

**Rupturing the 'Skin of Memory':
Bearing Witness to the 1989 Massacre of Women in Montreal**

by

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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To the dead and for the living

In Memoriam

Geneviève Bergeron

Hélène Colgan

Nathalie Croteau

Barbara Daigneault

Anne-Marie Edward

Maud Haviernick

Barbara Maria Klucznik

Maryse Laganière

Maryse LeClair

Anne-Marie Lemay

Sonia Pelletier

Michèle Richard

Annie St.Arneault

Annie Turcotte

**Murdered December 6, 1989
Ecole Polytechnique, Montreal**

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Abstract

This thesis has been written through the aftershock of the 1989 murder of fourteen women at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec, an event known commonly as the "Montreal Massacre".

Taking a feminist position that this was not the act of a "madman", I argue for careful consideration of *how* to remember this event and in what relation to other acts of violence against women. I propose the massacre may be understood as an event of "historical trauma": both because it broke the frame of what was normal and expected for women attending university in Canada, and because it surfaced a sense of the horror that is already known and unbearable in the lives of those subject to more everyday assaults and violations.

By way of explicating the nuances of this argument, the thesis is developed along three intersecting dimensions. First, I work with my own memories of violation--a history of incest that I began to remember *through* the event of the massacre. Second, I draw from post-Shoah (Holocaust) theorizings to introduce a language of witnessing and to contemplate the impacts of trauma, not only on individual "survivors", but also for social integrity. Third, I

perform the writing as itself a site of bearing of witness, marked by the disturbances of rupture, incomprehensibility and visceral impact.

Substantively, the thesis develops through a series of engagements with feminist memorial responses to the Massacre of Women, including art, song, installation, memorial vigils, and monument--drawn from my annotated bibliography of English-language feminist response (1990-1995). Each of the selected works is approached through two central questions: Which calls to witness are inscribed in memorial responses to the massacre? What are the implications of bearing witness to these responses, when one comes to witnessing already traumatized? The close analysis of responses is organized in part through an interest in attending to and conceptualizing the *pedagogical* effectiveness of memorial practices.

The work will be of interest to those working on philosophies of witnessing; relations between history, traumatic memory, and pedagogy; autobiographical theorizing; and, cultural practices in response to violences against women.

Acknowledgments

The text you hold in your hands is "singularly" authored, but takes its particular shape through the relationships to people, works and histories that I have been living for the past number of years. I cannot retrace every conversation, every late night reading that moved me to one thought rather than another, but I would like here to acknowledge as fully as possible the life that has sustained my writing.

My first act of acknowledgment is to the work of Charlotte Delbo, whose phrase "skin of memory" I have borrowed in the title of this manuscript.

I thank the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship for funding through the formative years of this writing. Studying at what is now OISE/UT has provided me with an opportunity to work with and learn from some incredible teachers. In particular, I am grateful to committee members: Deanne Bogdan, for her delight in ideas and for the provocative questions she asked, which set me wondering again, and Kari Dehli, for her desire and willingness to contemplate what it might mean to read as a scholar and a witness. Roger Simon, my dissertation supervisor, has offered me tremendous intellectual engagement over the years of our working relationship. I am especially thankful to him for negotiating with such skill a balance between guidance and space—and for trusting my not(conscious)knowing as a rich site of inquiry.

My commitment to this writing was born with and sustained by the companionship of some wonderful women. In particular, I/i wish to thank: Ann Fraser, for our irregular but always insightful and compelling brunch conversations; Tara Goldstein, Ann Decter and Tanya Lewis—writing group members—for their thoughtful and compassionate readings of this text-in-progress, and for sharing with me the insights of their own works; Veneda Murtha, for bringing her adventurous spirit alongside the demands of remembrance; Naomi Norquay, for deeply felt intellectual conversations, and for not letting me forget the possibilities brought by laughter; Susan Heald, for the years of our wide-ranging, multi-form dialogues that have helped me to know the normative is *not* necessary; Susan Beamish, for the intimacy of our relationship in which I/i first envisioned this manuscript, and for the passion she brings to refusing silence as an adequate response to violation.

The struggle to write has been eased in many ways by Sue Lang, whose compassion

and encouragement was often shared over pots of tea and chocolate goodies! I am especially grateful to her for being open to the impacts of this manuscript, and for her support through the last stages. I also thank Sue for the opportunities to think more about how to integrate creative, spiritual, and ethical concerns in the stretch for more life.

I am grateful to Tanya Lewis for our talks about writing trauma--joining theory with practice, memory with change--and for the desire to know that she brings to our conversations. Tanya's friendship, care, and thoughtfulness have been sustaining forces for me, particularly throughout the last months, and I thank her for all she has so willingly shared and given. Thanks too to Gillian and Patrick for including me in their lives!

I am profoundly thankful to Kate McKenna--writing companion, dearest friend and academic colleague. Much of what is written on these pages would not have been possible if I/i had not had the sustenance of our dialogues. Kate's exquisite listening skills, brilliant mind and visionary spirit have deeply impacted my work, my life, and I am honoured to learn with her.

My deepest gratitude to Lorie Rotenberg--my first witness--with whom I/i have learned how to bear the weight of remembering. This text is inseparable from the knowledge and understanding that has been created through our working relationship, and I/i cannot thank her enough for what she has helped to make possible. I continue to be inspired by Lorie's integrity, compassion, thoughtfulness, and commitments to justice.

Lastly, my thanks to Tamara Castonguay--particularly for the hope she infuses into my living beyond the deadness, now.

Even if the telling condemns her present life,
what is more important is to (re)tell the story
as she thinks it should be told; in other
words, to maintain the difference that allows
(her) truth to live on. The difference. He
does not hear or see. He cannot give. Never
the given, for there is no end in sight.

Trinh T. Minh-ha

Writing Memory

**Bearing Disturbances:
Introductory Notes To Readers**

This writing does not trace a single thread of remembrance. Rather, it is formed by multiple layerings of theorized memory: horizontal pleats that are pressed into the appearance of linearity, but do not sit easily beside and between each other. The task I have set for myself in the writing of this text is to bear (with) the disturbance of these layers, to imagine beyond their singularity. The notes forming this initial chapter are intended to give readers some orienting points to hold onto.

Note 1: writing past into present

We turn to the past with new questions because of present commitments, but we also remember more deeply what a changed present requires us to know. (Judith Plaskow, 1990: 53)

In the early evening of December 6, 1989, a lone gunman entered the University of Montreal's School of Engineering (École Polytechnique), searching for women. He murdered fourteen women, injured thirteen others (nine women and four men), and then turned the gun on himself. In a suicide note found on his body, the gunman identified his actions as a response to feminism. The aftershock of these killings--as registered in feminist memorial practice and in my own intellectual, emotional and political response--forms the substance and reason for this dissertation. For, unlike mainstream remembrance of this massacre, which has been distilled to minor news items on the anniversary days, memories of these murders have not receded for me,

only to resurface at the beginning of each December. Rather, I/i¹ have been living with their impact, in Annette Kuhn's evocative phrase, "on the pulse" (1995: 101): a visceral practice that keeps me attending not only to issues of (public)remembrance,² but also to the implications of remembering my(private)self.

It is this issue of public/private--as it is forged in relation to remembrances of particular acts of violences against women--that forms one of the central problematics of this work. I argue that this binary distinction, which directs conceptual attention to one side *or* the other, works to divide atrocities, constricting ways of making sense of the past, limiting possibilities for the present and future. Countering this hegemonic split, I "write memory" in this document across the divide: in an exploration of what becomes significant, of conceptual interest, in the intersections.

Note 2: writing trauma

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, *it is fully evident only in connection with another place and in another time.*

(Cathy Caruth, 1995: 8, emphasis mine).

¹ My attentiveness to representation in this document includes a concern with how to represent my self as speaking subject. Thus, I evoke in different contexts the following representations--I, i, I/i. My understanding of the significance of this strategy is explicated in the following chapter.

² A second representational strategy employed in this text is the use of parenthesis to expand the meanings being suggested or foreground a particular meaning. In statements constructed with this strategy, I intend a doubled reading--one that reads the parenthetical words in the sentence and one that reads them removed.

Certain events imprint themselves so deeply on a person, that she is never the same afterwards. The murders at École Polytechnique were like that for me. When the gunman killed fourteen women at another university in this country, killed them because they were women, because he presumed them to be feminists, the thickly layered shroud of forgetting in which i was enveloped began to rip. Slowly, over the subsequent years, that shroud has disintegrated, leaving me exposed to the horrors of (remembering) as many as sixteen years of violation by my father.

It is not the case that within hours of the murders I was unearthing repressed memories. Rather, what I/i have come to understand is the extent to which the women being killed in university classrooms and hallways has mattered to me. Before the evening of December 6, 1989, I had lived schooling (in its various forms) as somewhere "to go to": places that allowed and even required that I separate much of my self, and particularly my (female)body, from what I said, thought, wrote. My hold on this separateness began to shatter that December night.

Initially, I kept the work of remembering the violations of my girlhood far away from my work on remembrance of the massacre; increasingly, not only was this compartmentalization difficult to sustain, but I also became drawn to explore connections between these acts. Most obviously, they can be understood as connected in that both are expressions of endemic violence against girls and women. While this is a relevant and important relation, it is not what has held my attention; instead, what has concerned me are the substance and nature of *remembering* such violences and their traumatic impacts.

Note 3: writing against atrocity

i cannot separate my past from my jewishness or from my abuse, and while being abused didn't happen *because* i am jewish, it also did not happen *despite* being jewish.
(tova, 1995: 119, emphasis in original).

Increasingly, I realize how much my being Jewish matters to this work. This has come as some surprise to me: growing up in an assimilated family in England, I was so distanced from being Jewish that I marked Jews as "others", not me. It has only been in recent years that I have begun to work through what it means for me to know my(jewish)self. A pivotal aspect of this process has been my struggle to come to terms with the weight of the legacy of the Shoah.³ This grappling has become intertwined with my work on the Montreal killings, as I have engaged post-Holocaust theorizings in constant doubleness--as a feminist profoundly interested in the formations of trauma memory, and as an Ashkenazi Jew living at a time when reverberations of the horror of Nazi atrocities are highly pitched. Thus, while I do not write specifically about the Shoah, traces of its traumatic legacy surface in my work-- autobiographically and conceptually. In particular, my thinking and ways of working have been deeply shaped by Holocaust testimonies and theorizings, which have helped me to begin making sense of the intersections, complexities and implications of being both survivor of and witness to trauma.

Note 4: writing from the marrow

We write from the marrow of our bones. What she did not ask, or tell:
how victims save their own lives.
(Adrienne Rich, 1991: 51)

³ For readers unfamiliar with this word, it is a Hebrew naming evoked for the Nazi Genocide of European Jewry. The term existed before these atrocities and literally means destruction.

In writing memory in this document, I strive to work through issues of remembering the traumas of systemic violence by holding in focus not only the impacts on an individual "survivor", but also, and fundamentally, on the implications for history, knowledge, normalcy and human dignity (Avni, 1995). Thus, I am interested in "healing" not as an individual accomplishment aimed at restoring a sense of "normalcy", but as an ethic, a stance in relation to traumatic suffering that orients itself to the profound effects of the social forms, discourses and practices of what passes as normal.

I take up this stance as a project of witnessing, grappling with two central questions: First, which calls to witness are inscribed in remembrance activities and representations in response to the massacre in Montreal--what are witnesses being called upon to remember and forget and how? Second, what are the implications of bearing witness to these remembrance responses, when one has lived a history of violences and comes to witnessing already traumatized? It is with these questions in mind that I/i orient myself toward thinking about a politics of witnessing: to propose the urgency of interrogating what it does mean, what it might mean, for "us"--in whatever constellation of identities and relations to history we live--to bear witness to the particular act of women-hatred coined as the "Montreal Massacre" and to the ongoing practices of violence that preceded and remain in its wake.

Note 5: writing at the edge of the bearable

We know that here one is on the borderline of the bearable and we struggle against letting go.
(Charlotte Delbo, [1965] 1995: 41).

Many times, the writing of this text has pushed against my sense of how much I can bear (to remember, to know, to tell). In these moments I have encountered my own limits to bearing witness to the horrors that I/i am reading, viewing, and remembering. The questions I have grappled with in this process seem to me to be at the crux of bearing witness—and, thus, of potential relevance to readers. How to engage when flooding, splitting off, incomprehensibility, and flesh-stored knowledge overwhelm the established parameters of rational preparedness? How to stay with the chaos, not detach, not seek comfort in intellectual distance, and yet recognize that language, theory, and analysis are fundamental to the project being engaged here? How to live with dis-orientation and dis-integration as necessary, crucial, to bearing witness to the traumatic effects of endemic violences? In posing these questions here, to you, I am calling for reader-witnessings: that is, I am calling on readers to register, acknowledge, be present to the dis- and re-orientations that this text (may) evoke(s) and the implications for your readings / (re)tellings.

Note 6: writing disturb(ance)s

Not enough theory? The end of discipline? What if a field were to burst into bloom mountains become deserts washed by ocean?
(Jeffner Allen, 1994: 51)

I have come to find conceptual, political and emotional significance in disturbance, have discovered that it is most often in disturbing-unsettling-rearranging what is taken to be normal, obvious and familiar that I am most alert, that i can grasp that which has been suffocated, denied, dissociated from and forgotten, but presses so heavily for articulation. In this text, I disturb conceptual dichotomies, discipline boundaries, genre distinctions.

I disturb the lines that mark one analytic expression of violent practice as distinct from another, from others. And, thus, I am interested in remembrances of the killing of the fourteen women at *École Polytechnique* *and* memories of incestual violations by a father against his daughter *and* conceptualizations of the impact of trauma memory on those who lived through/despite the Nazi Genocide of European Jewry. In troubling the demarcation that constructs these violences as (separate) events, I am not suggesting the reversal--that there are no distinctions between them of significance--rather, I consider what it might mean to hold them (conceptually, politically) in relation.

I disturb the separations between sociological writing and poetry and prose, to burrow into the depths of what becomes speakable when they are written together, tended inside of each other. I write sections on remembering with embodied words and phrases that evoke touch smell hearing taste sight: calling for sensory engagement, because trauma memories spill over the discourses of conscious, rational remembering. And, in this, I refuse a detachment of terror from theory, pain from conceptualizing, bodies from scholarship. In their joining, I write from trauma memory, but do not simply tell what i remember. Rather, I create memory-texts: crafted, conceptualized, worked with, thought about as I sit with a dictionary in my lap to try to bring (to) language (to) what I/i am living.

At times, I take my cues less from the standards of academic writing practice, such as linearity, unambiguous coherence, a unified whole, and more from contemporary conceptualizations of remembering and forgetting trauma [rupture, embodiment, irreducibility]. Thus, the representational strategies I employ in this text are not random and ad hoc interventions in textual formation, but are conceptually crafted and driven. For example, I switch from

paragraph form to column form, because the latter allows me to represent versions of memory as equally significant, rather than in hierarchical relation. I interject words in a sentence, a sentence in a paragraph, creating a dissonance of meaning, as an expression of the way in which traumatic memory can rupture through the surface, even when that surface is a discussion about remembrance.

Consideration of representational strategies spills over into my use of (foot)notes.⁴ Working within the confines of hierarchically-organized textual topography, I have relied extensively on (foot)notes to add another layer: elaborating, situating, repeating, distancing, highlighting, unsettling, reconfiguring, ... traces of memory, trauma and the bearing of witness. In this, I have intended (foot)notes as expressions of intertextuality--not appendages to the (other) text, but placed apart primarily for reasons of intelligibility. Part of the labour of engaging this writing may be to shift the (foot)notes in your reading imagination: so that instead of keeping their place on the page, they rush in on the end of the breath of a previous speaking.⁵

I call on readers: to attend to the disturbances of this text as necessary to its substance and nature; to reconsider desires to harness the text back into discipline boundaries and conceptual dichotomies; to contemplate Annette Kuhn's observation that we "allow ourselves to look at things afresh, not casting aside our analytic procedures, but using them differently, making greater demands on them" (1995: 38).

⁴ My thanks to Deanne Bogdan for her curiosity about the strategies of textual layering in this writing--a curiosity which compelled me to offer these remarks on my usage of "the footnote".

⁵ After I had written this offering on (foot)notes--reflections on an almost completed text--I came across a paper by Jacques Derrida, in which he theorizes the footnote in relation to issues of annotation. One observation stands out for me immediately: "in our culture, the footnote is a remark, a 'notice'..." (1991: 198). From this perspective, some of the (foot)notes on this text may be read as further attempts to notice that for which there is little visible "evidence".

Note 7: writing that takes leave of the expected

A creative event does not grasp, it does not take possession, it is an excursion. More often than not, it requires that one leaves the realms of the known, and take oneself there where one does not expect, is not expected to be.

(Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1991: 26)

This chapter and the two that follow figure as layers of introduction to this document: each representing a different set of engagements with the central problematics of the work. They are intended to orient readers: first, to how I grapple with issues of representing memory as a writer of this work and a reader/viewer of other works; second, to the substance of the memories at stake here; and, third, to the conceptual engagements with which I/i theorize issues of (remembering) trauma and witnessing.

In the second section of the dissertation, I weave together these strands of thinking by developing a series of "studies in bearing witness" that engage feminist memorial responses to the massacre in Montreal. Each chapter takes a particular focus: chapter 4 considers a selection of representational practices from various sites of cultural production; chapter 5 looks at the memorial vigils, which have provided the central ongoing remembrance response across the country; and, chapter 6 is concerned with the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver, a major permanent memorial dedicated to the women killed in Montreal and to all women murdered at the hands of men. Each of the representations of remembrance discussed in these chapters is further documented in the context of the range of feminist memorial response, detailed in the Resource Bibliography. In the final section, comprising one chapter, I recall the central thematics of this text and begin to trace their implications for the development of an historical consciousness in relation and response to trauma.

Writing Memory

Of memories
that lie
between blood and bone
memories that are as much
carried by us
as carry us
forward and back
forward and back

incest
rape
mutilation

Of memories
born(e) in classrooms
to the absence
splitting
killing
of women
self from self
body from mind
her mind []

pedagogy
knowledge
violence

Of memories
that come flooding back
each december 6
standing at memorial vigils
cold seeping into bones
candles reflecting
the anguish
her anguish

fathers
boyfriends
sons

Of memories
collected
circulated
contested
in tv newspapers art shows & film
at monuments & readings
how do we remember?
how does she remember?

amnesia
testimony
witness

Of memories
that may be evoked
for you
during this reading
memories call forth
memories
call
forth

women
rage
now

name
the
familiar:

atrocities

Writing Memory: Tactile Theorizing¹

Insofar as love is a labour, a trying, an essay, it, like theory, cannot *be* anything but an offering, a giving of what one does not have, a description and transcription of what one cannot see or prove with visible evidence. (Peggy Phelan, 1993: 32, emphasis in original)

Our lives are not small. Our lives are all we have, and death changes everything. (Dorothy Allison, 1994:250)

I/i write (in and) out of horror: a horror that so many of us have life raped, suffocated, drugged and torn out of us. in and out. writing from inside the horror. writing as a way to move out of the horror. I write with a sense of promise: as witness to women trying desperately to expand the capacities not completely deadened: dreaming of more than survival, recovering-discovering bodies to actually live in; taking up space in the streets in classrooms on printed pages in homes on the subway through images and

¹ A note on the subtitle of this chapter: I first heard the term "tactile writing" during a course with Ann Decter (1994). She used it to describe writing that focuses as much on sensation as thought--writing that brings readers as close as possible to an experience by engaging not only intellect but also touch, smell, taste, hearing. While Ann was referring to fiction writing and poetry, it seemed to me that it is precisely when *theory* is tactile that I/i am most compelled by it, both as a writer and a reader. I have thus borrowed from her to create the term "tactile theorizing" to signal the nature of the theoretical work I do here. In this, I am also reminded of Adrienne Rich who writes that "one property of poetic language [is] to engage with states that themselves would deprive us of language and reduce us to passive sufferers" (1993: 10). It is against passive suffering that I/i (desire to) write.

words. I write because to not write is to allow the dead to disappear, to not write is to suffocate under what i do (and do not) remember of my past. I suspect I write as a way to breathe—quite literally: for weeks now I/i have been struggling to maintain adequate breath in and out of my body. in and out. sometimes inside. sometimes the surface. sometimes out. I have begun to wonder about voice and breath as much as about speaking and silence. Listening to Nicole Brossard, I remember that I too write "so the living wins over" (1994: np).

History is not kind to us / we restitch it with living / past memory forward / into desire / into the panic / articulation / of want without having / or even the promise of getting. (Audre Lorde, 1986: 57)

The further I journey into the writing process, the clearer I become about the precise nature of the struggle in which I/i am engaged: each act of this writing is caught by, woven against and discovered through the particular strands of regulation and possibility that constitute what it means to "write a dissertation", to write inside academe but more and more living at its edges, at OISE in the mid-1990's (having been privileged enough to receive funding through most of the years of this work). This means that alongside the anger and disappointment I feel at "this place", there is also: a pleasure in being with ideas, sculpting written forms; a deep sense that what happens in academe matters to me; and tiredness, always the tiredness...of learning that survival does not have to mean endless endurance...of living with/in/despite a traumatized self...of pain etched into flesh...of writing, teaching, learning, reading with ongoing regard for bodily as well as intellectual responses. But where else can i/we go, those of us committed to intellectual-political feminist work grasping a hold of the spaces that are possible, endlessly faced with(in) the stultifying forms and relations that would have us quieten (down)?

