itself and furthers the most problematic aspects of the spatial regime.

While it may be easy to critique the ‘tactical’ memorial as hopelessly romantic about (and even addicted to) its own ineffectiveness, lingering assumptions about the function of spatial monuments also need to be examined. Much recent critical literature has demonstrated that monuments’ claims to permanence, stasis, and even official memory are actually quite tenuous and subject to historic changes and the accretions of social use. Nonetheless, city-sponsored monuments do communicate a certain legitimacy and official worth to the events they memorialize. Insofar as official memorials

¹⁹ Michel de. Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

legitimate as common history what had been previously denigrated or overlooked as minority history, the effort to build a permanent Haymarket monument can be applauded.

At the heart of the pursuit for permanent monuments to the labor movement, then, is the belief that they are both immune from the inexorable slide toward forgetting and accrue political power to those whose political power had been previously denied.

However, a reflexive and problematic belief in the power of visibility underlies both assumptions. In the first case, visibility is seen as a precondition for collective remembering, and in the second, for the assumption of one's rightful political power.

Andreas Huyssen and Peggy Phelan have separately questioned those assumptions.

Huyssen suggests that our contemporary fear of amnesia is the paradoxical result of the *acceleration* of mnemonic technologies and memorial practices, such as the frantic pace with which we use electronic media to commemorate every element of our lives.²⁰

Phelan charges that the equation of greater visibility with greater political power ignores the ways representation operates as a sign of the real in an unequal political landscape and points out that "visibility politics are compatible with capitalism's relentless appetite for new markets and with the most self-satisfying ideologies of the United States."²¹

Certainly, the building of the monument might reflect a desire to localize and concretize memory in response to the proliferation of digital Haymarkets, and for the heritage

²⁰ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995).

²¹ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993).

tourism industry, the convenience of the monument—situated in a ‘transitional’ neighborhood of sushi bars, nightclubs and restaurant supply services—is undeniable.²²

Despite the substantial shortcomings of the Brogger monument, it would be simple modernist and avant-garde hubris to dismiss it out of hand in favor of invisible, performative memorials. After all, the Brogger statue may very well become a point of departure for future experiential memorial actions; as Robert E. Young reminds us, no monument can be separated from the social, emotional, spiritual, and political uses to which it is put.²³ Already, in 2005, the Chicago Federation of Labor staged its first official May Day rally around the monument, and they promise more in coming years. Given the inventive ways anarchist and labor sympathizers, while often at cross-purposes, have celebrated the Haymarket in the absence of official recognition, it is only a matter of time before new ways of enacting the status of radical history in the American city emerge. In this context, the performative tactics of dialogic and interventionist art might supplement and question both the strategies of the official monument and the various ways it is used by historians, the police, labor leaders and anarchists alike.

Nonetheless, I cannot help but mourn the filling of Haymarket’s empty center with another piece of monumental public art or be skeptical of the reasons for recuperating Haymarket into the story official Chicago tells about itself. Albert Parsons,

²² In discussing the reasons why the ILHS was able to secure civic support for a Haymarket memorial, Lara Kelland remarks, “Chicago of the 1990s faced entirely different challenges than it did earlier in the twentieth century. Gentrification brought a middle-class base back into the city after a generation of white flight, and heritage tourism also now offered a tantalizing revenue stream to city leaders. It is at this moment that civic commemoration was finally in the city’s interests, and the postindustrial environment offered a context in which organized labor was one interest group among many to be accommodated in the commemorative process.” Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest?."

²³ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

one of the Haymarket Martyrs, reportedly prophesied on the gallows, “The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today.” Perhaps that silence was getting too powerful, or too deafening, to allow Haymarket the continued privilege of remaining an open site.

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