Over and over I find myself struggling to stay close to what drives and sustains this writing; frequently moving to another place that is *informed* by the grit and the messiness and the day-night dreams and the body terrors and the burst outs and the giving (a)way. producing writing that bares the traces of these knowings but does not touch them, live with them. writing memory: from here. writing memory: back there. and yet it is only when I allow myself to foreground these places (pushing back the voices, the knowledge, the fears that shut them down) that it seems possible to breathe space into the writing; to remember not as a way to stitch the present into the shape of the past, but to remember as a way of re-patterning the past present and future.

repressed images reassert themselves upon us over and over again until we recognize them; until we cease to leave them out; cut them out.

until we wake up from the com(m)a.
(Betsy Warland, 1990: 114)

To recall: on December 6, 1989, a 25 year old man entered Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec. He walked into a classroom, told the men to leave--which they all did--and shot six women to death, accusing them of being "a bunch of fucking feminists". He then walked through hallways and other classrooms, killing eight more women and injuring thirteen other people.² Then he shot himself. In the three-page note found on his body, he described the murders as a political act and blamed feminism for ruining his life. This is the series of killings

² Of those 13, nine were women and four were men. The men were shot because they "interfered" in the killer's rampage (Lakeman, 1992: 93). The Security Manager at the Polytechnique reports: "[t]he massacre continues to traumatize the student body. Four students have died since the shootings and two have been confirmed as suicides. In one case, the parents of a student who committed suicide subsequently killed themselves" (in Anderson, 1991: 146). This last student was a man, "traumatized by the guilt he felt about not having tried to help the victims" (Anderson, 1991: 146).

that has come to be known by the signifier the "Montreal Massacre".

This is a writing
of
in
about
for
memory

and by "of--in--about--for" what I mean is that this is a writing *of* memories--a representation of remembrances of this Massacre of fourteen women in Montreal and of my own rememberings of girlhood violations; a writing that is *in* memory--in memoriam for women brutalized and killed by men's violences³ and, at times, lodged in memories of these moments; *about* (some of) what it might mean to remember as a pedagogical practice, about ways of working with remembrance in art, song, vigils, monuments, and writing; and the production of a text *for* remembrance: writing that calls for remembrance as a strategy for change, to propel an end to violences against those whose lives, bodies, psyches are subject to the forces of oppression.

And by *memory* I mean that which is variously named as social, collective, public, and/or historical--those remembrances of (a version of) the past that circulate (through

And by *memory* I mean that which might be named as personal, autobiographical, private, individual--those remembrances of one's (own and/or family's) past that circulate (if

³ I want to be very careful here. In this project, the focus is on two specific acts of violences suffered by girls and women at the hands of men. I do not want this to be read as suggesting that all violences against women are encoded in this way. To do so would be to privilege gender to the extent that it suggests a unitary meaning and erases the complex and specific ways in which violences are lived across dimensions of privilege and oppression--an erasure I do not wish to perpetuate. Nor do I intend an extension from this phrasing to a dichotomous position in which only men (and boys) are perpetrators and only women (and girls) are victims, a position that erases the abuses boys suffer and the violences directed at marginalized men.

television, film, music, monuments, at all) within a limited number of spheres
museums, buttons, photographs, writing ...) (i.e. family albums, story telling, therapy
in "the present". rooms).

I understand the significance of memories to lie with the hold that they
(variously) have on present imaginations, bodily possibilities, and ways of
re/making sense.

Forming these columns does more than list out meanings, it makes visible the
dichotomizing of memories along lines that are (currently, still) hegemonic: public / private,
social / individual, collective / personal.⁴ How does this dichotomising limit understandings of
(the implications of) remembering and remembrance? What might become visible, possible
through a focus on their interconnectedness? What might it mean to conceptualize remembering
as always public *and* private, social *and* individual, collective *and* personal? This text is one
response to these questions, a writing of how I have grappled with these dichotomies of memory,
collapsing them in efforts to think in a sustained way beyond their limits.

⁴ Reference to the interconnectedness of public and private memories is not new (for an
earlier example of this see Popular Memory Group, 1982; for more recent, Irwin-Zarecka, 1994).
What has received less analytical attention is a focus on the interconnectedness in particular
contexts. One noteworthy exception is a recent text by Annette Kuhn (1995). For a more
developed discussion on these points, see chapter 3.

We turn to the past with new questions because of present commitments, but we also remember more deeply what a changed present requires us to know. (Judith Plaskow, 1990: 53)

This writing is imprinted by a knowledge that I did not have conscious access to during the first years of thinking and writing about the killings of the women in Montreal. What I came to realize—even after having written the dissertation proposal—is the significance of a *university* as the site where the women were murdered as women. It is not that I did not know where the women were killed, nor that I had not thought about this context: it is, rather, that I/i have gradually come to understand the impacts (on me) of the women being killed in university classrooms and hallways. I understand now that, prior to the evening of December 6, 1989, education had provided me with the necessary conditions for maintaining a separateness from my self and my body. When the gunman walked through the classrooms and hallways at Ecole Polytechnique, killing fourteen women because they were women, because (he presumed) they were "feminists", my hold on this separateness began to shatter.⁵ Writing now, as the months turn toward the fifth anniversary of the Massacre, conscious of how deeply my senses of self have been shattered and reconstituted over the past few years, I/i have come to think of the deaths of those fourteen women as a catalyst that jarred me into a process of remembering years and years of incest.

I do not mean to imply by this that I suddenly "remembered" (recalled, understood) a history of violation. This is not the case. Rather, what I/i remember of that night on December 6, 1989 is holding vigil with the newscast until late into the night, crying screaming disbelief that

⁵ I wish to thank Ann Fraser for our conversation in February 1994 in which I was able to first recognize the significance of this moment.

led into the next day's memorial at the University of Toronto, and my wanderings in and out of a class I/i was taking at OISE; unable to stay in one place, not knowing where else to go, what else to do, not knowing what it meant to move on from that night, some twenty-four hours after the women had been killed in the classrooms and hallways of another university. I recall listening to parts of a radio call-in show in someone's office, to men proclaiming the murders as the act of a madman, nothing to do with them, nothing to do with male power, nothing to do with violences against women like battering and rape and incest.⁶ And then i don't remember December 8, 9, 15, 27 ... it is only those 24 hours that remain clear and vivid in my memory.

What I hear in my own words now--as I/i read over my recollection of these days in December--is an experience of being in "flashback"⁷: the pain and horror of December 6, 1989 striking me so deeply that it touched off the pain and horror i had (have) carried in me for years. Being unable to live the depth of this, having limited understanding of its profound nature, I make sense (in the now) of the references to not-knowing as a state of dissociation, of splitting off⁸: to not feel, to not remember.

I recall the words of Jane DeLynn, and "suddenly" understand why they have been so compelling to me. She writes:

[a]trocities no longer seriously possess the power to shock or surprise, and if on occasion we imagine they do--if we find ourselves being [stopped] by the latest serial or mass murderer or individual killer of particular

⁶ For further discussion of the media coverage of the massacre in 1989 and since, see the subsequent section in this chapter.

⁷ For readers who are unfamiliar with this language, "flashback ... refer[s] to any sudden remembering or reexperiencing of a traumatic event" (Bonnie Burstow, 1992: 11).

⁸ Bonnie Burstow describes splitting or the act of dissociation as "a flight into a disembodied state" (1992: 12).

repugnance—it is not because their acts are unimaginable but precisely because *they remind us of who we are, what we tolerate, and what we are willing to forget.*

(1989, 74-75, emphasis mine)

Her words reverberate in me two-fold: first, written in response to the atrocity of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry, I hear them from the location of an Ashkenazi Jew, struggling to come to terms with the weight of this legacy as it presses on me, now. Second, I hear them from my interest in the intersections of memory; I listen again, "atrocities ... remind us of who we are, what we tolerate, and what we are willing to forget", and my relation to the massacre falls into place. I believe this murder of fourteen women in Montreal in 1989 re-minded me of (unconsciously known) experiences of incest that had been held under a warp of forgetting over years of tolerating the conditions of dissociation that kept me unaware of, and largely unresponsive to, my embodiment. I suggest it is not surprising that my unconscious was triggered by an act of extreme violence against women in a university--that very public place where I had been most "successful" at dissociation and rewarded for what I accomplished through this split state.

"You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and liveable acreage. Occasionally, the river floods these places. 'Floods' is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding it is remembering.

Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get

back to where it was.

*Writers are like that: remembering where we were,
what valley we ran through, what the banks were like,
the light that was there and the route back to our
original place.*

*It is emotional memory--what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it
appeared. And a rush of imagination is our 'flooding'". (Toni Morrison, 1990: 305)*

In dissociated fragments that took some years to come into a semblance of connection, I/i have been in a process of re/calling to the surface of my being, to consciousness, being incested by my father for most of my early life. As I write these words, knowing that they will be read by others known and unknown to me, I/i am hit by waves of nausea that ricochet from the back of my neck to the walls of my stomach. Although i have now told a number of people about my remembering, have been heard and seen in the wretchedness of memory by some incredible women, I have only recently uttered incest in print (Rosenberg, 1996). I have not yet named my history of violation to any member of my immediate family (my father has been dead

for many years; my mother and brother are living).⁹ It is important to tell you this because the not-telling, the keeping quiet, the holding down is as much part of my life, formative to my life, as what is spoken across these pages.

I do not believe that one simply comes to a place of speaking, from which it is always and already now possible to articulate the horrors one has lived. Instead, I am most likely to find myself continuously grappling with a question asked by Karen Remmler: "What is the cost to the writer attempting to describe the inexpressible in terms of his or her own tortured body? (1994: 227). I have come to recognize that cost is not singular, it does not maintain a particular shape, a specific presence. Sometimes it comes in the nausea that tugs my hands away from the keyboard not this, not today. Sometimes it comes in dialogues with others, where I become positioned through my work, as the one who will not help hold the illusion that trauma lies with others, not us. Sometimes it comes in having to explain over and over that writing is not destructive to me, but not writing may well be. Sometimes it comes in the form of remembering the immense costs of naming, speaking, telling at other moments in my life. Sometimes it is not cost at all but pleasure and delight with language, a deepening strength, the clarity of purpose that comes with another's exquisite hearing of my work. Sometimes.

⁹ Though I/i have managed these past few years by severely limiting contact with my family--to the extent that I am only called in the case of health emergencies or deaths--in approaching the completion of this writing, my not-telling begins to weigh more heavily than it has previously. In my grapplings, I come across the following statement by Karen Remmler, commenting on the work of Mali Fritz, a survivor of the Shoah; Remmler writes: [s]he [Fritz] removes the stigma from the body of the victim by transforming it into a text that names the victimizer" (Remmler, 1994: 227). Remmler's observation impels me to continue, but it does not take away my sense of disturbance and risk (I suspect, for example, that members of my family might agree that it is imperative to name Nazi victimizers, but shameful to name family members who abused).

Although I have only named what i remember as "incest" in recent years, I realize now that the experience of "being in memory" is familiar to me: that I/i moved in and out of memory often for about ten years following my father's suicide when i was age 16. But until more recently, I did not have a way to understand these experiences *as traumatic memory*; instead, most often, i understood my self within the terms of a discourse that was sedimented early in my life, in which i did not exist as a separate person, in which i was positioned as mere appendage to my father's being.¹⁰ For years and years i felt (and still feel, although less regularly) that my sense of self "disappeared" during times of threat, that i could become an empty space. seeing myself as i was then, searching for a visible representation and all i can find is blankness. empty space. i do not exist. i am not there.

hollow outline

empty

gone.

In writing from a body that is present and absent, remembered and forgotten, now and then, I grapple consistently with how to represent my self as speaking subject. In past writings, my desire to slip away from the absolute *I* [unqualified, unlimited authority, certain, independent] has been managed by a turn to its opposite--the lower case, *i* [limited, partial, musing,

¹⁰ Janet Liebman Jacobs makes sense of this lack of separateness in this way: "[t]he multiple boundary violations that inform the child's relationship to the perpetrator create a dynamic of forced intimacy wherein attachment rather than separateness defines the daughter's relationship to her father" (1993: 133). Dori Laub also notes that when the conditions are such that one cannot be witness to oneself in the experience (the conditions that are prevalent in trauma), then one's identity ceases to exist, one is in effect annihilated even though still living (1992: 82).

interdependent]. While this has provided some element of disruption to my writing, prompting possible reflection on meaning making practices, it now strikes me as too limited, especially in the context of a lengthy text, where it easily loses its self-referential edge. If all perspectives are partial, situated and embodied (Haraway, 1988; Hill Collins, 1990; Williams, 1991); if we do not live unitary, singular and stable identities, but are fluid and multiple (Chang, 1994; Trinh, 1989, 1991; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1987); if language is not a vessel through which reality passes, but a limited vision that creates what and how it is possible to know the world (Brossard, 1988, 1990; Scott, 1987, 1989; Warland, 1990, 1993), then it seems to me that rather than choosing any one inscription of *I*, most useful and evocative are multiple representations that refer to their context for meaning. And, so, in this document, my self-representation moves with and through the following configurations, which are offered not as a rigid categorization, but as an attempt to articulate a complexity of issues.

I: in inscribing my self in this way, my intention is not to re/claim an absolute status, but to encode a sense of my self as a speaker who is foregrounding (in this moment) her stability in the present. It is an indicator that *i* am speaking with some assurance about what I know now. It may mean that in any particular sentence I am encoding one subject position over

i: I want to maintain this inscription for its allusion to partiality and interdependence of thought. It is the musing *i* that plays in relation most often to the capitalized *I*, as a nudging reference to the (im)possibilities of speaking. It is the recurring, rupturing past *i* that destabilizes the
• present *I*.

I/i: in inscribing my self within this configuration, *i* learn from Trinh Minh-ha who uses the convention to demarcate "the plural, non-unitary subject" (1989: 9), with which I want to recognize plurality *and* authority, as well as the simultaneity of past and present selves. So that, in the context of any utterance *i* am not positing one sense (or tense) of self in prominence over others,

others or one tense over
others--present self over
past self.

but I am suggesting that it
is possible to speak with
a s s u r a n c e f r o m
m u l t i p l i c i t y a n d
simultaneity.

While these inscriptions open up ways to represent my (remembering) self, they too are limited. How to represent the impossibility of speaking with authority about a subject--incest--that I/i? I/i? was never supposed to name, articulate, express?¹¹ How to inscribe a self who speaks in awareness of her vulnerability and exposure to misuse of her words, voyeuristic gazes,¹² attempts to disclaim or silence her? I/i am caught in the mesh of colliding discourses, poignantly aware of the significance and the cost of articulating traumatizing experiences *and* refusing to take my place as victim, crazy, object.

Contrary to my understanding of psychological-trauma literature, which tends to conceptualize "stages" of a life: before trauma, trauma, after trauma (during which one integrates the trauma experience with life before),¹³ I am hesitant about claims for a life before trauma when violation begins in infancy. That is, I am coming to believe that my formation is one where a "traumatized identity" is not something that I move in and out of, that is there sometimes and not others, that I can "pass" through. Instead, I/i live it much more like my being a lesbian, white, jewish, ... it is then one of the fundamental socially-formed identities that I can never

¹¹ On these issues, see also Hannah J.L. Feldman (1993), who asks readers to reflect on the complexities of the speaking subject, when that speaker is a woman who has been raped, writing an exhibition catalogue essay about representations of rape.

¹² With regard to discussions around voyeurism and sexual abuse tellings, see Janice Williamson (1994) and Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray (1993). Williamson reminded me that Betsy Warland, in *The Bat Had Blue Eyes* (1993), also works with a shifting I-i in her articulations of memories of child sexual abuse. Williamson argues that this strategy unsettles reader voyeurism; she states: "Warland's 'I' is nomadic, furtive and difficult to keep an eye on" (1994: 217). Although I had not recalled Warland's text when I was writing this section on my use of I-i-I/i, Williamson's observations are relevant here also.

¹³ For a comprehensive sense of this schema, see Judith Lewis Herman, 1992.

shake off (although, like the others, its meaning does and will shift). What I feel I am trying to grapple with is not the first level of recognition, "i was incested as a girl-child", but a deeper level of how living (through) incest has fundamentally structured my subjectivity.¹⁴ I do not want this to be read as reductive, as if I am saying that all of who I am can be caught within the naming "incest survivor"; but, I/i do want to push here an acknowledgement (for theory, politics and pedagogy) that continuous, repeated incest has (and does) structure, limit, create me as much as the oft-quoted mantra of "gender, race, sexuality and class".¹⁵

*As far as memory at least is concerned, private and public turn out in practice less readily separable than conventional wisdom would allow.
(Annette Kuhn, 1995: 4)*

For some time, I held the labour of remembering incest separate from my work on feminist memorial responses to the massacre. Increasingly, sustaining this split became difficult to bear; I have struggled with various responses to this difficulty: from keeping things as they are, to leaving academia for a period of time, to trying to find ways to live both and have each site of work inform the other. I/i have come to see the latter response as the only adequate one for me at this time: on one level, I firmly believe that there is an imperative to doing--and being

¹⁴ Sharon Marcus offers a point of argument that parallels mine here; she observes: "the horror of rape is not that it steals something from us but that it makes us into things to be taken" (1992: 399).

¹⁵ Articulated in this way, my position risks suggesting that a logical consequence is to argue for political mobilization around "trauma identity/ies". While this issue is beyond what I can consider here, I am at the very least cautious about such a proposition. On the problematics of articulating injury and identity to struggles for reparation, see Brown, 1995.

part of shaping space for others who desire--intellectual work that refuses the splits (public/private, personal/social, body/mind) upon which so much academic belief and practice continues to rest. On a second level, I gradually became interested in exploring possible connections between these two sites of memory work. Most obviously, they can be understood as connected from a feminist perspective that identifies a range of practices in the formation of endemic violences against children and women. I began from this perspective, and could not have created this text if I had not been writing at a time when this work was available to me: it too was formative to how *I/i* came to be here. However, it did not help me to consider the web of issues that are raised when the substance and nature of *remembering* such violences was brought into analytic consideration.¹⁶

Instead, then, I have turned my attention to conceptualizing "witnessing", as a particular practice of remembrance for change. To recall, I have been occupied with two central questions: First, which calls to witness are inscribed in remembrance activities and representations in response to the massacre (i.e. memorial vigils, art exhibits, video, poetry)--what are witnesses being called upon to remember and forget and how? Second, What are the implications of bearing witness to these memorial responses, when one has lived a history of gendered violences and comes to witnessing already traumatized? From these questions, *I/i* have oriented myself in this writing to a sustained consideration of bearing witness--taking on the task of interrogating the responsibilities and burdens that accrue in bearing witness to the specific act of women-hatred named as the "Montreal Massacre" and to the on-going practices of traumatization which it may

¹⁶ For discussion of this point, see the section below on the issues involved in remembering the massacre in Montreal in relation to other violences.

recall.¹⁷

How people attend to the past, if at all, and how they make sense of it is very much grounded in their experience. At the same time, and allowing for this, the public framing of remembrance does matter. Beyond providing resources to work with, public discourse may validate (or discourage) particular ways of seeing the past. (Iwona Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 56)

Within hours, the killings in Montreal in 1989 became marked as an event-in-history, demarcating these fourteen murders as outside "the ordinary" acts of violence against women in Canada. While I do not disagree with the sense of horror that is coded into such a demarcation, I do wish to recognize that interpreting the killings as excessive depends on and reinforces hegemonic interpretations of the more usual violences against women as (to varying degrees) "acceptable".¹⁸ Such hegemonic hold has been kept in place, I suggest, not particularly through expressive remembrance, but primarily through forgetting. On one level: in the remembrance of the "Massacre" as a (separate) event, there is a constant marginalization of the violences that *are not* registered in historical memory.¹⁹ On another level, aside from commentary to mark the anniversary each year and the occasional reference in a news item, there is a general forgetting

¹⁷ Through this lens, I work with my bearing of witness. In doing so, I have a particular intent in mind: not as a claim to the individuality of *my* trauma, but rather as illustrative of what may be at stake when bearing witness to traumatic histories is taken to encompass not only an other, but also one's self. For a conceptual discussion of this point, see Chapter 3.

¹⁸ As I will discuss below, dominant feminist interpretations of the Montreal killings were differently oriented: while they share(d) a sense of the Massacre as horrifying, they did not frame the event as isolated, but as one of the myriad forms of violences against women that are part of the fabric of everyday living.

¹⁹ For instance, as Lee Lakeman points out, media representations of this murder as "the largest mass murder in Canadian history" ignore the massacre of native peoples (1992: 97).

in mainstream public discourses. It seems to me that these forgettings--what is not said, the connections that are not made outside of the anniversary week--are as crucial to the organization and sedimentation of the killings-as-an-event, as the very acts of remembrance themselves.

This week, the unimaginable happened. A 25-year-old man ... strode into the University of Montreal and opened fire on innocent students. ... The shock, horror and grief reverberating throughout the country are all prefaced with the question, "Why?" Why Lepine? Why female victims? Why now? Why Canada?

(Toronto Star, Dec. 9, 1989)

A Toronto woman was hacked to death last Tuesday and another was beaten to death with a baseball bat on Wednesday.

It was a fairly typical week for women in Canada.

(Globe and Mail, Oct. 8, 1990)

Today, as a year ago, many people--including Quebec's minister in charge of the status of women, Violette Trépanier--refuse to accept that there is a

Sixty-year-old Alba Fuentes-Reyes was hacked to death with a 36-centimetre machete outside her Hamilton townhouse while children watched in horror last Saturday afternoon. Her estranged husband, Carmelo Reyes, has been charged with first-degree murder.

On Sunday, a 3-year-old girl found the body of her mother in her Parkdale apartment. Milaca Nicolik, 37, was lying in a pool of blood, her throat slashed.

And yesterday, a medical study suggested that abused women face the most beatings during the first three months after giving birth.

It is against this unrelenting backdrop of violence that Metro residents prepare to mark the fifth anniversary of the massacre of 14

It does not matter that the man who decided to kill fourteen women--and he clearly did decide to do that--killed himself afterward; it is not of him that I am afraid. I am afraid of what he represents, of all the unspoken hatred, the pent-up anger that he expressed. Hatred and anger that is shared by every husband who beats his wife, every man who rapes his date, every father who abuses his child, and by many more who would not dare.

(Diana Bronson, *Globe and Mail*, Dec. 8, 1989)

A judge described Ieuan Jenkins as "a model of generosity and tolerance" yesterday before giving him a suspended sentence with three years probation for strangling his wife with his bare hands.

(*Globe and Mail*, Dec. 7, 1990)

direct link between the 14 slayings and violence against women.

(*Globe and Mail*, Dec. 6, 1990)

On a poster calling for women to respond to a research project on the development of feminist consciousness, someone had written: SHOOT THEM.

(OISE, within a week of the Montreal massacre.)

"My experience in the women's movement is that no single event has had a bigger impact on the life of women as the Montreal Massacre". (Judy Rebick, *Globe and Mail*, December 6, 1990)

But on the day of commemoration the blood still flowed. Yesterday morning, Montreal Urban Community Police discovered the bodies of three women, one stabbed to death, the second beaten to death, and the

women at l'Ecole polytechnique de Montreal.

(*Toronto Star*, Dec. 6, 1994)

Horrific Acts like the Montreal murders can galvanize public rage at violence against women. But sadly, the solution will not be found in keeping madmen off the street, but in teaching men who are mad that women can never, ever again be a receptacle for their rage.

(Michael Hollert, *Now Magazine*, Dec. 1-8, 1994)

About 600 people gathered at Toronto's City Hall, less than half the number expected. Some women in the crowd said they felt vulnerable to violence simply appearing at the event. One called it a potential "shooting pond".

(*Globe and Mail*, Dec. 7, 1990)

They said it with white ribbons, with music, with candles, with prayers, with flowers, with tears. At a Montreal event commemorating the second anniversary of the rampage at Ecole Polytechnique that claimed the lives of 14 young women, the slogan "never again" echoed in the cold winter's night, propelled by voices loud and clear.

(Globe and Mail, Dec. 7, 1991)

On December 6, the school (Ecole Polytechnique) will be closed. A mass will be held off campus, open only to students, staff and the victim's families.

"It's going to be extremely low key," Mr. Bazergui [the school's director] said. "We don't want to make a big fuss about it. It's going to be held in memory (of the victims) and, as much as possible, in silence."

(Globe and Mail, Dec. 4, 1990)

third shot to death in three separate incidents. In Toronto, a woman medical student was recovering from stab wounds, allegedly by a rejected boyfriend.

(Globe and Mail, Dec. 7, 1991)

The white ribbon campaign, launched by Metro Men Against Violence ..., marks the first time men have organized on a national scale to end violence against women.

(Now Magazine, Dec. 5-11, 1991)

Posters are appearing at Queen's University that read:

"December 6 : Remembering 15 victims of feminism".

(Anne Swarbrick at the Vigil at City Hall, Dec. 6, 1990)

Yesterday participants at a University of Toronto forum debated whether women should take up arms to end male violence.

(Toronto Star, Dec. 7, 1994)

"A day of memorial is not the same as ending violence against women", said Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. "This is a day of anger, a day of crisis", she said yesterday.

(Toronto Star, Dec. 6, 1994)

red roses?

What are the

	"appropriate"	songs?
	memorial responses	
white ribbons?	to violences against	violent re-action?
	women?	
candles?		education?
	grief?	
organizing?		silence?
	anger?	separatism?
legislation?		
	vigils?	

The naming of the slaughters as the "Montreal Massacre" is one of the central manifestations of a simultaneity of remembering and forgetting. In problematizing this naming, I turn first to Ana Maria Alonso, who offers this crucial insight into the naming of slayings in Mexico in 1983. She states, "the name is a mnemonic sign"--a capturing of memory--[a sign] which condenses an interpretation of events and gives the day a historical saliency, but a saliency which is selective, which highlights some aspects and obscures others" (1988: 39). From the beginning, feminists and some progressive others linked the December 6 killings to the myriad forms of violences against women that are enacted daily in Canada. I want to argue, however, that the very naming "Montreal Massacre" doubly obscures these connections. The term

"massacre" references a "general slaughter of persons". While this term brings to the fore the impersonal relation between the women killed and their killer, it makes inconspicuous the gendered nature of this act: for he did not kill fourteen *ungendered* persons, he deliberately separated out the women from the men and he killed fourteen *women*. As Lee Lakeman argues, this aspect of the killings would suggest parallels *not* to general slaughters but to, for example, the "premeditated killings of 12 Vancouver prostitutes last year [1988]. That [the gunman] killed 14 women at once instead of one a month is hardly a key point" (1992: 95).

Further, how is it that "Montreal" came to inscribe the particularity of these mass killings? It seems to me that this descriptive sign offers the most minimal of meaning: it obscures the site *an engineering school*, the victims *white women--specifically, women who were (or were presumed to be) engineering students*, the political impulse *anti-feminism*,²⁰ and the perpetrator *a white man*. Coupling "Montreal" with "massacre" frames the killings in such a way that attention is implicitly drawn away from these specificities and turned instead toward already sedimented massacre discourses that tie the December 6 killings into a "madman" narrative.²¹

²⁰ It is noteworthy that the man who killed the women in Montreal articulated these murders as anti-feminist, even though dominant interpretations have tended to resist this naming in favour of a madman construction. In the suicide letter found on his body and released to the press the following year, he wrote, in part: "Even if the Mad Killer epithet will be attributed to me by the media, I consider myself a rational erudite (person) that only the arrival of the Grim Reaper has forced to take extreme acts. For why persevere to exist if it is only to please the government. Being rather backward-looking by nature (except for science), the feminists always have a talent to enrage me. They want to keep the advantages of women (e.g cheaper insurance, extended maternity leave preceded by a preventative retreat) while trying to grab those of men" (*Globe & Mail*, Nov. 27, 1990).

²¹ The argument here is not that all massacre discourses are tied into a madman representation; rather, that this is the dominant image to circulate, in North America at least, when the murderer is a person acting on their own behalf, killing "randomly". This differentiates such killings from those massacres enacted against a peoples through and with state authority or

Countering this version of the truth, feminists have endeavoured to put into place an interpretation of the signifier "Montreal Massacre" that calls up a witnessing of the *similarity* between this event and the daily-nightly violences against women. These attempts have been voiced strongly and continuously enough that I think the hegemonic weight of the general massacre interpretation is losing some of its hold. Certainly, the anniversary coverage in the mainstream media from 1991 to 1995 is markedly different from the first two years, when headlines posited a raging debate as to whether the killings were the act of a madman or a man who was "quite normal".²²

A legacy of feminist scholarship and activism on the atrocity of endemic violences against women provides substantial support for articulating such connections.²³ While I believe this has been a necessary remembrance approach, it is not unproblematic. My concerns are two-fold: first, how are the connections to be made and with what effects; second, on what terms are the Montreal murders (being) taken up as an "event" of and for historical memory?

To speak to my first question: I am concerned that the sign "Montreal Massacre" may become so pliable that the specificities, of who was killed, when, under what circumstances and with what effects, become obscured in the call to remember a ubiquitous power relation. This is a risky strategy with two mutually problematic effects. On the one hand, if the fourteen women

theological sanction. That one is marked by madness, but not the other, is another instance of how dominant interpretations of violence are coded.

²² This headline was typical: "Remembering: The act of a madman or a tragedy sparked by society's pervasive sexism?--that is still the question being asked today, exactly one year after [the gunman] killed 14 women students" (*Globe & Mail*, Dec. 6, 1990).

²³ This literature is too vast and multi-faceted to offer any single references of note. For specific discussions of feminist cultural practices in relation and response to violences against women, I have found Scholder (1993) particularly interesting.

who were killed in Montreal come to stand for all women subject(ed) to violences at the hands of men, then the specifics of the lives and deaths of other women encompassed within this sign become inconspicuous. If, on the other hand, the murder of the fourteen women slips out of symbolic significance and is replaced by other particular acts of violence against women, then the tragedy of the loss of the lives of the women in Montreal is minimized.

Keeping these effects in mind, I concur with other writers (Bociurkiw, 1990; Kohli, 1991) that strategies of remembrance need to recognize the women at Ecole Polytechnique were shot explicitly because they were women, because they were presumed to be feminists, *and* that they were relatively privileged as women attending and participating in a university. For example, it is unlikely they would have been targeted (nor their deaths taken seriously by "the state"²⁴), had they not been perceived to be in a position associated with opportunity. To remember these murders as explicitly gendered *and* implicitly race and class specific is to push for a consideration of much more complex connections between the massacre in Montreal and the degrees of privilege and oppression within which women live actual and threatened violences.

On these terms, it is perhaps useful to consider counter-namings to "Montreal Massacre", rather than hooking this naming into feminist discourses. Counter-namings are being put into place: I am familiar, for example, with the women's memorial committee in Winnipeg

²⁴ I am thinking, for example, of the declaration of the National Day of Remembrance, the federal panel to investigate violences against women, and the passing of federal legislation on gun control—all of which were initiated as a response to the December 6 killings. Such responses, of course, cannot be separated from the federal and provincial governments continued eradication of support for services for women subject(ed) to violences. Noteworthy here are the federal cutbacks in 1990 and the impacts of Ontario government policies in 1995.

who use "December 6" as the symbolic marker.²⁵ I have variously rolled around my tongue: massacre of women; killing of fourteen women; anti-feminist massacre; killing of university women. I slip among some of these in the writing of this text, in an attempt to keep conscious what the various namings differently call into remembrance and forgetting.

But this too is partial. To return to my second question above--on what terms are the Montreal murders (being) taken up as an "event" of and for historical memory?--I want to think further about the feminist emphasis on connections. What I want to argue for is *more*: to attend to, think through and work with what has been displaced by this particular feminist focus. To consider this, let me step back a moment. The interpretation that was circulating widely in mainstream media within hours of the killings constructed the murders as "incomprehensible" (in Lakeman, 1992: 94), "one man's act of madness" (in Nelson-McDermott, 1991: 125), in which "the victims just happened to be women" (in Schmidt, 1990: 7). Feminist response²⁶ was *thus* largely mobilized through the urgency of contesting this interpretation. While this response is not surprising, has been absolutely necessary--and will no doubt continue to be so--I think it bears further consideration. I suggest that feminist interpretations articulated in *response* to the individual pathology position were already "caught up"²⁷ by the former framing. Thus, the very efforts to break-apart the individualized interpretation contributed to a concomitant (apparent)

²⁵ My thanks to Dr. Keith Fulton for drawing my attention to this naming.

²⁶ By evoking this general category "feminist response", I am not inferring that there was a unified single response to the massacre on the part of "feminists". Rather, I am referring to an impression of feminist interpretations that circulated in the mainstream and feminist media in this country.

²⁷ My reference here is to Philip Corrigan's insight, as a reading of Roland Barthes' work. See his "Doing Mythologies" (1990). I thank Susan Heald for helping me make this connection.

stabilization of a dichotomy of relevant terms within and through which to express remembrance of the massacre.²⁸ Some six years after the murders, at a distance from the immediacy of these "terms of debate" as necessary, I have come to think that what has been ignored²⁹ in a feminist emphasis on making connections, between the massacre and the more usual violences against women and other oppressed peoples in Canada, are precisely the implications of the sense of *horror* that was first expressed in the hours and days after December 6, 1989.

My sense is, now, that the massacre ruptured the frame (cf. Felman and Laub, 1992) of what was considered to be not only normal but expected, anticipated for women attending an institution of higher learning in the late twentieth century in Canada; i.e. that they are safe,

²⁸ The apparent neutrality of these dichotomized positions is illustrated in a recent article on teaching about the Montreal Massacre in Women's Studies classrooms (Scanlon, 1994). In this piece, Jennifer Scanlon describes a series of exercises she gives to students, all of which unproblematically reinscribe the limits of interpretation within the individual pathology versus systemic violence dichotomy. For example, in one of the exercises, she specifies that students are to "juxtapose two arguments ... [the killer] was a sick young man who went off the deep end ... [with] ... [the killer] is part of a continuum ... part and parcel of our [society's] woman-hating" (1994: 77). Scanlon does not give equal weight to these interpretations in her article, expressing her alignment with the latter position: "one of my long-term goals is that over the course of the next few weeks [in the classroom] the Montreal Massacre will be seen for what I believe it to be, part of a continuum of violence and hatred rather than an aberration that will never be repeated" (1994: 76). However, the exercises she describes nonetheless register the terms of discussion within a dichotomy, which in its structure not only presumes an equal weighting between these positions, but also obscures other ways of remembering, speaking about and working with the implications of the massacre for Women's Studies students.

²⁹ I am evoking the term "ignored" here in Shoshana Felman's understanding of ignorance as "a kind of forgetting--of forgetfulness" (1982: 29). As she continues: "while learning is obviously, among other things, remembering and memorizing ..., ignorance is linked to what is *not remembered*, what will not be memorized. But what will not be memorized is tied up with repression, with the imperative to forget--the imperative to exclude from consciousness...." (29).

welcome and can attend classes without harm.³⁰ When a man walked the hallways and classrooms of a university, murdering women because they were women, he broke that frame. And for a few hours, some days, there were a myriad of responses to that rupture, but, as Marusia Bociurkiw notes, "by December 12, there was no more mention of the murders or of feminism, but an illusion of progressive democracy (within which supposedly feminism flourishes) was maintained" (1990: 8).

What I want to suggest is that it is imperative to let in, to stay present to, the horror of this mass killing, not because it was outside the range of what is possible in this country, but precisely because it broke through dominant refusals to attend to the horrors that pass as normal, or at worst, are understood as isolated acts of individuals. As I grapple with the implications of this sense-making, I return to read again feminist articles on the massacre that sit on my shelves; I find the following statement by Colette Guillaumin, a criminologist, and I want to call on the

³⁰ I want to further argue that normativity in relation to violences against women is not singular, but depends in part on who the women are, what they are doing and where. So, in contrast to the women students who were/are positioned as "innocent victims" of violence, women who work as prostitutes are understood within dominant frames to risk a greater level of violence as normal and expected (and, of course, the very categorization assumes that a woman could not be a student *and* a prostitute). Lee Lakeman, in her essay on the massacre, notes, for example, that 12 prostitutes were killed over the period of a year in Vancouver (in a year before the Montreal killings), but there was nothing similar in the way of social/public "outcry" (1992: 95). When I read this, I was reminded of the multi-media education and art project, *MNI--Many Women Involved* in San Diego in 1992, a response to the sexual assaults and murders of women in San Diego county, which were known as the prostitute murders, even though "less than half the slain women were known sex workers" (Sisco, 1993: 43). In contrast to interpretations of the Montreal Massacre, the "official" response to the San Diego murders "did little to refute the idea that these forty-five women deserved to die because of how they lived" (Sisco: 44). There is also a noteworthy (and sickening) comparison between the Montreal and San Diego murders in terms of naming: where the women at École Polytechnique have been remembered as individual women (even if their names are not well-known), the in-house San Diego police term to refer to the women slain in "the prostitute murders" was "NHI (No Humans Involved)" (in Kirkwood, 1993: 7).

profundity of her insight:

One cannot regard the slaughter in Montreal as an act devoid of meaning, a *senseless* act, just a break in the normal course of events, an unpredictable event that is limited to creating a 'shock'. Yes, it is a shock, but it is not a shock of the unknown, it is a shock of pain, of anger. In fact, it is a shock of the known, the 'I can't believe it' of the known that is not acknowledged--of *unbearable* reality. (1991: 12-13, emphasis in original)

It is precisely the horror, the unbearable of this act, that may provide a connection to what is already known and unbearable: not because the acts are "the same", but because the massacre in Montreal ruptured a frame of actualized and threatened violences as normal.

From this perspective, to bear witness to the massacre of women in Montreal is to grapple with the recognition that its traumatic impact cannot be resolved--publicly or privately--in a society in which violences against women are still treated largely as matters of individual rather than *social* integrity. If the massacre is understood, thus, as an event of "historical trauma" (Caruth, 1995; Simon & Eppert, 1996)--an event that shocked in its extremity, resists assimilation into already articulated frameworks,³¹ commands an attention but is constantly forgotten--then the focus of remembrance consideration needs to shift. To borrow from Ora Avni, who writes in response to the Shoah, to bear the weight of remembering and witnessing the event in Montreal is to bear the impact of "living historically", by which she means living in a world of

³¹ In this instance, the already articulated frameworks are those, I suggest, bound in the dichotomy of interpretation, which position the massacre *either* as an act of individual pathology *or* the result of systemic women-hating.

which these murders are a part (1995: 206), and, I would add, were/are possible.³² On these terms, a research panel on the extent of violences against women, the declaration of a single day of remembrance and action on violence, and gun control legislation are highly circumscribed responses that contain the extent and nature of violences, rather than force a contemplation of the kind of society (we live in) in which it is possible for men to murder women because they are women (students, prostitutes, mothers, sisters, wives, lawyers, clerks, ...). Such contemplation would need, as Laura Brown argues, "to admit that [the] everyday assaults on integrity and personal safety are sources of psychic trauma, to acknowledge the absence of safety in the daily lives of women and other nondominant groups" (Brown, 1995: 105).

The stakes in such a stance are obviously high--they return for contemplation the unbearable of what is already known and suffered. Julie Brickman alludes to these stakes when she notes:

the fundamental mechanisms employed to cope with ongoing trauma--denial, dissociation, minimization, false normality--are but extreme versions of the ones we all use to distance ourselves from public traumas: the Massacre, the Gulf War, the homeless. Without these mechanisms, raw human misery might permeate our consciousness to an unbearable extent and the boundary between ourselves and the suffering of others might diminish. (1992: 135)

However, I will argue that to bear the weight of witnessing the traumas of others *is* to be permeated on these terms--but not to collapse; it is to bear the disturbances of familiarity and dissonance, of known and unknown, of worked through and unbearable (cf. Laub, 1992a). *How*

³² Adrienne Rich offers a further point for consideration in this context. In an essay on the work of Irena Klepfisz, Rich writes that this poet searches "for what is possible in a world where *this* [the Shoah] was possible" (1993: 131, emphasis in original). To search for what *else* is possible certainly is part of what impels me in the struggles to bear witness.

one might do this--without falling permanently into an abyss of terror, horror--is the task I/i have set for myself in this document as I contemplate the Massacre as a rupture of normativity that returned me to the/my unbearable.

Conceptual Explorations in Trauma and Bearing Witness

On the one hand, each society has its own politics of truth; on the other hand, being truthful is being in the in-between of all regimes of truth. (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989: 121).

The critics say memory lies. With whom? she asks. (Janice Williamson, 1994: 200)

Introduction to a trajectory:

As I grapple with the central problematics of this work, I return over and over to literature that explores relations between trauma, witnessing and representation as these have been articulated in relation and response to the Nazi genocide of European Jewry.¹ What I/i find in these writings are ways of thinking about trauma that sustain an exquisite focus not only on its impacts for individual "survivors", but also, and centrally, on its implications for community and human dignity. Ora Avni provides a clear expression of this doubled focus in her work on Elie Wiesel's *Night*, and is worth quoting at length:

¹ What I am referencing here is a reading of *selected and contemporary* work, including: Ora Avni, 1995; Cathy Caruth, 1995; Charlotte Delbo, 1990, 1995; Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, 1992; Saul Friedlander, 1992; Lawrence Langer, 1991; Claude Lanzmann, 1985; Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, 1993; Art Spiegelman, 1986, 1991; James Young, 1993. Roberta Culbertson's (1995) essay is also noteworthy in this context. Like I, she refers to the work of Lawrence Langer and Charlotte Delbo in her discussion of testimonies by survivors of different sources of trauma. She observes "[although] the experiences of other survivors are not the same as those of holocaust survivors ... there are unavoidable similarities, and the struggles of holocaust survivors pave the way for others" (191, en. 1).

Yes, we want to "heal". Society wants to heal; history wants to heal. But, no, a simple "life goes on", "tell your story", "come to terms with your pain", or "sort out your ghosts" will not do. *It will not do, because the problem lies not in the individual--survivor or not--but in his or her interaction with society, and, more precisely, in his or her relationship to the narratives and values by which this community defines and represents itself.*

She continues:

Although there is some undeniable value (and sometimes even a measure of success) in attempting to help each part, in attempting to alleviate individual suffering so as to restore a semblance of normalcy (*but precisely, "normalcy" is hurting*; it is no longer normal), neither "healing" nor "breaking the chain of suffering" will ensue. (1995: 216, emphasis mine)

Avni's articulation is pivotal to my project in its stress on "healing" not as an individual accomplishment "back" to "normal", but as an ethic; a stance in relation to traumatic suffering that realizes the social forms, discourses and practices of what passes as normal permit and allow for phenomenal wounding. For, as Avni further notes, where psychoanalysis focuses on "the shattered universe of the survivor [her]self", healing is insufficient unless we grapple also with "the threat the survivor's experience represents for *society's integrity*" (217, en. 14, emphasis mine).

In exploring this stance in relation to the traumatization of girls and women at the hands of men's violences--specifically in relation to incest and the massacre in Montreal--I am not suggesting equivalences between these acts and the Shoah. This would be a misreading of my intent and interest in working across these sites of trauma. Rather, what I/i am proffering is that post-Shoah conceptualizations of trauma as individual *and* social, personal *and* collective, psychic *and* historical are of fundamental importance for feminists interested in the implications of trauma beyond individual healing processes.

Through this lens: How might we understand the intersections, complexities and implications of being both survivor of and witness to trauma outside of therapeutic contexts²? By way of illustration, and to discover more about what is at stake in its asking, I will respond to this question by considering how I/i bear witness to feminist memorial responses to the massacre in Montreal. This work of remembrance will be guided by two intricately related questions: As an already-deadened³ witness, what am i forgetting / refusing / unable to engage in another's memorial response? As an-already traumatized witness, what am I/i able to engage with, hear into being that I might not otherwise be able to do?

In this chapter I work through conceptualizations of trauma and bearing witness to establish the basis on which to engage these questions in the following chapters. In the upcoming section, I re/situate my relation to the Shoah as a Jewish woman and an incest survivor, through

² I want to underline here my interest in bearing witness as a pedagogical practice. While being borne witness to in a long term therapeutic relationship has been crucial for easing the effects of traumatic suffering in my life, I concur with Avni that this work alone is not "healing" when the violences that are taken for normal continue. In naming bearing witness as a pedagogical practice, I am thinking precisely of hearing, taking in, and re/telling the effects of trauma as public, social, collective acts. I do not understand pedagogic and therapeutic practices in opposition here, but as two different sites of and for bearing witness. For instance, it may be that, in engaging a memorial response that particularly unsettles me, I turn to a (private) therapeutic witnessing as part of what it means for me (to continue) to be able to bear witness (publicly) to another's telling of trauma.

³ To some readers the term "deadened" here may be surprising. I use it to signal the long-term effects of particularly prolonged trauma, which I/i understand, live and hear others identify as deadening to bodies, psyches, souls, dreams, capacities to become (otherwise). It is a more acute term than "numbed", which is perhaps the more typical naming to describe the long-term effects of trauma. Yonah Klem, writing on the potential use of the mikvah as a healing response to incest, also references the term "deadening". She notes that children who suffer incest experience "a kind of death" both during the time of the incest [in stifling responses that they fear may result in worse actions] and once the actual abuse has stopped [in order not to be overwhelmed by the horrors of what they/we may begin to remember] (1995: 126). She goes on to say: "[c]hildren who are repeatedly abused ... become expert at living half-dead lives" (126-7).

an autobiographical mapping and three tellings in bearing the disturbances of this intersection.⁴ The sections that follow these tellings develop the main body of analysis for the chapter: the first grapples with a Judith Lewis Herman text on trauma and suggests a turn to Charlotte Delbo's language of deep and common memories; the second thinks through a multi-layered understanding of bearing witness.

I/i am compelled by reflections on remembrances of the Shoah not only as a feminist interested in memory, but also as an Ashkenazi Jewish woman, deeply cognizant of how I/i am--and am not--figured within this identity: the child of a jewish mother and a jewish father; themselves children of jewish parents with jewish parents (at least i believe this to be so; there is not much of the telling of history in my family). This heritage accords to me an "authenticity" within dominant discourses of Judaism that I do not feel (nor have any particular desire for, but i do realize that it matters); accords me an identity in which I do not find

⁴ Other Jewish women and incest survivors live and will regard this intersection differently. I am thinking, for example, of daughters of Holocaust survivors who were also abused in their families. Carole Ann Fer in a round table discussion with Jewish incest survivors, notes for instance: "[m]y understanding from people I've spoken to individually is really that it's too painful for them to come together to talk about the two issues [being children of Holocaust survivors and survivors of incest]. And I think there's something very Jewish about it too, that's separate from the pain of the Holocaust. It's much easier to talk about the pain you've experienced from outside oppression than from inside the community and the family" (Round Table, 1991: 31).

space for my(jewish)self. I live a secular non-religious, to this point, largely non-ritualized life that is marked by my "being jewish" in ways I am only beginning to comprehend--marked by my own desires in, and representations of, self as well as the meanings others make on and of me as an Ashkenazi Jew.

In naming my self jewish, I/i search uneasily for markers that others might recognize (perhaps I might re-cognize): I do not live in a "Jewish neighbourhood" (but the Bloor Jewish Community Centre is a 15 minute walk away from my home); I am not part of a congregation or community (but i am connected to other jews); I do not have a traditional European-Jewish look (but it's the 1990's and I live in urban Canada); I do not speak with a particularly "North American Jewish" cadence to my voice (although more and more i find yiddish phrases and syntax slipping from my tongue); I do not have "a Jewish-Nose" (but i have a jewish nose)⁵; I am not

⁵ I have borrowed the form of this coupling from Ann Decter in an essay (1992) where she writes through some of the complexity of being jewish (father's lineage) and not-jewish (mother's lineage), articulating the doubleness of an identity in which she figures, differently, as "not Jewish" and "not-Jewish".

conversant with Jewish traditions, rituals, ways of making sense (but i am always seeking the work of jewish lesbians, jewish feminists. i am conversant with the writings of Adrienne Rich, Melanie Kaye / Kantrowitz, Elly Bulkin, Sandra Butler, Lesléa Newman ...). I did not grow up learning about my self as Jewish--assimilated non-identity in England, Ireland--nor had I thought of myself as Jewish for most of my life (but I "came out" as a jewish lesbian, hand-in-hand, and I came to this self-naming Jewish in learning about the Shoah). And now I/i am beginning to face the limitations of an identity I know through horror--with little sense of the joy it might (still) carry.

Bearing Disturbances: Three Tellings

As preface to the following tellings, I wish to underscore that I offer them not as an unsettling of the profound and lasting horror of the Nazi massacre of European Jewry. What I am raising here are political and epistemic concerns about whose lives and deaths are given weight in historical memory and how and with what effects. I am deeply aware that elements of these tellings may be read as "outrageous" and I do not tell them lightly. I maintain, however, that there is something to be learned about trauma from what (almost) cannot be said.

If the lens is widened:

Remembering and forgetting. Who remembers what, how, and with what effects? Who forgets what, how, and with what consequences?

Simultaneous and inseparable: every social remembrance obscures another remembering, pushes some acts toward amnesia.

Widening the lens of remembrance to find within its scope two events generally held separate and distinct. Are there resonances that the separation overlooks?

A risky strategy: how to see connections without slipping into comparison, without forming the appearance of equivalence, without seeming to draw parallels? And yet not forget that history is layered with traumatic atrocities?

Widen the lens
Snap[shot]:

Nazi genocide of European Jews
Father brother uncle grandpa rapes of little girls

Focus

The mentalities and conditions that allowed:
For jews (in particular) to be targeted as vermin to be destroyed
For girls (in particular) to be targeted as less-than
to be destroyed in their and our bodily integrity

The world's silence disbelief denial
Society's silence disbelief denial

Focus

The conditions of captivity:
Hundreds of thousands
in cattle cars and barracks piled ontop of one another
no boundaries of self, separated, starved
Thousands upon thousands assaulted in homes
no privacy, no integrity to selves, no right to no

Focus

Denial:
Poles who speak of smelling burning flesh
but not knowing that jews were being slaughtered
Teachers and doctors and priests
who inspect the bruises across a girl's inner thigh
and accept a mother's explanation that she's clumsy

The continued denials that it ever happened
or if it did happen, it was minimal
it wasn't as significant as we claim
it didn't have any lasting effect

Holocaust deniers and revisionists
False memory syndrome fathers and mothers

Focus

Fighting back:
keeping the remembrance of atrocities past and present
in the face of us all

and how these acts get us labelled:
misfit *survivor* deviant *heroine* marginal
trouble maker *courageous*
self-interested
liar

Focus

The impact of the horrors done to us:
selves forgotten in the conscious mind
lodged in the crevices of bodies
in sub-conscious layers
where remembering takes the form of
nightmares day-terrors flashbacks
or doesn't take obvious form at all
and gets pushed back further and further
in each act of dissociation

Widen the lens

Snap[shot]:

What of holocaust survivors who violate the bodies of children?
What of mothers who didn't comply?
What of Polish resistors who harboured jews?

Crack the lens

Snap[shot]:

If the surface reveals nothing:

Surface: Claude Lanzmann's internationally acclaimed film *Shoah*: the geographic landscape he films of the now (rural, picturesque land) reveals nothing of the then (an extermination camp), bears no visible traces of the atrocities performed there *yet still, surely, the bodies of the slaughtered stained the earth?*

Surface: The unmarked body of an adult woman incested as a child, who shows no apparent scarring *yet, still, surely, the tissues beneath her skin must be tracked through with trauma?*

i wonder about embodied formations

My own. Coming to understand that at issue for me are not only the memories "lodged" in my body, but also how my very embodiment has developed in particular ways due to the nature of the physical violations i lived as a (growing) child. By age 3, I had been diagnosed with chronic asthma and have lived since with respiratory difficulties from mild to severe, a continuous presence in my life. I learn from a naturopathic doctor who works with my body that my respiratory muscles appear to be continuously stressed, "as if they are compensating" [for what?]. She also describes my upper back as a sheet of steel--armour or shell--hard protection that I tolerate through dissociation from the pain, that still slips in when i am touched. It seems likely to me that my lungs were formed under the weight of an adult man's body.

Claudia Gahlinger: writes of a woman visiting a dentist, realizing that the deformation of her jaw occurred because of multiple oral rapes as a child. She writes of the dentist saying: "'There's a bump in the jaw, here, and if you force it, you can wear it down. It seems you've stretched that ligament--' *Or had it stretched for you*

'---so now you can open your mouth further at will'" (Gahlinger, 1993: 80, italics in original represent author's thoughts).

The many women who self-mutilate, whose disfigured bodies bear testament to their frustration and powerlessness: where slashing and carving at one's flesh is an expression of the extremity of psychic pain (in Kershaw and Lasovich, 1991).

From inside out: sometimes the surface reveals. sometimes nothing. until we look closer. if the land is lush and peaceful. if the body is functioning. the surface may not show that atrocity was lived there.

If the dead are (to be) remembered:

"History no longer pays respect to the dead: the dead are simply what has passed through"

(John Berger in Lipsitz, 1990: 22).

"Our dead line our dreams, becoming more and more commonplace"

(Audre Lorde, 1986: 31-2).

How much lately, I/i carry within me the anger and grief brought by death: not only the deaths of the fourteen women in Montreal which put into place the imperative for me to do this work, but also, during the writing of this text: the African American word-warrior Audre Lorde, Toronto feminist activists and educators dian marino, Kathleen Martindale, Robin Black, Marian McMahon, and my grandmother (my last surviving grandparent): but also: the horrors of the Shoah, Bosnia, Rwanda ... and I/i find myself encountering over and over questions of history, meaning and "the now".

This is not to collapse those who have died into a series of bodies, unmarked by the cause of death. Breast cancer, old age and the carelessness of others are not the same as state-orchestrated genocides, "cleansings", or individually performed acts of massacre. But too: to move away from hierarchies of death is to insist upon the necessity of developing and maintaining historical memories, not only of mass but also insidious atrocities. It is to remember the deaths wrought by oppressive practices yet refuse the desire for closure, for simple "explanations". It is to do this without ourselves in the process "going mad" with grief-anger-pain.

Conceptual considerations of trauma:

The phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all-inclusive, but it has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding: if psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology and even literature are beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma, it is because they are listening through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience. (Cathy Caruth, 1995: 4)

In contemplating the substance and effects of trauma, I have struggled to find a language and a way of thinking that helps me to move, intellectually and emotionally, through this fraught terrain. Come up. Come back. Breathe the thin familiar air of amnesia (Claudia Gahlinger, 1993: 39). In this next section, I engage texts that have been significant in this struggle. I begin with the work of Judith Lewis Herman, specifically her most recent text, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), which offers an analytic framework for making sense of the effects of trauma and what she sees as the necessary associated elements of "recovery". I have been compelled to bring this text into focus for two key reasons: First, in my initial search for literature of interest to my project, I found Lewis Herman's work both informative and problematic--and I/i think it is useful here to detail the nature of that engagement. Second, I believe it would be irresponsible for me to ignore her text in a sustained discussion of incest and trauma: not only because of what I may learn from her (which is not insignificant, given the sustained attention she gives to trauma and its impact on the present), but also because of the shift away from her diagnostic thinking that I believe is necessary to grapple with Ora Avni's recognition of "the threat the survivor's experience represents for society's integrity" (1995: 217, en. 14).

As a feminist psychotherapist and faculty in a university teaching hospital, Lewis Herman's interest is, generally, in treatment, and, specifically, in the development and presentation of a "new diagnostic name [for] the psychological *disorder found in* survivors of

prolonged, repeated abuse" (1992: 3, emphasis mine).⁶ The naming she offers is "complex post-traumatic stress disorder" (see pages 118-122 for details). Her work is important, to my mind, because it not only involves challenges to previous diagnostic concepts that have failed to recognize the power relations that structure abuse, but also because it recognizes the particularities of ongoing trauma.⁷ Where her work is of serious concern to me, however--as witness to my own life and the tellings of others--is in its unproblematic maintenance of a psychiatric frame that is conceptually inadequate, and, I think, politically dangerous for any of us who may be held under the diagnosis she lays out and the subsequent medical and psychiatric responses.⁸

⁶ My use of italics in the above phrase is intended to signal to readers my discomfort with Lewis Herman's languaging of the impact and effect of psychological trauma. Although I turn to this issue more substantively in subsequent discussions of her text, I want to note here, minimally, that my concern is with the discourse she uses for making sense of the effects of trauma--not with her recognition of these effects. Thus, in this instance, I question the phrase "disorder found in", which, not only presupposes certain ways of being as order[ly], but also circumscribes attention to individuals--and particularly, individual psyches--as the crux of what is at stake with regard to the impact of trauma.

⁷ On this point, see also an essay by Laura Brown (1995) in which she develops an argument for recognizing repetitive, continuous, inter-personal abuses as traumatic--a recognition that runs counter to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* definition of trauma as "outside the [usual] range of human experience" (in Brown, 100). She indicates at the end of her essay that efforts to change the definition are being felt and that understandings of trauma in the next edition of the *DSM* are likely not to rely so heavily on traumatic effect being produced by infrequent or unusual events (111). This too, of course, still begs the question as to why diagnosis is appropriate *at all*.

⁸ I want to be careful here. I am raising serious concern about the conceptual frames developed and relied upon in psychiatry; I am not lodging a critique against individuals who rely on this system. I do not understand such reliance as a matter of simple "choice" when psychiatry is the dominant, state-sponsored "mental health" system, and there are few alternatives available--and then at significant cost. For those readers unfamiliar with the debilitating effects of psychiatry on women and disadvantaged others, see: Blackbridge, 1985; Burstow, 1992; Finkler, 1993; Millet, 1990.

To leave aside these concerns momentarily, I want to focus first on how Lewis Herman works up an understanding of a conceptualization of trauma. Out of an interest in exploring the commonalities between "private" (i.e. incest) and "public" (i.e. war) traumas, she opens the text with a discussion of the development of ideas about "psychic trauma"⁹ through investigations into "hysteria", "combat neurosis" and "domestic violence" (10-32). She argues that contemporary understandings of psychological trauma are "built upon a synthesis" of these three fields of inquiry.¹⁰ Organized chronologically, Lewis Herman begins her discussion with early psychoanalytic explorations into women's "hysteria" in France and Vienna in the late nineteenth century: documenting Freud's recognition of--and subsequent retreat from--hysteria as founded on the psychological trauma of childhood sexual abuse (10-20). She then moves into literature that has considered the impact of wartime experiences on returning veterans, particularly following the Vietnam War. She cites the American Psychiatric Association's inclusion of "post-traumatic stress disorder" in its "official manual of mental disorders" in 1980, as a key legitimating moment in the recognition of psychological trauma (27-28).

In both sections, she writes of how the experiences of trauma have been similarly

⁹ "Trauma" began to have a psychic reference point around the turn of the century. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Second Edition) details definitions of trauma as follows: the first, regarding bodily injury, is cited to *Blancard's Physical Dictionary*, 1693; the second, defined as "a psychic injury, esp[ecially] one caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed", is cited first to W. James in 1894 (OED: 441). References to Sigmund Freud's work, which is more commonly recognized as significant for thinking about psychological trauma and trauma memories, appear under definitions of "traumatic", where there are citations to papers published in 1909 and 1929 (OED: 441).

¹⁰ I want to draw attention to the partiality of Lewis Herman's approach here. Following a psychiatric course, she privileges certain European and North American work on trauma without recognition of other thinking on the issues with regard, for example, to mass atrocities of anti-jewish racism, anti-black racism and the colonization of First Nations peoples.

conceptualized. Regarding the work of Freud and Pierre Janet, Lewis Herman writes: "[they] had arrived independently at strikingly similar formulations ... Unbearable emotional reactions to traumatic events produced an altered state of consciousness, which in turn induced the hysterical symptoms" (12). With regard to the effects of war: "[i]nitially the symptoms of mental breakdown [experienced by many soldiers] were attributed to a physical cause ... Gradually military psychiatrists were forced to acknowledge that the symptoms of shell shock were due to psychological trauma. The emotional stress of prolonged exposure to violent death was sufficient to produce a neurotic syndrome resembling hysteria in men" (20).

Lewis Herman traces the similarity one step further in her conclusion to this discussion, identifying "[h]ysteria [as] the combat neurosis of the sex war" (32). She argues that:

[f]or most of the twentieth century, it was the study of combat veterans that led to the development of a body of knowledge about traumatic disorders. Not until the women's liberation movement of the 1970s was it recognized that the most common post-traumatic disorders are those not of men in war but of women in civilian life. (28)

While she credits feminist work outside the traditional mental health system for generating knowledge about the substance and nature of sexual violence and creating services to respond to those who have been victimized (28-32), she does not attend to differences between this work and that with combat veterans. Instead, she draws on commonalities of descriptions of the effects of trauma to argue: "[o]nly after 1980, when the efforts of combat veterans had legitimated the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder, did it become clear that the psychological syndrome seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery and incest was essentially the same as the syndrome

seen in survivors of war" (32).¹¹

Lewis Herman follows these sketches with detailed chapters on the effects of psychological trauma—drawing out her analysis from these chapters to form her stages of a healing response. I am particularly compelled by these formative chapters, where she discusses extreme terror; issues of disconnection, trust and safety; and the effects of living in captivity. Reading across these discussions, i find many statements that deeply resonate to my understanding of the trauma I/i have lived, and other phrasing that provides me with an analysis I had not previously had. I particularly appreciate her continuous reference to the extent of trauma: its profoundly painful and isolating effects and its potential to immobilize us in the present.

And, at the same time, I am troubled by the language that Lewis Herman draws on to make sense of such impacts on the formation of subjectivity.¹² My concern lies predominantly with her unproblematized reliance on the categories "normal" and "abnormal", which she evokes as regulating expressions—assuming an assignment of non-traumatized people to the former, traumatized people to the latter. So long as these categories form a dominant frame through which issues of the impact of trauma are understood, those of us who are grappling

¹¹ This emphasis is not surprising, given that Lewis Herman's text is built around an articulation of this similarity, presumably with some intent to legitimize, in the psychiatric establishment at least, the seriousness of "private" traumas. While I acknowledge the potential importance of such efforts, I am also cautious about drawing similarities without grappling with the differences. This is a discussion beyond my purposes of working with Lewis Herman's analytic frame here.

¹² For a rather different critique of how Lewis Herman approaches thinking about trauma, see Ruth Leys' discussion of her limited and consequently problematic reading of the work of Pierre Janet (1994: 647-662, in particular).

directly with these impacts are continuously burdened with the requirement to make ourselves (appear) normal—enough. This not only bears a significant weight on individuals, but also ensures that these normative categories are continuously being renewed and kept in place.

By way of illustration: at the beginning of her second chapter, "Terror", Lewis Herman states:

[t]raumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. Moreover, traumatic events may sever these normally integrated functions from one another. (34)

My reading of this statement is multi-layered. First, I think she articulates an important recognition of the effects of traumatization with the terms "profound and lasting". This resonates with some of what i have been struggling to speak about: specifically, my contention that continuous trauma (especially when violation begins at a young age) is fundamental to the formation of subjectivity.

Further, while I concur with her perception that traumatic events fragment, for example, emotion from conscious memory (34), I/i am cautious about how I want to make sense of that fragmentation. I am fully aware that it can be not only difficult, but also immobilizing to have a severe bodily reaction without a consciously known understanding of what is being triggered in the reaction. However, I would not extend from this to Lewis Herman's position that these "normally integrated functions" have been "severed". I question the presumption that equates normal with an integration of functions. It seems to me that this is precisely a way of making sense that has severely marginalized people (through drugs, institutionalization, shock-therapy ...) who do not fit the shape of a fully-rational and functioning unitary subject.

Similarly, I am concerned by Lewis Herman's following reference to "the ordinary"—not simply as a descriptive term, but one that inscribes understandings of "how the world works":

[w]hile it is clear that ordinary, healthy people may become entrapped in prolonged abusive situations, it is equally clear that after their escape they are no longer ordinary or healthy. Chronic abuse causes serious psychological harm. (116)

Again, I concur with her recognition of the seriousness of the effects of, particularly, prolonged abuse. And, I remain concerned about how these effects are understood and their implications for practice. These concerns feel especially poignant in the context of the discussion in which the above-quoted statement originally appears. While Lewis Herman critiques the "mental health profession" for its "tendency to blame the victim" (116) and its sexist appraisals of women's experiences (117-118), she continues to adhere to presumptions that make a distinction between those who are "ordinary and healthy" and those who have experienced "psychological harm", who, as she clearly articulates, "are no longer ordinary or healthy". It is not the enormity of impact that I question; it is the categorization that posits normal and healthy *against* traumatized.

Out of a desire to displace these categories and, at the same time, continue to hold onto recognitions of the profound effects formed in (as a result of) trauma experiences, I have turned my attention to other ways of making sense of the substance and effect of trauma on the present.

Although she does not directly address the issue on these terms, I have found the work of Charlotte Delbo (1990, English translation) compelling, and am particularly drawn to her introduction of another vocabulary for thinking about traumatic events and their impact on the formation of memory and subjectivity. Delbo, a survivor of the Shoah, is credited by Lawrence

Langer as forging a "verbal breakthrough" (1991: 5) in her construction of testimonies that recognize the two formations of memory that created--and allow for--her remembering of Auschwitz. She identifies these as "deep memory" (*mémoire profonde*) and "common memory" (*mémoire ordinaire*), for which Langer provides the following explanation:

[d]eep memory tries to recall the Auschwitz self as it was then; common memory has a dual function: it restores the self to its normal pre- and postcamp routines but also offers detached portraits, from the vantage point of today, of what it must have been like then. Deep memory thus suspects *and* depends on common memory, knowing what common memory cannot know but tries nonetheless to express. (6, emphasis in original)

Saul Friedlander, in his articulation of these concepts, further notes that "[d]eep memory and common memory are ultimately irreducible to each other. Any attempt at building a coherent self founders on the intractable return of the repressed and recurring deep memory" (1992: 41). I am drawn to this conceptualization for two reasons: firstly, the concepts of deep and common memory offer a break from Lewis Herman's regulating language of normal and abnormal, while maintaining a focus on the profound and lasting effects of trauma; and, secondly, the *relational* aspect of these terms--and the emphasis in their interpretation on lack of closure--moves me toward being able to think through the substance and effects of trauma as a continuous vibration in the now. I will address each of these points in turn.

Delbo's description of deep memory clearly resonates with Lewis Herman's representation of trauma memory, as the following statements illustrate. Lewis Herman states: "It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep" (37). Charlotte Delbo's description of being in deep memory is illustrative of Lewis Herman's articulation:

[s]ometimes, however, it [the skin covering the memory of Auschwitz] bursts, and gives back its contents. In a dream, the will is powerless. And in these dreams, there I see myself again, *me*, yes, *me*, just as I know I was: scarcely able to stand ... pierced with cold, filthy, gaunt, and the pain is so unbearable, so exactly the pain I suffered there that I feel it again physically, I feel it again through my whole body, which becomes a block of pain, and I feel death seizing me, I feel myself die. Fortunately, in my anguish I cry out. The cry awakens me, and I emerge from the nightmare exhausted. It takes days for everything to return to normal, for memory to be "refilled" and for the skin of memory to repair itself. I become myself again, the one you know, who can speak to you of Auschwitz without showing any sign of distress or emotion. (in Langer, 1991: 6-7, emphasis in original)

Each time I/i read this testimony, i am drawn into it bodily through my own remembering: my throat constricts, my chest tightens and I stumble over the letter keys on the keyboard: viscerally aware of the striking similarity between Delbo's description of deep memory and my experiences of *being inside* incest-formed memory: a period of time during which I/i am simultaneously--although not equally--*in* my(past)self and my(present)self. This is an experience during which not only the boundaries between time, but also space, blur.¹³ So that in flashback, I appear as usual but am far from the surface of my being, being pulled into the numb frozenness that settles in the ground of my belly reaching up though my rib cage holding my heart. as if i am collapsing from the inside out. inside falling down piece by piece. (col)lapsing in my ability to hold onto myself in the now as separate and distinct; boundaries collapsing into no boundaries fluidity of past and present so i do not know anymore which is which. the top of my spine is coming

¹³ I am increasingly thinking of this experience as one in which the "skin of memory" (to use Delbo's term) is punctured, so that its "contents" spill over and permeate "the present". As I live it, this puncturing is at times forceful--as in the nightmare that Delbo describes there is a "bursting forth"--and at other times slower, more subtle, so that over a period of time, the skin seems to give way and the past is a gauze over the present. Following a bursting forth, I find myself desperately needing sleep, which I have begun to think of as a period of time during which I do precisely re-form the skin covering deep memory, so that when I wake the next morning (often 10-12 hours later), my relationship to the substance of the memory has shifted: it no longer fills me, it is not *me*.

out of my body, being pulled off of my back. i can barely walk or move my arms. tears and breath stifled underneath the weight. underneath it so there is no getting out. It is often hours before I can rebuild from the collapse--rebuild enough to be my self again in the present.

What Delbo further helps me to realize is that these experiences are not the only, or even the most dominant, expressions of remembering trauma. At a level of common, or what she later calls "thinking memory" (Langer, 1991: 7), we put together narratives of thinking about what it means now, what it has meant before, to live with trauma experiences and traumatic memories. And this too is the memory of trauma. In my work, I recognize common memory in the narratives in which I speak *about* incest at some distance from the sensory experience not only chronologically,¹⁴ but also emotionally. These are the narratives that take their shape "from the vantage point of today"; tellings of "what it must have been like then" that I can and do tell with some detachment from their content.

And, I also want to introduce a third element here: for it seems to me that in addition to being expressed through flashback and narratives about the past, trauma memories impact on daily practices and engagements in ways that I/we minimally recognize. What i want to orient attention toward here are those moments in which the present so feels like the past that the conditions of living in trauma are unconsciously replicated onto the present. Dori Laub, a psychoanalyst and co-founder of the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, offers a conceptualization of such moments that I find helpful. He notes that "the continued power of the

¹⁴ Chronology is a problematic term in relation to discussions of memory. The chronological distance I experience at a level of common memory means that I am cognizant of the distinction between present and past which allows me to recognize the past as *not now*; when i am in deep memory this chronological distinction blurs and I/i experience a hybrid time-space in which it feels as if i return to the past experience, which in effect i do at a sensory level.

silenced memory [of trauma]" is its "overriding, structuring and shaping force", a force that may be

neither truly known by the survivors, nor recognized as representing, in effect, memory of trauma. It finds its way into their lives, unwittingly, through an uncanny repetition of events that duplicate--in structure and in impact--the traumatic past. (1992a: 65)

Translating this insight into the context of my own work: I think of those circumstances when I am not in a state of flashback, I am not dealing explicitly with incest memories, and yet I/i am living out an incested subjectivity--i am moving around in the world as if the *conditions* of sexual abuse were current in my life. Unlike an experience of being in deep memory (in which i am "back there" to such a degree that my now self has slipped behind my then self), and also unlike an experience of common memory (in which I am clearly "here" and expressing knowledge of the incest from the vantage point of the present), I make sense of these experiences as times in which I/i am simultaneously *in* the past and present--but not cognizant (in the moment) of this simultaneity.

As Laub continues:

Trauma survivors do not live with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, *attained no closure*, and, therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. (69, emphasis mine)

To my reading, what is being gestured toward here is an understanding of traumatized subjectivity--one in which the boundaries between past(self) and present(self) are continuously destabilized through the impacts of traumatic events, or what Friedlander refers to as "recurring deep memory" (1992: 41). Immediately this understanding is significant in its challenge to a

notion that it is both desirable and possible to "recover" from trauma.¹⁵ Further, and what concerns me in this project, it foregrounds a messy terrain that requires considerable contemplation: namely, what are the implications for bearing witness to another's telling of trauma when one comes to that witnessing already traumatized?

Conceptualizing the bearing of witness:

to speak as well as to bear / the weight of hearing.
(Audre Lorde, 1986: 10)

The term "witness" is frequently evoked across a range of testimonial sites—including law, religion, literature, therapy and solidarity movements. Whereas in each site the term may take on a particular sub-set of meanings, at minimum, the notion consistently references two central components: one of hearing and/or seeing and one of telling (to others) what one has seen/heard.¹⁶ While at first glance these components seem relatively straightforward, I/i want to suggest otherwise. What is being referenced by the notion of "hearing", "seeing" or even of "telling"? Specifically, in the context of my project, how narrow or encompassing is the lens through which one might be thought to witness [hear, see, tell] another's articulation of deep

¹⁵ Lewis Herman offers an expression of this position in the second half of her book, a narrative of "stages of recovery", which reads as linear—although there is some indication that closure around trauma is never entirely completed (195). An emphasis on the possibility of completion is paramount, however, and encapsulated in her final sentence in which she states: "the survivor who has achieved commonality with others can rest from her labor. Her recovery is accomplished; all that remains before her is her life" (1992: 236).

¹⁶ This general understanding is articulated in "common usage" definitions, such as those found in general and legal dictionaries, which state, for example, that a witness is "a person who has seen or can give first-hand evidence of some event" (Collins, 1986) and "[a] 'witness' ... testifies to what he [sic] has seen, heard or otherwise observed" (*Words and Phrases: Permanent Edition*, 1658 to present, 209).

and/or common memories?¹⁷

Remembering: Until I received a phone call from a friend on the evening of December 6 1989, telling me to watch the news, I had no idea, was living unaware, of the rampage in Montreal and the impact it would have in my life. After the call, transfixed by the newscasts until the late hours of the morning, I understand now that I/i was compelled¹⁸ to bear witness to this excessive act of misogyny; that my need was precisely [not] to forget in the moment.¹⁹ I recall this as a night in which i was forced into a place of pain and terror (later anger) ... never again plus jamais my barely (but still) clutched illusion to safety finally and fully shattered. I do not

¹⁷ I want to underscore here that the considerations on bearing witness presented in this text are articulated to concerns of pedagogy--particularly in relation to feminist memorial practices (including this writing). What I do not consider is bearing witness as a practice articulated to reparation and vindication in the court system. This would be a wholly other project with its own set of questions and problematics; for, as Wendy Brown argues, the search for "legal recognition of injurious social stratification is understandable" (1995: 21), but it is highly risky. As she goes on to question: "where do the historically and culturally specific elements of politicized identity's investments in itself, and especially in its own history of suffering, come into conflict with the need to give up these investments, to engage in something of a Nietzschean 'forgetting' of this history, in the pursuit of an emancipatory democratic project?" (55).

¹⁸ The notion of compulsion is interesting here and may be relevant to larger questions of why people differently take up [or refuse] calls to witness. In an earlier chapter I suggested that I was compelled to bear witness to this killing of women in a university, in part, because it shattered for me the separation I was trying to hold between [consciously unrecognized] incest and schooling as "safe". In addition, I wonder now if the compulsion was also driven by a desire to enact for others what my mother was not for me: a witness to trauma, a person who would remember what she saw/heard and be accountable to that remembrance through her conduct in the present.

¹⁹ I have written this as the "need [not] to forget" to signal a doubled meaning: a need not to forget the massacre and a need to continue forgetting what it triggered--namely, memories of the incest.

recall consciously deciding to witness, I/i just remember taking this stance-
-what Shoshana Felman refers to as being an "unwitting" or "involuntary
witness" (1992: 4).

After some of the shock had worn off, I/i began to position
myself, along with many others, as what Felman calls a "conscious
witness" (4)²⁰: a person "choosing"²¹ to (try to) respond, in an on-going
way, to the weight of those deaths on the possibilities for living in a world
where the "state of emergency" (Benjamin) might no longer be my/our
norm. At the vigils as i stand tears streaming down my face clutching
those around me wanting seeking support comfort don't let me
down/go/fall one line plays itself across my mind like a never ending tape
we are easy targets here [time for shooting practice] why wouldn't
another man shoot us here? In the now, I wonder, how was this
imperative to "bear witness" organized in and by the threats and/or
actualization of violence that shapes (albeit differently and with varying
effect) the lives of many women? What did other women and men do that

²⁰ The term "conscious witness" is not quite adequate here: while it signals my decision in the present to consciously remember the killing of the fourteen women in Montreal (thus, be impacted by, carry the weight of, and keep that remembrance present in my interactions with others), at the same time, it obscures my unconscious relation to the slaughters that also shapes how I/i have taken up this witnessing.

²¹ There is a particular tension in my use of the term "choosing" here, where I/i feel myself to be caught in the simultaneity of conditions that make it both *possible* (under the threat of annihilation) not to witness and *impossible* (through an ethical compulsion to social justice) not to witness. I will return to this tension in the following chapters as I work with and through tellings of my bearing of witness to feminist memorial responses to the massacre.

night? What other positions did they occupy? Who bore witness? Who could not--would not--did not--dared not? There is no doubt it could have been me, might yet be me but I refuse to be stilled stopped strangled by this fear and i can not dislodge its hold on me--how I/i live in my body--where i walk--when I travel--who I/i engage with--how i sleep--"[t]hrough the imposition of social order on the body, a 'second nature' is created, but it must be constantly watched or kept under guard. Transgressions are subject to punishment" (Jacquelyn Zita, 1990: 332).

As my footnoted commentaries on this recollection suggest, my initial response to the Massacre of Women was formed not only by a conscious registering of the horror of a man killing fourteen women (presumed to be feminists) at another university in this country. It was then, and continues now, to be formed also through the trauma of a history of violation by my father. What this doubled formation suggests is that the significance of bearing witness to a traumatic event lies not only with how it may call us into a different ethical relationship with the dead, but also, how it may mark spaces for us to remember the traumas already lived (anticipated, recognized, acknowledged, threatened, observed, ...).²²

Thus, I/i am troubled by conceptualizations of witnessing that presume traumatic force lies with(in) an event / cultural practice and not also with(in) those who are positioned and

²² My parenthetical namings here are intended as a reminder to readers that I am (re)telling my trauma history in relation and response to the massacre in Montreal, as illustrative of what needs to be attended to in conceptualizations of bearing witness at an intersection of traumas. In doing so, I am attempting to *both* make palpable a sense of what is at stake in this labour *and* not suggest a reduction of this theorizing to my particular engagements.

position ourselves to witness. For example, I think of the powerful work of Shoshana Felman (1992) on literature that testifies to the European Holocaust. In her reflections on pedagogy, she expresses a concern with how to impress on students (potential witnesses) the significance of this event, and contemplates that teaching in the "era of testimony" is hinged on bringing a class to the "highest state of crisis that it can withstand" (53). In her analysis, "crisis" means a sustained engagement with "information that is *dissonant*, and not just *congruent*, with everything they have learned before hand" (53, emphasis in original).

While I/i agree with Felman's articulation of witnessing as an unsettling practice that may well contain moments of crisis, I/i do not concur that this crisis is necessarily or only brought about by extreme dissonance. Rather, what I suggest is that the unsettling, the crisis, can occur because the traumatic information is *both* dissonant *and* familiar.²³ To turn the lens of witnessing toward dissonance and familiarity is to recall Laura Brown's articulation that traumatic effect is the consequence not only of that which is considered "outside the range of usual human experience", but also that which is insidious, ongoing and a "normal" threat/actuality in the lives of oppressed peoples (1995: 101-103).

If witnessing holds potential for "people to trace and transform the social logic of violence" (Simon and Eppert, in press), which I/i believe it does, then it seems to me imperative that this be worked through not only in relation to the traumas of mass atrocity, but also to the

²³ For example, readers may recall my initial witnessing stance in relation to the Massacre in which I/i was thrown into a crisis. On one level, the killings were dissonant with what I had known in sites of education prior to the evening of December 6, 1989; on another level, they were consistent with what i had (not)known of bodily violation.

"secret and insidious traumas" of daily existence (Brown, 1995: 102).²⁴ To take this stance is to refuse an approach to bearing witness that slips into the well-worn hollows of the public / private divide. As Cathy Caruth argues, drawing on the work of Dori Laub, "speaking and ... listening—a speaking and listening *from the site of trauma*--does not rely, I would suggest, on what we simply know of each other, but on what we **don't yet know of our own traumatic pasts**" (1995: 11, italics in original; bolding is mine).

She continues:

[i]n a catastrophic age ... trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others, but, rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability *to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves*. (1995: 11, emphasis mine)

Caruth explains departure thus: "[t]o listen to the crisis of trauma ... is not only to listen for the event, but to hear in the testimony the survivor's departure from it; the challenge of the therapeutic [pedagogic?] listener, in other words, is *how to listen to departure*" (10, emphasis in original). I suggest that to take her observations seriously is to put forward an understanding of bearing witness to one's self as a necessary and ongoing aspect of the preparedness to bear witness to another (as I will explore in the following chapters).

There is a parallel here to Dori Laub's suggestion that there are three levels to witnessing Holocaust experience. As he details them, these are: "the level of being witness to oneself within the experience, the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others, and the

²⁴ It may also be that a witness' trauma is not only carried within her own lifetime. I am thinking of two pieces I have read recently, in which the authors cite the historical legacy of the Holocaust as having traumatic effect—even for those who were not directly involved. See: Lesléa Newman's short story "Flashback" (1988) and Karla Miriyam Weiner's essay, "Survivors Nonetheless: Trauma in Women Not Directly Involved with the Holocaust" (1995).

level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself" (1995: 61). Based on my reading of Laub's relevant essays (1992a; 1992b; 1995), I am not clear how he would make a distinction between levels one and three. To my mind, while it makes sense textually to point to each as a separate level, I would argue that, in practice, attending to the process of witnessing is a central aspect of how one bears witness to one's self--*if* bearing witness to an other is to be accomplished in a manner that does not conflate that telling into one's own. This is the key risk associated with the position I am arguing for here and one that requires a determined vigilance to ensure that a witness does not conflate the telling of another's trauma with her or his own (cf. Simon and Eppert, in press). I offer that such vigilance does not preclude attention to a witness' history, rather it may require it.²⁵

Based on these terms, what may need to be attended to in a conceptualization of bearing witness that turns both to the trauma of one's self *and* an other?

To begin, I propose three considerations in bearing witness to one's self. The first of these is made tangible for me in Laub's reference to "being witness to oneself *within* the experience" (emphasis mine). By point of comparison: the naming (of) "the Holocaust" (or the Shoah) provides an identificatory space within which a myriad of Nazi atrocities against European Jewry and others can be cited as part of "the experience". Thus, Laub notes that the first level of bearing witness "proceeds from [his] autobiographical awareness as a child survivor [of the European Holocaust]" (1995: 61). When the naming "Montreal Massacre", on the other hand, is interpreted as a coding of *separation* between that slaughter of fourteen women and other

²⁵ I do not mean to suggest that a (re)telling must include reference to one's own history, but I am arguing for the necessity of attending to that history--at least in so far as it impacts (on) bearing witness to an other.

acts (such as rape, assault, battering, ...), such identificatory effect is diminished or lost.²⁶ On these terms, then, Laub's reference to "being witness to oneself within the experience" may be (re)interpreted to include the experiences of not only those who were at Ecole Polytechnique in the early evening of December 6, 1989 and survived, but also those who have been and continue to be subject to and/or impacted by other practices of oppression, which result in the "secret and insidious traumas" of daily existence (Brown, 1995: 102)

Second, and from this perspective, for me to bear witness to my self within the experience (in this text) means attending to my self (past and present, remembered and forgotten) in relation to the event of the massacre and my subsequent participation in and engagements with memorial responses—including the very practice of this writing. In fact, it is this writing itself that provides the most palpable example of what it means for one person to witness herself within the experience. This is not to suggest that this is the only or even desired form through and in which to bear witness to an event; it is, however, to recognize the extent to which one may shape one's life as, in Laub's words, "the vehicle by which the struggle to tell continues" (1995: 63). My life work for the past number of years has been formed in and by this "struggle to tell": tellings not only of remembering the massacre of women, but also of memories of the incest i lived as a girl. To bear witness at the first level is precisely to attend to both these struggles, both these tellings, which are irreducible to the other.

Further, and the third consideration to keep in mind, being witness to oneself in the experience is not simply a matter of recognizing where and how consciously worked through

²⁶ This is one of the key reasons, to my mind, that the linguistic attachment of the Massacre to feminist and other critical discourses on "violences against women" is so important.

memories of trauma (in Delbo's terms, common memories) reverberate and may be touched by another's articulation. In these instances, boundaries between past and present, self and other are likely to be relatively stable and do not strike me as particularly problematic. However, in instances of unconscious traumatic memory being triggered (deep memories being wrenched into a current engagement), the boundaries are considerably more fluid and the potential to engage another's remembrance practice predominantly through the fracture of own's own traumatic history is higher. As I read his work, Laub would argue that deep memories may be(come) active in such a context because of the "collapse of witnessing" (1995: 65) produced by (prior) trauma. With the term "collapse", Laub is referencing the impossibility of witnessing Holocaust experiences as they were occurring (1995: 65-67)—and I would extend this to all experiences of extreme and continuous trauma.²⁷ Such circumstances of witnessing may necessitate relationships and endeavours outside (and potentially even within) the moment of engagement, in which the potential witness herself can be witnessed so as to take up the bearing of witness to another in ways that maintain, and do not collapse, the boundaries.²⁸ Thus, being witness to oneself *now* may require at minimum an other, and further, to recall Ora Avni's words cited in the introduction to this chapter, multiple others (in her terms, society or community): not to "sort out" those who have lived trauma, but to "take in" the implications of those traumas for how

²⁷ Cathy Caruth describes this "collapse" as follows: "[t]he historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that *it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all*. And ... since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (1995: 8, emphasis mine).

²⁸ For a detailed instance of this, see my discussion of Katherine Zsolt's installation in Chapter 4.

"we" (survivors and not) remember, define and envision the societies and communities in which we live (216).²⁹

If these form the considerations for bearing witness to one's self within an experience, what does bearing witness to the tellings of others entail? I have found the work of Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert (in press) particularly useful in this regard and appreciate their triad explanation of the responsibilities evoked by the term "to bear". They note:

[f]irst, one must bear [support and endure] the weight or psychic burden of [another's articulated] traumatic history, acknowledging that memories of violence and injustice do press down on one's sense of humanity and moral equilibrium. Second, one must bear [carry] or transport / translate stories of past injustices beyond their moment of telling by taking these stories to another time and space where they become available to be heard or seen. Third, through word, images and/or actions, one must indicate to others why what one has seen or heard is worthy of remembrance and in what ways such remembrance may inform one's contemporary perceptions and actions.³⁰ (in press)

Taken as a whole, this is the level of witnessing that is most consistent with a common understanding of the phrase "to bear witness" with its components of listening and telling to

²⁹ I have wondered, for example, if bearing witness to the murder of other women, as *part of* an organized feminist response, made it possible for me to begin to bear witness to the violations i have lived. This is not to suggest that somehow my witnessing of the massacre at École Polytechnique was untrue or impure, terms which would assume that one's own history is irrelevant to witnessing, but rather to recognize that it was only in the context of a feminist remembering "community" that I was able to recall my(traumatized)self.

³⁰ While Simon and Eppert explore this triad at the level of bearing witness to another's testimony, I/i suggest that it is relevant not only here, but also to how one bears witness to oneself. In thinking about this, I am struck again by Caruth's evocative statement—"our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves". To hold this alongside Simon and Eppert's triad is to recognize that "endur[ing] the psychic burden of history" and "translat[ing] stories of past injustice" may call up the burdens of one's own history and the stories of one's own experiences of past injustice. And, again, the project of witnessing, it seems to me, is *neither to deny this trajectory, nor conflate it with the traumatic remembrances of others*.

others what one has heard (and/or seen). The first gesture here, according to Simon and Eppert, is a recognition of witnessing as a burden--what Laub refers to as "the hazards [of] listening to trauma" (1992a: 72). These are important recognitions, a reminder that to witness is to grapple with responsibilities that can weigh heavily on one's sense of self, history and possibility. Perhaps, most clearly, it is in this regard that issues of pedagogy come to the fore in attempts to make sense of *how* to help ourselves and others come to witness--issues I will grapple with more substantively in the following chapter sequence with reference to specific remembrance acts and representations.

The second and third gestures--to carry forth and translate what one has seen or heard into another context--are complex, not only on the terms already indicated in discussions of witnessing oneself, but also in terms of what might constitute a "just and compassionate response to testimon[ies]" (Simon and Eppert, in press) to the dead (and I would add, the deadened). I want to think through this layer of bearing witness in contradistinction to the two dominant approaches to witnessing that tend to circulate around issues of violences against women.

One approach, informed by thinking that privileges the authority of experience, identifies testimony as a sacred speaking and witnessing as an unquestioning practice. From this position, testimonies are understood as unmediated and, thus, it would be considered transgressive--even violating--to question or form judgements about what is told.³¹ As Dori Laub points out, however, one of the hazards of this position is that it keeps the teller of trauma at a

³¹ I have, for example, regularly encountered this stance at academic conferences, where I have presented papers on this work. In such contexts, I have been told that the project in which I am engaged is compelling conceptually but "too personal" to discuss. While one may expect this in "traditional" disciplines, it has been distressing to me to receive such response from colleagues who work in Women's Studies, critical pedagogy and other interdisciplinary foci.

distance, avoiding the intimacy of knowing through a screen of awe and fear (1992a: 72). Contrary to this position is one premised on distrust of and disbelief in any statement that cannot be scientifically verified: for example, people who take a position within the discourse of "false memory syndrome" argue frequently for the lack of validity of repressed memories on the basis of inadequate scientific proof.³² Listening from this position is directed toward finding gaps, contradictions and inconsistencies between "reality" and "testimony" to precisely undermine any claim to truth.

What each of these positions share is a mono-dimensional understanding of the production of truth: in which "the truth" is seen to be determined *either* within a telling *or* outside of it. Clearly, I/i want to move explicitly against this mono-dimensionality and to embody instead the significance of what Simon and Eppert have identified as "the need for a doubled form of attentiveness". They express this as:

an attentiveness within which one attempts to witness the translation of a person's grasp of a past event as it is transactionally presented and still hold accountable the substance of that testimony for the truth effects it may reinforce or attempt to legitimate. (manuscript: 15)

On these terms, to enact a bearing of witness [as carrying forth and translation] would be to work to hear another's articulation of deep and/or common memories through an understanding of truth that pivots on three primary considerations: (i) all articulations are partial and thus their truth effects cannot be a priori determined by external "evidence"; (ii) articulations cannot be reduced

³² Nathan and Haaken (1996) provide challenging and thoughtful insights on memory and truth in their discussion of Dr. Elizabeth Loftus (a key proponent of "false memory syndrome"). As they explain, Loftus has recently experienced a significant dissonance between her identity as a scientist and a Jew. They write: "Loftus, debunker of repression and recovered memory was carried away [in response to the request that she work on a Nazi war crimes case] ... by the tortured recovery of her own 'repressed' past" (94-95).

to what is seen, heard and remembered, which too are partial and thus shape truth in their partiality; and (iii) judgements with regard to truth are not neutral considerations, but—at least within commitments to social justice—are produced at a juncture of honouring the dead, keeping them present now, and remembering for a world in which their murders would be inconceivable. And in this I/i recall again Judith Plaskow's insight that "[w]e turn to the past with new questions because of present commitments, but we also remember more deeply what a changed present requires us to know" (1990: 53).

In working through this understanding of bearing witness to the (re)tellings of others, I have had in my mind, among other moments, a talk that I attended by Suzanne Laplante Edward, the mother of one of the women killed at Ecole Polytechnique.³³ I/i struggled during this talk--and for sometime afterwards³⁴--to witness what is was she said about her daughter and the thirteen other murdered women.³⁵ Witnessing meant finding a way through in which I/i

³³ On June 13, 1995, at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Suzanne Laplante Edward spoke in a series organized in conjunction with an exhibition of designs for the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver. Mrs. Edward is the mother of Anne-Marie, one of the women slaughtered at École Polytechnique, and the founder and first president of the December 6th Victims Foundation Against Violence. She gave a presentation for approximately 45 minutes, providing a narrative of the meanings she has made from "the unspeakable tragedy", organized around a sequence of remembrances to the fourteen women, and calling on audience participants to speak (out) in response to their deaths.

³⁴ I would like to thank Julie Salverson and Elisabeth Friedman for our talk after the presentation in which some of the ideas I present here began to take shape.

³⁵ The talk focused on remembering the murdered women, using compilations of letters from families and friends, to provide a composite picture of who they were before they were killed and reduced to a (potentially remembered) name—or one of the fourteen dead. Each composite was accompanied by large-scale projections of photographs of each of the women. Edward offered this as a counter-remembrance to the practice of recalling and attending to the memory of their killer. While I understand her gesture, I have concerns about the manner of this public memorializing. That said, my comments here are offered as illustrative of issues of bearing witness and are not intended to impinge on Edward's personal responses to the murder of her

could *hear* her speak as a mother who had lost a child tragically and who sought some sense of justice through the parliamentary system.³⁶

As a daughter in relation to these testimonies to other daughter's lives, I feel my self rub up against this mother's inscription. A daughter who has an estranged relationship with her mother, a daughter who lives outside of her mother's ways of making sense of how daughters should be, I can not hear these remembrances as totalizing truth.

As a feminist who is being called upon to witness women's lives, I am drawn to hearing the not-saids, the almost-saids that hover at the edges of the spoken words. To do otherwise, to engage these tellings as unproblematic, is to be complicit in a recirculation of dominant inscriptions of femininity that deny women the possibilities of complex subjecthood.

For me to bear witness to the mother's tellings was to listen and not dismiss her in her distance from a feminist politic and in her enactment of a mother framing a daughter's life; it was to try to grasp a sense of what she could not / would not say in a public forum about what it was to lose her daughter in this way (a sense that I could try to trace through her commitments and actions in the now); and, it was, also, to listen to my own responses, questions and concerns about the pedagogy of her tellings. I became highly aware during this time that to bear witness was precisely not to reduce her telling to my apprehension, but nor was it to subsume my response within the frame of her telling. Instead, it was and continues to be a matter of holding both and sifting their pulls to truth, a matter of bringing her telling alongside other responses to the murders to form (provisional) judgements for how her telling weighs on obligations to bear

daughter and the other thirteen women.

³⁶ Edward and others worked for a number of years for the gun control legislation that was passed on the 6th anniversary of the massacre in 1995.

witness for the dead *and* the living (deadened).³⁷ In this, I am reminded of an essay by Megan Boler (in press) in which she offers that witnessing is principally about obligation. Reflecting on her teaching in the context of what she calls a "multicultural curriculum", she desires obligation over empathy, because, to her reading, "empathy" allows students to "abdicate responsibility" in relation to the testimonial texts they read. Her recognition is useful in that it signals, to me, a differentiation between witness and voyeur or tourist—those subject positions that allow people to visit, pass by, even scrutinize without doing the work of thinking through the implications of a telling for their own formation and relations to history.

What stories might the women have told of
their own lives? And would it depend if
their mothers, their fathers were listening?

How is my telling of stories possible
because my mother, estranged, and my
father, dead, are not listening?

And these points direct me to a final consideration. Laub observes that the level of "bearing witness to the process of witnessing itself" requires time for retreat, consideration, assimilation (1992b: 76). In my project, bearing witness to the process in which I am engaged pivots most strongly on attending to the fundamental tension of bearing witness to the anti-feminist massacre and bearing witness to my history of violation. For clearly, it is a tension and one that I do not assume the responsibility for lightly. I stay present to this responsibility in the creation of this text through re-engagement with my own tellings, attempting to trace and lay bear their formation, to be explicit in how and where my history is being called up in, by and through memorial responses. In part, this means that when boundary distinctions between "I" and "i"

³⁷ I am evoking here the organizing logic of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, opened in Washington in April 1993, which is articulated in the phrase "[f]or the dead and the living, we must bear witness".

collapse, I need to do the work of repairing the skin of (my) memory so as to maintain a preparedness to bear witness to the (re)tellings of the tragedy of the massacre of Genviève, Hélène, Maryse, Annie, Nathalie, Barbara, Anne-Marie, Maud, Barbara Maria, Maryse, Anne-Marie, Sonia, Michèle and Annie. In this, Laub's gesture to attending to the process of witnessing may be read as a recasting of Donna Haraway's insight: to attend to the process of bearing witness is to take note of how I (and we) "become answerable for what we [have] learn[ed] how to see [and hear]" (1988: 583).

Notes toward studies in bearing witness:

The following sequence of chapters explores the bearing of witness along three intersecting dimensions. First, I consider feminist memorial responses as acts of bearing witness: where what is being borne is a translation and retelling of the slaughters in Montreal.³⁸ Second, I take on the responsibility of bearing witness to each memorial response by engaging in the labour necessary to think through how it is that the massacre is being remembered or retold. Third, in this process, I bear witness to my self, which includes responding to how my traumatic history may be (being) engaged by each memorial. Oriented by my argument in the previous chapter that the massacre ruptured a frame of actualized and threatened violences as normative,

³⁸ In this sense, I am relying on Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert's second meaning of the verb to bear--as in to carry or transport. In doing so, I am not suggesting that feminist cultural workers may not also be bearing witness in the first and third meanings articulated by Simon and Eppert: bearing the weight of knowing and making evident the significance of the impact of the event in one's life. However, I would not want to presume, without speaking with the creators of these responses, how they understand these aspects, whether they are present in their cultural work, to what degree, etc. It seems to me that the notion of *carrying* a telling can be most readily seen/heard/viewed in the work itself and thus this is the focus I take for discussion in the chapters.

I am centrally interested in how each response may (and may not) ready those who engage it to bear witness to the horror of the massacre and its connection to what is already known and unbearable.

In this, I recall Ora Avni, who writes: the "problem [of trauma and healing] lies not in the individual--survivor or not--but in his or her ... relationship to the narratives and values by which this community defines and represents itself" (1995: 216), and suggest that it is vital to attend to the narratives (images, memorials, ...) by which feminist community is defining and representing itself in response to the massacre. From this perspective, I return to Charlotte Delbo's notions of common and deep memory. Where previously I have discussed the significance of her language for its analytic insight into internal processes of remembering trauma, I add another layer to this. I suggest that common and deep memory are also relevant to analyses of how memorial practices represent the trauma (the unbearable, the horror) of the event of the massacre of fourteen women.

In one sense, this move is consistent with Delbo's usage, in that she too was working with these notions as a representational strategy for making sense of her processes of remembering. In another sense, the move I make extends Delbo's insight to suggest that her language provides a powerful lens for forming judgements regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of feminist memorial practices. What struck me earlier about Delbo's formulation--that the elements of continuity (common memory) and rupture (deep memory) are always *in relation*--continues to be significant, directing me to consider not only how a memorial practice represents aspects of common *or* deep memory, but also how a relation between these elements is produced.

Using this lens, what *I/i* work through in these following chapters is how bearing witness extends beyond a practice of remembrance in which the dead remain in a fixed past, to a remembering in which the dead (and the deadened of ourselves) may be consciously borne as part of the past in the present.

**Studies in
Bearing Witness**

**Encountering the Unbearable:
Art, Memory and Bearing Witness**

[Certain] questions [and I would add, memories] do not evaporate and leave the mind to its serener musings. Once asked they gain dimension and texture, trip you on the stairs, wake you at night-time. (Jeanette Winterson, 1992: 13)

I want to begin this chapter by re-posing a question Shoshana Felman asks, regarding the Shoah, in the context of this project on bearing witness: "can we ... assume in earnest, not the finite task of making sense out of the [Massacre of Women], but the *infinite task* of *encountering* [the unbearable]?" (1992: 268, emphasis mine). Although Felman's question seems to posit one task against the other, her work (along with that of, for example, Laub, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Caruth, 1995; Langer, 1991) suggests they are more likely to be in tension: where the conditions of bearing witness to traumatic histories are such that one is confronted with trying to make sense while, simultaneously, knowing that horror continuously breaks frames of understanding. From this perspective, it is useful to consider *both* of the tasks Felman sets in front of me/us: to attend in a detailed way to what each makes possible in engagements with memorial responses and, to realize, I think, the particular significance of the second. To this end, I offer a bearing of witness in this chapter as a repetitive practice, in which I consider, first, how a selection of feminist memorial responses may be engaged from the finite perspective of making sense of the massacre, and second, how these same responses may be taken up from the infinite

perspective of encountering the unbearable.

I begin with brief descriptions of the feminist memorial responses I have chosen to work with in this chapter.¹

A selection of responses:

Who can bear to know.
(Gladwell, 1995: 83)

I will engage the following four feminist memorial responses: an installation, by Lin Gibson, as part of a series of visual works that she exhibited across the country, under the project title *Murdered By Misogyny*; a panel of images, by Pati Beaudoin, shown in the *Don't Remain Silent* art exhibit; and, a song, "This Memory", written and performed by a Winnipeg-based women's group, The Wyrd Sisters.²

The key elements of Gibson's installation were two columns of type applied to the front window of Pages Books and Magazines on Queen Street West in Toronto. The left-hand column was an alphabetical listing, in upper-case type, of the first and last names of the women killed in Montreal; the right hand column comprised a listing, in lower-case type, of the names of fourteen other women (Gibson and thirteen friends). Under the right-hand column was the

¹ I have chosen to consider a limited selection of responses, in a detailed way, to make visible the nuances and the labour of bearing witness to layers of traumatic histories. I suggest that the *method* of working I present in this sequence of chapters (starting with chapter 4) could be taken up in bearing witness to any of the feminist memorial responses included in the Resource Bibliography.

² Please see the resource bibliography for the details on Gibson's series, a description of *Don't Remain Silent*, and the complete lyrics to "This Memory".

phrase, "guilty as charged" (referencing and reframing the killer's accusation that the women in Montreal were "a bunch of fucking feminists"). The other central element on the window was a prose-poem that read: "these names ... ces noms ... here in black and white for all the world to see. Our eyelids burn, we cannot look. We did not imagine. Ces noms ... leurs noms ... names which might have been our own. Wrapped in our womanly arms. Safe in our feminist hearts. Ces noms ... once inscribed ... imprinted ... can never be erased ... jamais" (in Yeo, 1991: 9).

Pati Beaudoin's work, which she did not title, is a long panel on which framed colour photographs of the fourteen women are placed alongside each other. Underneath each photo is a plate inscribed with the woman's name. At the far end is a fifteenth photograph frame around a mirror, underneath which is a blank name plate. This work was included in both of the *Don't Remain Silent* exhibits in Toronto in 1990 and 1991.

"This Memory" is included on the Wyrd Sisters' *Leave a Little Light* collection. Although a dedication—"In memory of the fourteen women murdered in Montreal on December 6, 1989"—accompanies the printed lyrics, the song begins with reference not to the deaths of these women, but to their lives. The first two stanzas evoke daily routines and the morning ordinariness of a day that was to end in a horror not imagined at its beginning. The refrain of the song is of particular interest in the context of this writing. In its first articulation, it reads as follows: "But it could have been me / Just as easily / Could have been my sister / Left there to bleed. / Oh it could have been my father / Or my brother done the deed. / Oh no ... don't let me lose this memory". In subsequent repeats, there are slight variations: the third line is changed to "Could have been my lover" and, in the last repeat, the entire sequence is re-positioned so that "me and my" become "you and your" (i.e. "It could have been you ... Could have been your

father").

Encounter I, making sense of the Massacre:

(Re)creating is thus not a question of talent and of accessibility; but of exactness internal to the problematic of (each) creation. Does it work? How does it work?
(Trinh, 1991: 25)

A dominant feminist interpretation of the women-hating murders in Montreal has spun on the recognition that the fourteen women were targeted *as women* and thus any fourteen women might have been killed by the gunman. This sense-making materializes in the feminist art works noted here through (what I think of as) a practice of *alignment*,³ by which I wish to evoke a series of meanings, including position in an arrangement, a sequence, a line; form in alliance; in union with a subject; in relation with others. In thinking through an understanding of this strategy, I explore two central questions: How does each artist carry an alignment position for herself in and through the work? How might this establish a particular call to alignment for those who engage it--that is, how open or constrained is this call to others in setting the terms of a witnessing relation?

The most explicit in her use of a strategy of alignment is Gibson, who not only directly pairs the names of the women killed in Montreal with names of feminist women, but also includes her name on that second list. In so doing, she names herself as one who bears the responsibility of witnessing; in her words, she takes on the task that she also asks of others: "to

³ A remembrance strategy of and for alignment is not limited to the representations I discuss here. I chose these pieces for how each works with this strategy differently and for what those differences make visible.

remember forever the name of the woman with whom her name was matched and to allow her own name to stand publicly as a feminist alongside the names of the dead"⁴ (Gibson, 1990 press release). As Marian Yeo argues, "by coming forward and identifying themselves as feminists (and thus potential victims), these women demonstrated that their stance was not only empathetic but also political. The Montreal women were killed *because* they were women, and if the female gender constitutes 'guilt' then they were 'guilty as charged'" (1991: 9, emphasis in original). In carrying forth remembrance of the injustice of the murders on these terms, Gibson might be understood to be positioning the feminists listed in the work as guardian witnesses: women who are called upon to protect from historical erasure the names of the women who were massacred.

Gibson's strategy might be read not only in relation to the women who are aligned in a public pairing with the dead, but also more broadly to include all feminists (women?) who engage her installation. The primary element of the work on the window at Pages that directs me to such a reading is the prose-poem, that anchors the two columns of type, calling on an "our" and a "we" beyond the names of those listed: feminists, women. Reading the second column of type through this anchoring fragment, I would argue that it is reasonable to read these women's names not only as aligned with the dead but also as stand-ins for feminists, or perhaps for women more generally. If I read Gibson's installation in this way, then I can read it as a call to those feminists / women who engage her work to add themselves to the list: to remember, to bear the weight of that remembrance, to carry forever the taint of death that has been attached to feminism through the massacre. I can add myself to the list with relative ease, but it is precisely this that

⁴ Of course this call to viewers bears no *necessary* relation to how the work is engaged--it may be taken up, disavowed, recast, etc. This is a point I will return to in my ongoing reflections on this art work.

troubles me and has prompted me to think more carefully about this strategy.

While I honour the women whose names appear on both of Gibson's lists, acknowledge the significance of such public, collective namings, I am nervous about a remembrance stance that foregrounds (an assumption of) sameness—being women (feminists), potential victims—as *the* basis for alignment (and potentially, witnessing). In particular, my concern lies with the possibility that remembrance slips from similarity to sameness and, on this basis, to substitution. This is a slippage that risks erasing the core difference between the women listed (and those who engage): namely, only the women on the left died in the massacre in Montreal. Douglas Crimp (in part of a larger conversation on trauma and AIDS) offers a similar concern regarding substitution and witnessing, observing that "the structure of empathy [seems to get] constructed in relation to sameness, it can't be constructed in relation to difference" (in Caruth and Keenan, 1995: 263). While my comments are not about empathy per se, I think his observation is more broadly relevant to this discussion of remembrance politics. I suggest Gibson may have been aware of the problem of slippage; certainly she mitigates it through two representational practices. One of these is the use of upper-case type for the names in the left-hand column and lower-case for its accompanying list. The second is the use of parallel notations at the end of each list that clearly specify that these women are being drawn in(to) relation but are not the same: following the left-hand list, this reads: "died, December 6, 1989 / Montreal"; on the right-hand side, "feminist as charged".⁵

⁵ A reverse reading of this pairing strategy is how it draws in the names of the 14 massacred women—enveloping them in the identity "feminist". Or, as Julie Brickman observes: "[i]f they [the murdered women] did not live as feminists, they certainly died as them [through the killer's accusation]" (1992: 129). The difficulty with feminist activists and artists continuing this naming is that it risks subsuming the dead to the needs of present commitments. I thank Roger Simon

These strategies, however, are somewhat undermined by the phrase "names which might have been our own" in the prose-poem. In thinking of this fragment, I am also reminded of Marian Yeo's comment in her review of *Ces Noms*, in which she argues: "the prose poem which accompanies the lists of names underscores the fact that the two lists might well have been interchanged" (1991: 9). As a remembrance strategy this risks leaving the burden of responsibility with women or feminists: not only does this potentially minimize the complexity of relations through which women may be able to differently witness each other, but also neglects the positions men may variously occupy as witnesses to this event.

Approached from this perspective, I find Beaudoin's panel more productive in its remembrance politics than Gibson's installation. As creator of the work, as the first face in the mirror, it seems to me that Beaudoin also, although less explicitly, includes herself as witness in her representation. It is not evident from the panel itself how the artist made sense then (or would make sense now) of that witnessing position. Perhaps, a moment of alignment, as in Gibson's installation? It is noteworthy, however, that while Gibson remains always represented as a witness in her own work, Beaudoin's is not a stable and consistent presence; instead, she figures in (and out) depending on whether her face is at the mirror.

It is precisely the shifting face at the mirror--and the implications for how a viewer-witness is positioned in relation to the women killed in Montreal--that intrigues me. For the one who remembers *is always positioned in relation* to those who have been murdered. There is no position of bystander neutrality: once a viewer enters the space of the mirror, she/he is positioned to witness (although may not necessarily carry forth the remembrance). Unlike Gibson's work,

for alerting me to this reverse reading.

in which the nature of the relation is already specified, the terms of a witnessing relation in Beaudoin's work *depend upon* the subjectivity of the viewer as much as what is viewed. Thus, alignment here is (potentially) more multi-faceted.

As that of a white feminist working and studying in a university, my face does slip into the fifteenth slot without significant rupture (and this is where the similarity to Gibson's work is at play and requires similar attention). Clearly, though, other faces at the mirror (and even other ways of identifying my face: lesbian, jewish, ...) will call up other witnessing relations. For example, a white man's face at the mirror alongside the faces of the fourteen murdered women may be positioned not through a recognition of seeing himself as *one of them*, but through his potential similarity to their killer.⁶ The face of a woman of colour at the mirror will be positioned differently again (and again, depending on her other identities): in the similarity of gender and the difference of race, she might be reminded of, for instance, Rita Kohli's question: "Did you know / In Rexdale 2 Black women / And 1 South Asian woman / Were shot at / Just before the Massacre? Did you? / No." (1991: 13). While what one sees is the same (the faces of the fourteen women with their names), how one makes sense of that seeing and its implications for one's relation to the dead women's remembrance will not be the same for any of us.⁷ As Shoshana Felman argues in relation to the victims, perpetrators and bystanders

⁶ I am not suggesting that this is the *only* position from which white men can view the panel; rather, it is one way of making sense that needs to be recognized. The task, it seems to me, is to develop discursive positions from which men can mourn the loss of the women in Montreal, while grappling with the impact--*for them*--of living in a society in which these murders were possible within gendered relations of domination.

⁷ This comment has relevance also for Gibson's installation, although the relation *appears* more defined in her piece because of the already established pairing of names.

of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry, who give testimony in Lanzmann's film *Shoah*: "[they are] differentiated not so much by what they actually see ... as by what and how they *do not see*, by what and how they *fail to witness*" (1992: 208, emphasis in original).⁸

As witnesses to the women murdered in Montreal, the Wyrd Sisters, in their song, "This Memory", include themselves as bearers of remembrance ("don't let me lose this memory").⁹ While they share with Gibson a reliance on gender as the primary relation of and for alignment, they articulate the texture of this relation along three dimensions. First and reminiscent of Gibson's strategy, they include themselves as likely victims ("But it could have been me / Just as easily ..."). Second, and again not unlike either Gibson or Beaudoin as (potential) witnesses, they align themselves through relations to other women ("Could have been my sister / Left there to bleed"; "Could have been my lover / Left there to bleed"). Third, they recognize their relation to men who may be (seen to be) aligned with the killer ("Oh it could have been my father / Or my brother done the deed"). Within the analytic frame of artist-as-witness being mapped here, I suggest that "This Memory" lies between Gibson's inscription of

⁸ I will return to the issue of a failure to witness in the second section of this chapter, *Encounter II*.

⁹ My discussion of this song focuses on a reading of the lyrics through the analytic lens being explored here. While all of the re-representations of art works being engaged are limited by the form of this document and requirements for reproducibility, I find it particularly difficult that the lyrics are presented detached from the music that is their companion. For analytic purposes, however, I suggest that the music of "This Memory" is supportive of the lyrical content and structure: at a slow tempo, the music is sombre, evocative of sadness, perhaps melancholy. It is not disruptive of the mood of the lyrics, but helps to establish this as a song of mourning and loss.

a mono-dimensional witnessing relation (through sisterhood), and Beaudoin's (un)marked¹⁰ relation(s).

There are two aspects of witnessing as alignment that I want to draw further attention to in "This Memory"—particularly in thinking about how listeners may be (being) called into a witnessing relation. First, the song suggests the weight of remembering hangs on a gendered line that implicates not only women (me, sister, lover), but also men (fathers, brothers). In including these references within the scope of their lyrics, The Wyrd Sisters foreground the position that men are (potentially) culpable in a society in which the massacre was a "shock of the known" (Guillaumin, 1991: 13).¹¹ This stance is not rendered explicit by either Gibson or Beaudoin (although it may be presumed as an intertextual reference). Gibson's *Murdered By Misogyny: Ces Noms* concerns itself with the burden of memory that lies in the hands and hearts of women feminists, and thus does not directly engage the burdens that may accrue to men. While Beaudoin's panel may be read through this gaze, the possibility for its articulation depends (almost entirely) on the one who engages and on the discourses of engagement.

¹⁰ I am suggesting (un)marked to reference both a recognition that Beaudoin is marked as a woman artist who submitted this piece to a feminist show, and is not marked in the piece itself--is not identified in the way, for example, that Gibson names herself.

¹¹ There is an echo here to the inscription on the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver that has been seen, by some, as controversial for naming men in the murder of women. (For some discussion of these issues, see chapter 6.) What neither of these namings grapple with, however, are the ways in which gender intersects with race, class, ability and sexuality, such that a gendered dichotomy (men as perpetrators, women as victims) implodes with complexity. From this perspective, the burdens of memory do not hang smoothly on a gendered line. It is noteworthy also that fathers are positioned in a relation of accountability, but there is no parallel reference to mothers. Through an orientation to bearing witness to the massacre, this is an interesting absence. I wonder, for instance, about what it might be for the mother of the killer son to bear witness to his deeds? The burdens of memory and accountability would weigh heavy here I suspect. I thank Kate McKenna for drawing my attention to this absence in the lyrics.

Second, there are two references that gesture to the possibility that at least one of the fourteen murdered women may have been lesbian. The first of these is the second stanza which evokes a non-gendered "lover": "Early that morning / Getting ready by the door / Kissed her lover on the cheek / Said 'I'll be coming back for more / ...'". The (likely) meaning of this reference is further specified in the second refrain in the lines, "could have been my lover / left there to bleed", which are being sung by women about women. Given the structure of the lyrical formation--which parallels me/my with you/your--I suggest the wording of the second stanza makes reference to a woman lover. A lesbian presence is further alluded to in the lyrics through an absence: where relations to fathers and brothers are named, there are no evocations to boyfriends or husbands. It is precisely the marking out of this space of alignment for (lesbian) listeners that engages me--personally and pedagogically. While the works by Gibson and Beaudoin do not preclude the possibility of lesbians among those murdered or among those whose names or faces may be brought into alignment with the dead, the space that The Wyrld Sisters mark, in "This Memory", is noteworthy for its presence and its rupturing significance. That is, at issue, from a remembrance perspective, is not whether there were lesbian and/or bisexual women among the murdered, but that a presumption of heterosexuality has been pierced.¹²

"This Memory" is further noteworthy for its explicit call to listeners to bear witness, to hold the memory of the fourteen murdered women, and to grapple with the recognitions that it could have been you or your sister murdered, your father or your brother implicated in the

¹² This is a pointedly absent gesture from the majority of remembrance responses. (For an other, although problematic, exception, see Lacelle, 1991: 30).

killings. Again, this strategy falls between those evoked by Gibson and Beaudoin: where the former offers a list of feminist names to which others might understand them/our selves to be called, the latter propels all those who engage her work into relation with the fourteen dead women, but does not specify what (the meanings of) those relations are or will be. The responsibility for (this) memory, thus, lies, according to the lyrics of the song, with us all--and particularly women, "because it could've been you or me". Comments I raised earlier in concern with Gibson's installation are noteworthy here also: I am compelled by and yet remain cautious about calls for alignment--for remembrance--on the basis of (possible) substitution.

There is fear of the experience that leaves a mark, the moment when the brain is not split from the blood ...
 (Rich, 1993: 126, emphasis in original)

Michael Taussig directs attention to "the place of the name in terror's talk" (1992: 28). And I wonder about the names named in remembrance of talking, walking, shooting terror.

Lin Gibson's lists:

Each matched with another	side	by	side
Selves named by association		her	other
This could have been me	Murdered	By	Misogyny
Might yet be me		Her	
		Her	

And yet it was:

Geneviève
 Hélène
 Nathalie
 Barbara
 Anne-Marie
 Maud
 Barbara Maria
 Maryse
 Annie
 Anne Marie
 Sonia
 Michèle
 Annie
 Maryse

Not me
 Nor her.

The burden of memory lies with the last face.
Theirs. Yours.

Seeing self in relation. Dead and alive.
But what else?

My face slips in line without a rupture of significance.
Terror's talk at Pati Beaudoin's mirror.

Again, though: the slippage.

Faces marked similar [but different]. Her, not her.
Different [but similar?]. Her, not him.

Me? Not Me?

Your lyrics assume a lesbian lover
among the dead
pierce a space for me
in the silence

Don't let us lose this memory

Left there to bleed, mother
It could have been you and me
Your husband, my father

What of this memory?

Remembering December 6th
on a gendered line
blurs under the hands of
her complicity

Who loses the memory?

You
Not me.

Encounter II, approaching the unbearable:

How might I/i now face the *infinite task* of *encountering* the unbearable of these memorial responses? In thinking through this question, I have found the conceptual language of Charlotte Delbo's common and deep memory significant--particularly because it orients me to the unbearable of trauma *not* as an isolated level of remembering in which one risks (permanent) collapse. Instead, and to recall, it is the *relation* between common and deep memory that is crucial to Delbo's survival.

To cast her conceptualization within the context of memorial responses to the events in Montreal: at the level of common memory, the emphasis is on regarding the massacre not as an isolated, unthinkable event, but one that can be understood within a continuity of violences against women. While this level of memory does not disregard the pain, anger, terror that may be associated with the massacre for those who remain in its wake--for those living historically (Avni), living in a country in which these killings were possible--it does not make these emotions palpable. Rather, memory at this level is an attempt at making coherent sense: salve to a wound. (This level of remembering is similar to how I first approached the feminist memorial responses being discussed here--a finite way of making sense.)

It is clear from Delbo's work, however, and gestured to in some of my earlier comments, that the salve is permeable, coherence is temporary, sense-making is partial. What unsettles common memory is precisely the recurring nature of deep memory, which troubles continuity as a necessary remembrance response. Deep memory "preserves and tries to transmit the *physical* imprint of the ordeal" (Langer on the work of Delbo, 1995: xiv, emphasis in original) on its witnesses. It is the rawness, the unspeakable, the horror that cannot be represented

in the same language as common memory, but nonetheless has some presence, some trace; for, as Langer also notes, these layers of memory are not insulated from each other (1995: xii): as formations of (deep) and from (common) trauma, they are distinct yet always in relation.

In approaching Lin Gibson's installation from this perspective, I can understand her work as a bearing of witness--carrying and translating memory--along lines similar to Delbo's doubled formation. Her columns of type are tightly paired with each other; every name is lined up with another; the letter and line spacings are equally distributed; each column is centred within its panel and held in equivalent visual relation with the large header, MURDERED BY MISOGYNY. I reiterate these elements, by way of suggesting these as visual markers of common memory: they are the aspects of this installation that anchor it in the now, that lay out a relation of continuity (with the murdered women). Common memory as continuity is further established through the installation's oblique reference to two other historical events in which those who were not targeted aligned themselves with those who were.¹³ Thus, Gibson is suggesting a remembrance strategy in this work that gathers in not only feminists in Canada post-1989, but also a continuous relation with other social justice struggles. In this manner, she reinforces a sense of common memory as stabilizing: a contextual understanding that foregrounds a way for feminists to move forward *now* through a strategy that others have used before. Remembering at this level is, then, oriented toward surviving the horrors, living after Montreal.

But this is only a partial reading of Gibson's installation. For what is also present--

¹³ Briefly, the two events Gibson is recalling are: (i) the 1973 signed newspaper proclamation by women in France, who protested that country's restrictive abortion laws by "confessing" to having had illegal abortions; (ii) the thousands of non-Jews who took to wearing Star of David armbands in Denmark during Nazi occupation, to interfere with attempts to locate Jews by sight. For more details, see the section on Lin Gibson's work in the Resource Bibliography.

and, I would argue, disturbing of the afore-mentioned elements—is the prose-poem that accompanies the columns of names. To recall, this segment reads: "these names ... ces noms ... here in black and white for all the world to see. Our eyelids burn, we cannot look. We did not imagine. Ces noms ... leurs noms ... names which might have been our own. Wrapped in our womanly arms. Safe in our feminist hearts. Ces noms ... once inscribed ... imprinted ... can never be erased ... jamais". I suggest that this is the element of the installation that reaches from and endeavours to describe a level of deep memory—its sensations and emotions, its physical imprint (to recall Langer) on Gibson (and perhaps on others she was close to).

I want to draw attention here to the form of the representation as well as its content. It is noteworthy, for example, that in contrast to the precision of the other elements of the installation, a primary aspect of the prose-poem are the ellipses: the dots that stand in for omissions, for what is not (perhaps, cannot) be spoken. To think of the ellipses in this way is to play against my earlier reading of Gibson's use of a strategy of alignment: where she has previously paired the names, establishing a sense of continuity, here the strategy has broken down. The ellipses may be read through a consideration of deep memory as signalling both absence and excess: that is, joining and disrupting sparse words, these signifiers are both hollow and so filled as to be beyond meaning's grasp. In this, I am reminded of Roberta Culbertson, who writes of deep memory that it seems "both absent and entirely too present" (1995: 169). Her description of deep memory as marked by "temporal blanks" in the conscious mind (175) might be usefully translated in terms of the significance of Gibson's ellipses as blanks in language: not filling empty spaces between words but scars perhaps on the surface of the skin of memory (to recall Delbo again) that cover deeper impacts of the massacre. For, as Culbertson continues to

argue, it is the "blank period" itself in one's recounting of a profoundly shaking experience that *is* memory (175).

From this perspective, the words and phrases in the prose-poem may be understood as providing linkages between sets of ellipsis. Thus, it is not surprising that the dominant phrases express the unbelievability of the massacre: an event that was not imagined, that cannot be seen (from the perspective of common memory),¹⁴ an event that is kept at a distance by already articulated frameworks—even those feminist and other critical frameworks that Gibson relies upon in other elements of her installation. The use of repetition and translation is also noteworthy: these names ... ces noms ... Ces noms ... leurs noms ... Ces noms. In moving from English to French, Gibson has explained that she is "'speak[ing]' directly to the slain women in their own language" (in Yeo, 1991: 9). I would suggest further that the English to French translation may be read as an inscription of translation as inherent to a process of bearing witness—of carrying forth tellings.¹⁵

Further, since my interest is especially in bearing witness to the unbearable of oppressive realities already known but rarely acknowledged—an unbearable that the massacre momentarily brought to the fore—what most engages me (from a traumatized subjectivity), and shapes the tellings I/i am producing here, is the prose-poem in the context of Gibson's installation. For it is not the poem alone that i find so compelling (although I am drawn to certain

¹⁴ Gibson's actual phrase is: "Our eyelids burn, we cannot look. We did not imagine". If read as a particular expression of the limits of common memory, this phrasing begins to suggest forgetting as necessary to a work of remembrance. This is a point I will explore in detail in chapter 6.

¹⁵ See Felman (1992: 153-163) for a detailed discussion of translation as a metaphor for bearing witness: that which can never be fully known.

phrasings, particularly the image of eyelids that burn from remembered horror), but the way in which this element upsets the others, unsettles the neatness of the columns. It is, perhaps, the sense of disturbance that most compels me. Unlike my earlier concern with the implications of Gibson's mono-dimensional relation for witnessing as alignment, here I am drawn into the ellipses, the (textual) scars that reverberate for me as one whose inner flesh and organs are wounded but whose skin (surface) does not bear the evidence. In her ellipses, surrounded by words that promise holding, caring, and support,¹⁶ i touch the horror of that December night, I remember why this project matters to me, to my life. I remember the little girl who so desperately wanted her father to stop. I remember the young(er) woman who was stunned into (a gradual) remembering at the resound of gunshots through the classrooms and hallways of another university in this country. I remember that the unbearable must precisely be borne (witness to) if the conditions under which it is possible for a father to rape his daughter, for the gunman to act, are to be transformed.

What I am gesturing toward here is a layered understanding of bearing witness in which common and deep memories of the massacre are materialized in and through the art works, and in and through my engagements with these works, as I/i too remember that December night and its aftermath. In addition, the common and deep memories of my own history of violation are present here. By way of considering the complex relation between these layers more explicitly, I want to introduce a fourth memorial response to the Massacre of Women.

¹⁶ While there are particular "womanly arms" and "feminist hearts" that I/i imagine in hearing a place for myself in Gibson's promise, I am also aware that these all encompassing namings may be read as displacing a recognition of woman to woman violation and neglect. This too is what feminists (need to) grapple with in remembrance: mothers, sisters, aunts, lovers, friends, colleagues, supervisors who harm girls and other women.

Katherine Zsolt's installation, "Daughters and Sisters", comprises body casts of fourteen women, hung upside down from the ceiling by their bound feet. The women are nude and posed, with slight variation, so that their hands and arms partially cover (protect?) their torsos. There are no faces on these body casts: where there should be eyes, noses and mouths there are blacked out spaces that may be read as masks or holes. When the work was installed at A-Space Gallery in Toronto, as part of the show *Don't Remain Silent*, the body casts were hung at different lengths above the ground and grouped in such a way that it was possible to walk around and between them without hindrance.

*Each body is a shout. All of them torches flaming with cries of terror,
cries that have assumed female bodies.*
(Delbo, 1995: 33)

Images of Katherine Zsolt's body casts press heavy on me, push for articulation. Behind my eyelids, i remember: rope that binds feet and holds bodies in suspension, hollowed out faces that recall to me a body emptied of its self, backs exposed without cover, hands and arms that seek concealment.

Bodies. Cast. Neither alive nor dead. The skin of another's memory wrapped around her body to approximate your form.

But hanging and faceless.

Another dying?

My own skin unwraps in remembrance.
Of that night. The nights. Face blurs at
the edge of past and present. Falls into
the recesses of memory.

I have come to think of Zsolt's body casts as that which lies beneath the ellipses in Gibson's prose-poem. They may be what is found when the scars bleed and the wounds (of deep memory) are exposed. Unlike Delbo's nightmares,¹⁷ however, from which she wakes, from which it is possible to repair enough (of her sense of now-self) for a semblance of continuity, there is no moment of waking inscribed into Zsolt's installation. Instead, it is (representative of) the moment of rupture left open. Of fourteen women at Ecole Polytechnique, there are now dead bodies; of fourteen women who had their flesh encased, the casing remains: in the parallel of this moment, it is as if time has been stopped. And--in its suspension--a witness may glimpse the physical imprint of the unbearable in the trace of (its) embodiment. In this, there is minimal refuge to common memory.¹⁸

¹⁷ I am recalling here a citation from Delbo's work in the previous chapter in which she writes: "[f]ortunately, in my anguish I cry out [from sleep]. The cry awakens me and I emerge from the nightmare exhausted. It takes days for everything to return to normal, for memory to be 'refilled' and for the skin of memory to repair itself" (in Langer, 1991: 7).

¹⁸ This is circumscribed of course by considering the installation in isolation and assuming that the one who is bearing witness is alone in this moment. Such considerations seem "obvious" to me as I sit at my computer, in the silence, surrounded by photographs and slides of Zsolt's work. I presume that were one to bear witness to her work in the context of the show, with others, "distractions" from deep memory may be more available. This point is more broadly relevant and may be extended to a recognition that how memorial responses work is always contextual--another reason, I would argue, for attending to how traumatic histories may be called up in an engagement.

my body breaks. under his hands. memory

pushes and the skin separating me from then, here from now, splits. flesh slips down to bone
where exhaustion etches. blood seeps through the cracks. dries on my lips by morning. nausea
spirals and puddles at a hollow in the bottom of my throat.

my body breaks and time escapes the bounds of linearity. past repeats under the cover
of present. arms raised above my head, muscles scream from the strain of memory. infant wrists
held easily in the grip of her father's fingers.

my body breaks as breath pushes for release from a
burdened mouth. no space. no air. respiratory muscles seize and convulse. i learn to live on
shallow breath, less movement, fewer cries.

Whereas previously in this chapter the writing has flowed as the ideas have come into
clarity, I/i have stumbled over, erased, rewritten, grasped again and again for a reading of Zsolt's
"Daughters and Sisters" that has some coherence. In reflecting on this, I recall how her
installation has haunted me for the past five years. At one point, I had a large-scale black and
white photograph of it on a wall in my home. I did not live easily beside it: (t)he(i)r remembered
bodies were an unsettling presence. And yet too I have been so drawn to these body casts--to the
beauty of this installation--to the light and the shadow and the texture of (casted) skin. What

strikes me is that I/i seem to be overwhelmed by the impact of Zsolt's body casts on me--barely, if at all, able to move *between* deep and common memory responses to the work.

To draw from the discussion in the previous chapter: this may be understood as a moment in which my (trauma) history is being pulled forward in some way by the installation and, thus, needs to be attended to as a part of what it is (for me) to bear witness to Zsolt's work and the impacts of the massacre. As one who has lived much of her life "deadened", I wonder if i am not compelled by the body casts as representations of that experience? For, as casts of women's bodies, these forms are "hollow": they do not reverberate with the sounds of blood moving through veins, breath in and out of lungs, muscle against flesh. These bodies are permanently still(ed). *i kept my body as still as possible.* And, yet, the skins in which they are wrapped--from which their shape is formed--were wrapped around another. In this sense they are not empty, but traced with life. *under layers of skin, i remember.* I wonder what they look like on the inside; are the texture of body hair, skin blemishes, bruises of history imprinted there? *the tissues beneath my skin writhe with the residues of trauma.*

These are the last words I utter for days.

I try again to sit at the computer to write. Before I have even called up this chapter file, my stomach is heaving and a cold sweat drips from my face. i crawl into the back of my body and wait for the sickness to pass. Gradually, I return enough to call a friend¹⁹ and ask tentatively if she might be interested in meeting today to talk over the work. She agrees. I read all the writing I have for this chapter out loud to her and in so doing feel my relation to the writing return. That she listens so well—pays such exquisite attention to the text—helps me to re-establish a witnessing relation: not only to Zsolt's "Daughters and Sisters", but also to my(traumatized)self. As I think through this experience, I am reminded of earlier discussions regarding a "collapse in witnessing" (Laub). I suggest that when i am *in* deep memory, with my traumatized subjectivity filling me, I cannot bear witness to myself—precisely, there is no witness there. In being heard by another, I was able to shift from that collapse and begin writing again. As Dori Laub explains, "the [giving of] testimony [in this case, reading and being present to my tellings] is the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims [her] position as a witness: reconstitutes the internal 'thou' and thus the possibility of a witness or listener inside [herself]" (1992b: 85).

I include my (re)telling here, because it is demonstrative of (some of) what might be at stake in bearing witness to another's translation of traumatic experience, when one engages from a traumatized subjectivity or from being otherwise impacted by trauma.²⁰ In this moment,

¹⁹ My deepest thanks to Kate McKenna for her friendship and companionship throughout this writing process: without her, it would have been far bleaker, stretched for with much less hope.

²⁰ I am reminded here, for example, of Roger Simon's understanding of historical memory as "memories of events that one did not experience personally but that have been embodied and can continue to be embodied through listening to and conversing with others, reading texts and viewing images" (1994: 7-8).

I recall my earlier supposition that in such witnessing relations, the viewer / listener may need to be borne witness to so as to continue her witnessing of another. Having begun this (in part through relation with my friend), I am able to re-engage Zsolt's installation: not to "move beyond" my earlier engagements, nor, however, to stay there, stilled (again) by the horror. Instead, having been heard in the depths of their effect, I am able to continue to be present to the translation of injustice that the body casts carry.

In re-establishing a witnessing relation, I consider how I have been responding to and writing about Zsolt's art. I notice, for example, that as I wrote this chapter, my understanding of how I would work with this installation has shifted. Originally, I anticipated including it in the earlier section on remembering as making (coherent) sense. As I wrote that section, however, I moved further and further from a position of "reading" the body casts in this way--i.e. as fourteen women's bodies that might be seen as aligned with (even substituted for) the fourteen massacred women. Bodies that, to reframe Gibson's phrase, might have been our own, and were (literally) formed from the shape of another fourteen women's bodies. Perhaps the blacked out faces and the rather similar body shapes and sizes suggest a reading that "any" (white) woman²¹ might have been "left there to bleed" (Wyrd Sisters), might have had her body casted and hung from the ceiling in remembrance, as witness.

While this is (perhaps) a relevant reading of Zsolt's installation, it is not one that I could have sustained earlier in the chapter. To my mind, to engage with the body casts first (or

²¹ I encode "any" (white) woman here to reference a particularity of these body casts, which are not only "white" in their plaster form, but also suggest White women's bodies physically. They are also slender women's bodies of (apparently) undifferentiated age, further breaking apart a sense of *any* woman's body. With this in mind, the body casts may be read as "forgetting" the differences in women's bodies in a privileging of alignment based on sameness.

predominantly) on this level would have been to refuse Zsolt's call to bear witness to the unbearable of the massacre: "a shock of the known, the 'I can't believe it' of the known that is not acknowledged--of *unbearable* reality" (Guillaumin, 1991: 13, emphasis in original). In heeding her call, staying present to the unbearable reality of the massacre, I was returned to my own unbearable: to what I/i live now as attempted annihilation. Again, this is a sense-making that reverberates with Laub's analysis. He notes: "[the] loss of the capacity to be a witness to oneself and thus to witness from the inside is perhaps the true meaning of annihilation" (1992b: 82). What I want to underscore, however, is that while my traumatized engagement *is* particular, it is *not* "unique". Perhaps the fourteen body casts, in their stillness, their exposure, recall for you the pain (in your life, other lives) of women, men and children herded into gas vans and chambers. Perhaps the hanging bodies remind you of the horrors of political torture. Perhaps they recall images of the bodies of your people murdered and hanging from trees. Perhaps ...

To take the physical imprint of the body casts into one's own flesh--not in a conflation of difference(s), but in allowing oneself to be impacted at emotional, visceral, sensory levels--is to potentially face profound loneliness, despair, terror, anxiety, and more. It is little wonder, then, that in such possibly re-configuring moments, a shift in focus to the level of common memory might be sought. It strikes me that such movement back and forth between deep and common memory is necessary to continuance--if one is not to shatter apart.

That said, art works that bear the imprint of and (may) propel one toward deep memory(ies) are crucial if the bearing of witness is a stance taken not only toward the dead, but also toward the living and the not yet. For I do not know how the unbearable of oppressive realities is to be transformed if it is not borne socially, publicly, collectively: lived "on the pulse"

(Kuhn), but no longer rendered individualized, pathologized. No longer borne alone or as a site of individual shame. It is in this sense that commemorative practices that evoke deep memories are necessary. If "healing" is to be possible, the effects of trauma need to be seen (and/or heard), taken in and borne through the actions of others—not only in the "private" confines of a therapeutic relationship or significant friendship, but also in the "public" contexts of classrooms, art galleries, and memorial events.

* * *

We shall not just hear through our ears but through our skin and stomach.
(Gladwell, 1005: 31)

Different from the deep piercing of Zsolt's body casts that leave me speechless, disoriented for days, the effect (on me) of The Wyrd Sisters' song "This Memory" is less sharp, but nonetheless significant: in the timbre of Nancy Reinhold's voice, in the rhythm of the guitar, in the images spun by the lyrics, my remembrance skin stretches to recall loss and mourning. Here present does not split from past: I remember, but I do not return to the rawness of that December. Instead, the feelings, thoughts, worries, sensations that occupied me then come to the surface—not as charged as they once were, but still potent enough for consideration.

At home, as I/i listen to the opening stanzas, of daily lives being lived without anticipation of danger, my breathing becomes patchy. (Remembering) living with the threat of violences that are not (altogether) random. But not knowing when. My memory skips to the lines: "turn on my TV / Listen as they're talking / About the news of a shooting spree". How many

women (and men) sat in front of televisions, listened to radios, in disbelief, shock, horror, fear as a narrative of what had happened hours before was pieced together out of the chaos of scattered, wounded, murdered bodies? I inhale deeper through the references to fathers and brothers who could have done the deed: not because I do not know this, but perhaps because I know it too well. Sometimes I forget that this line itself may be deeply disturbing to some, for whom it is (perhaps needs to be) inconceivable that fathers, brothers, sons and husbands may be culpable.²² I hear a plea in the lines, "don't let me lose this memory ... don't ever lose this memory". A recognition, perhaps, of how strong are the pulls to amnesia, even to common memory which remembers fourteen women were murdered on December 6 1989, but does not trace the horror of that memory.

On these terms, the song neither drops me into my own deep memories, nor keeps me at a distance from the shock and unbelievability of the massacre. I consider the elements of voice, lyric, music on "This Memory" for how they may carry forth the sense of shock, of loss. Unlike Gibson's installation, in which the columns of names and the prose-poem can be more clearly read as referencing different levels of memory, The Wyrd Sisters' translation does not break down along these lines. Instead, it seems to rest just above and just on the underside of the skin separating common and deep memory: a concurrency not necessarily suggested by a reading of the lyrics alone. It is the element of voice that I think I am grappling with here, as I suspect

²² My thanks to Kate McKenna for helping me to articulate this point. It strikes me also that at some level these lines *should* be deeply disturbing to me (and us all); if they are not, is this a signal of how i/we have learned to live with the usual as normal?

that what most compels me to this understanding is the presence of Nancy Reinhold's voice. By this, I want to reference, not only its existence--i.e. that is she singing this song, but much more than that: a sense of her being-ness that is translated into the voice and the poetics of "This Memory". Gladwell describes the voice as "an acoustic mobile tableau of a body in poetics" (1995: 30): to my hearing, Nancy Reinhold's vocal presence on "This Memory" is a tableau that is sombre, committed, concerned, serious, transformed; at other times, on other songs, it is joyous, strong, reflective, thoughtful. So, although the words of the lyrics she sings are closer to common memory articulations of the massacre, the voice of her singing shifts the register of these words (for me) onto the terrain of the body: felt, lived, known, not at a distance, but on the flesh.

* * *

*Of the visions that come to me waking and sleeping the most insistent is
your face. Your face, mirror-smooth and mirror-clear.*
(Winterson, 1992: 132)

I return to the faces: theirs, mine (what I imagine as yours). If we recall Felman's observation that a failure to witness is a failure to see (1992: 208), then it is interesting to consider again what *is* seen in Beaudoin's panel.

First: the photographs. Although the panel was created in memory of the fourteen murdered women, these are pre-massacre images. In the context of a memorial showing, viewers may be expected to bring an intertextual recognition that we/they are seeing the faces of women who are no longer alive; however, this recognition is not rendered explicit either in the panel itself nor through a title that may point toward such a reading. Thus, a circumscribed engagement

with the work would not necessarily turn on the recognition that one was placing one's face alongside the faces of fourteen massacred women. Structure is not a clue here either, as photographs may be grouped and framed together under many more circumstances than death. From this perspective, then, what is seen in Beaudoin's panel are faces of the living—including the viewer's own. These are not photographs from the morgue (however grotesque to imagine and perhaps this is not beside the point), which would at minimum carry forth a seeing of the effects of the killer's actions, and propel one into a witnessing relation with the dead that could not be glossed over by images that suggest otherwise. My point here is not that "more horror" is "better", or, at minimum, unproblematic. For this too is a fraught terrain. As Andrea Liss comments in relation to Holocaust photographs, "if too much horror is shown ... the desired retrospective bond between viewer and pictured can turn into codified positions of the pathetic and the privileged" (1993: 110). But perhaps my argument here is an exaggerated one: given the media coverage of the massacre and the likelihood that the photographs would call forth some recollection of the event, it is unlikely that viewers would see fifteen images of the living.

So, second: the mirror. Even if I begin from the assumption that those who engage do so with the knowledge that this is a memorial work, I remain cautious about what is being seen in that engagement. In the immediate aftermath of the murders, the mirror may well have been adequate to the task of reminding viewers of the(ir) horror. For example, seeing my own face in the mirror within the first six months or year following the massacre would have been sufficient, I expect, to make visible the physical imprint on me of that December night. Some six years later, however, I no longer find my(traumatized)self—in *relation* to the fourteen murdered women--rendered visible in that mirror. I suggest that the mirror does not necessarily

position one to see the rawness, the unspeakable of the massacre: where these might be brought forward, they depend almost entirely on the one who is looking and how her relation to past(s) and present(s) may be engaged in the seeing of herself in the mirror, in relation to the dead.

On the basis of these considerations, I suggest that the panel does not effectively translate the unbearable of the massacre into its structure and/or content. While it may be engaged from the level of deep memory, the possibility of bringing forth this level in relation to the massacre depends--almost entirely--upon witnesses and the discursive context of viewing. As those who bear witness are further and further removed from the initial horror of the killings, such engagement seems less likely.²³

* * *

The story of trauma ... attests to its endless impact on a life.
(Caruth, 1996: 7)

In (writing of) bearing witness to these works of Katherine Zsolt, Pati Beaudoin, Lin Gibson and The Wyrd Sisters, I/i have been differently compelled to follow the traces of common and deep memory as they surface in me and in relation to the images, words and music I encounter. What continues to disturb me (and appropriately so, I believe), as I turn toward

²³ This may shift if one were to engage the panel from within a present that is highly charged by other atrocities. Even this, however, would not necessarily return one to the unbearable of the massacre, and, thus, the specificity of these killings may be subsumed in the remembrance of others. I would argue that such engagements would not constitute an adequate bearing of witness to the massacre.

another memorial response, is the task of encountering the unbearable (Felman) when it is doubly imprinted in what I am bearing witness to and what I bring to that witnessing. If the shock of the unbearable is the shock of the already (un)known (to recast Guillaumin's phrasing), then what implications does this have for art practice, memorial response, pedagogy?

**Remembering (and) Memorial Vigils:
Voicing Past into Present**

memorial: 1. serving to preserve the memory of the dead or a past event.
2. of or involving memory. ~n. 3. something serving as a remembrance.
(Collins)

vigil: 1. a purposeful watch maintained, esp. at night, to guard, observe,
pray, etc. 2. the period of such a watch. ... 4. a period of sleeplessness;
insomnia. (Collins)

memorial vigils: 1. held at night, vigils to the memory of those women
murdered in Montreal. 2. A purposeful remembering against the risks of
amnesia. 3. Remembering that may instill periods of insomnia in women:
alert to the fears of "this might have been me", scared to sleep for fear of
the body's exposure if/when (left) unguarded.

Of all the feminist activities of remembrance, probably the most publicly visible and noted are the memorial vigils, which were held in the days following the women-hating massacre in 1989 and have been key markers of commemoration since. The vigils are an opportunity to mourn, grieve and remember in a public gathering the loss of the lives of the women in Montreal, and all women who have been, and continue to be, subject(ed) to violence.¹ As commemorative ceremonies, the vigils are more than a re-minder of the Montreal killings: I suspect that, for many, remembering on these nights is "doubly imprinted", to use Judith

¹ In the latter part of the sentence, I am referring to an understanding of the massacre that has shaped the substance of feminist memorial vigils. This does not exclude the possibility that some people may participate in a vigil without this understanding.

Plaskow's phrase (1990: 57), reverberating not only with memories of previous evenings of December 6, but also other moments of living (against) violence.

In this chapter, I organize my bearing of witness to feminist memorial vigils across four layers of "remembering": each a different engagement with voicing past into present. In the opening section, I evoke the sounds of women's voices as they have reverberated through six years of anniversaries marking the massacre. These voices provide a backdrop for the analytic substance of the chapter: in Remembering II, I explore memorial vigils as a site of and for the creation of a "community" of those who (may) bear witness. This section is followed by an articulation of remembering, from 1989 to the present, through a narrative of grieving, which moves across and between the levels of common and deep memory. This provides an introduction to the final layer of remembering: a consideration of the conditions of memorial vigils for readying those gathered to bear witness to the massacre's continuity and its unbearable. In this layer, I return to questions of voice in the form of critical reflections on a key strategy of remembrance: calling out the names of murdered women.

Remembering I:

Yet I know that she knows if it were not for the deep cry of the rebel and the long wail of the docile, no one would care about the hard and violent sounds that haunt our collective memory. (Nicole Brossard, 1991b: 100)

When I think of the memorial vigils held each year in remembrance of the women massacred in Montreal, I think of "the hard and violent sounds that haunt our collective

memory".² For it is the sound of those nights that stays with me long after I have returned home, warmed from the cold. The sound of women's voices: loud, clear, strong claims that the violences women live (with) at the hands of men are not acceptable. The sound of women's voices: in mourning, punctured with periods of silence, frightened, caught between tears. The sound of women's voices: screams, cries, wails of rage, disquiet, challenge, fury, pain. The sound of women's voices: dispersing from the memorial site, walking home, on the subway, at local bars and cafés, in classrooms the next evening, on television clips and in letters to the editor, over kitchen tables, at grocery store checkouts, as heads lie together on pillows. The voices that know the resound of what is hard and violent in women's lives. And too, there are women's voices not sounded out loud at the vigils, but perhaps whispered on occasion amongst those present: voices that curve against a gendered split: she hurts girls too, she sexually exploits women also, she complies with his demands.

Some of the voices I/i remember ... some of the words that inspire this continuing work ...

² While I am inspired by Brossard's words, I do not wish to cite, unproblematically, claims to a collective memory, which, left unspecified, can suggest a common or shared (understanding of) memory. I find the nuances of Roger Simon's interpretation of the term useful in this context. He writes: "[c]ollective memories are the effects of reflexive engagements with representations of the past in which history and biography are integrated into a frame of reference for living. While it is individuals that remember, not groups, I am emphasizing here the collective aspect of living memory in order to emphasize the organized, non-idiosyncratic quality of such memories" (1994: 8). Attending to collective memory as "organized [and] non-idiosyncratic" is a useful point of reference for the analysis developed in this chapter.

"14 women were murdered in Montreal on December 6, 1989. Women of every race and class are abused and killed every day by men they know. We mourn and work for change".³ "[On the morning of December 7, 1989, I hear a woman on a Montreal radio station say] 'I could not sleep last night'. I wonder how many women in this city could sleep last night?".⁴ "Grief for you has rebellion at its heart, it cannot simply mourn".⁵

"You're 30, you're 43, you're 50, you're reading the paper, or someone calls you, you can't believe it, you're numb, or you feel angry. You're a feminist. You've spent five, or 10, or 15 years going to meetings, organizing demos, publishing / writing / fundraising / speaking / marching. Suddenly, you're tired, or you're burnt out, or demoralized, and you cry for the deaths of 14 young women you've never met. You grieve also for the literal expression of a hatred for feminism that you know to be embedded in your culture. You feel targeted. Your heart feels cold".⁶

"A group of women, feminists I suppose, try to say something [at the first vigil in Montreal, 1989] over a megaphone, but they are told to shut-up, that this is not their issue, and they comply".⁷

"[THE KILLER] MAY HAVE PULLED THE TRIGGER BUT THE INSTITUTION LOADED THE GUN. ON DECEMBER 6TH WE WILL TAKE AWAY THEIR AMMUNITION. WOMEN ARE SICK AND TIRED: SICK of documenting and filing harassment complaints that go

³ Pamphlet, Women's Vigil, Toronto: December 6, 1991.

⁴ Woman's testimony in d'Souza et al, 1993.

⁵ Adrienne Rich, reprinted on memorial vigil program, Toronto: Women Won't Forget, December 6, 1991.

⁶ Marusia Bociurkiw, 1990: 7.

⁷ Woman's testimony in d'Souza et al, 1993.

nowhere; TIRED of the never ending stories of committees, sub-committees, reports, memos, letters, policies, meetings, panels and consultations that administrations use to pacify and exhaust us; TIRED of women in positions of power selling us out because they don't want to jeopardise their own privilege. We are SICK of hang-up phone calls, threatening letters, physical and sexual assaults, heterosexist annihilation and sexist and racist harassment. We are TIRED of defending feminism and social justice in classrooms. MOST OF ALL WE ARE SICK AND TIRED OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT US BEING USED AGAINST US. ... To commemorate December 6th this year [1995] we are asking women to take action against those who allow violence against women to continue on college and university campuses. We are calling for a province-wide demonstration, a show of strength by women, and a clear demand for action and accountability from college and university administrations.⁸

"For us, rape is not an oddity,
but a common-place.
I have had to fight over and over again for my life.
My life".⁹

"The months we have spent debating feminist theory, its focus on male violence, the need to go beyond the victim label on women to something more empowering, none of it has prepared us for this [the massacre]".¹⁰

"Every morning I woke up feeling ill.
My first thoughts were always the same-
fourteen women had been massacred in
Montreal. Even now, two weeks later the

⁸ The Alliance of Feminists Across Campuses, 1995, emphases in original.

⁹ Lee Maracle, reprinted on memorial vigil program, Toronto: Women Won't Forget, December 6, 1992.

¹⁰ Woman's testimony in d'Souza et al, 1993.

horror remains. Yesterday in the supermarket I saw their faces on a tabloid magazine at the checkout. I realized I was staring compulsively at them. They were very young and most of them were smiling. I also realized the woman behind me was staring at them too. We just shook our heads--a universal gesture of distress".¹¹

"So I've made myself a promise.
To honour the memory of those fourteen women killed,
I've promised myself that in the coming year
I'm going to commit fourteen extra acts of feminism.
And I invite you all to join me,
especially those of you who have never before
thought of yourselves as feminists,
and also those of you who have been active feminists
for many years and had been thinking lately
you'd done enough and it was time
to let others take your place".¹²

"How do you do it? How do we look deep
into the horror of this without flinching,
without denial? I fear that if I do, I will not
emerge. How do you keep from going under,
and what do you do with the pain? This pain
for which I can find no language. It spills
over the words and washes over me,
overwhelms me. How do I contain it?".¹³

¹¹ Joan Baril, 1990: np.

¹² Schmidt, 1990: 7.

¹³ Woman's testimony in d'Souza et al, 1993.

"They wanted to prohibit remembering it.
But they couldn't wipe the blood off
the windows of the Polytechnique.
Like live coals, it flared up every evening
at the very moment the University
loomed large
in the shadow of the cemetery".¹⁴

"To show solidarity with
feminists is to recognize
that men have dug an
unbelievable death trench
with their misogynist lies,
their phallogocentric
privilege, and the
'commonplace'
intimidation that exists
between women and
men."¹⁵

"I trace the curve of your jaw with a lover's
finger, knowing the hardest battle is only the
first. How to do what we need for our living
with honour and in love? We have chosen
each other, and at the edge of each other's
battles the war is the same. If we lose,
someday women's blood will congeal on a
dead planet. If we win, there is no
telling".¹⁶

¹⁴ Catherine Eveillard, 1991: 177.

¹⁵ Nicole Brossard, 1991a: 33.

¹⁶ Audre Lorde, quoted in d'Souza et al, 1993.

Remembering II:

By way of opening, I want to bring together observations by Shoshana Felman and Ora Avni to help me think about community in relation to memorial vigils. Felman states: "[m]emory is conjured here essentially in order to *address* another, to impress upon a listener, to *appeal* to a community" (1992: 204, emphasis in original). Avni observes: "[a] community is therefore as much the *result* of its speech acts as it is the necessary condition for their success" (Avni, 1995: 212, emphasis in original). If I consider feminist memorial vigils through Felman's articulation, what I am drawn to note is the appeal of testimony to feminist (and pro-feminist) communities that existed prior to the massacre. If I consider these same memorial events through Avni's suggestion, then I note that community might not (only) exist prior to the moment of speech acts, but be generated through the speaking and hearing of testimonies. If I hold both of their observations simultaneously, then what I am able to consider is that memorial vigils might be the site of two formations (and sedimentations) of community. It is precisely this doubled sense that I want to hold onto for exploring how memorial vigils generate relations between remembrance, witnessing and activism.

First, and briefly, what forms does the appeal of memory/ies to pre-existing communities take? In the context of the vigils I have attended,¹⁷ Felman's reference to speaking memory--so as to leave an impression on listeners--is accurate: women speak so as to affect those

¹⁷ The following discussion of feminist memorial vigils is based on my experiences and understandings of attending such memorial events in Toronto, either at Queen's Park or the University of Toronto. Based on coverage that I have read and seen of vigils in other sites, it seems there are some key similarities. However, my comments are specific and I ask that they be read as contextual, with possible resonance to other vigils.

who are gathered, to leave some mark on them/us, to propel (further) action on violences against women. Such an articulation of remembrance and/or change¹⁸ is also evident in program material: for example I have in front of me programs from the Women Won't Forget vigils in Toronto, all of which state in large type on the front cover: "WE HEREBY RECLAIM THE RIGHT OF ALL WOMEN TO LIVE IN HOPE AND NOT IN FEAR". The appeal from and to already existing communities is evident from the speakers lists, with women speaking often of and for their work against violences against women in specific communities, and the inclusion of well-recognized feminist voices cited on programs (Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Robin Morgan, Andrea Dworkin, bell hooks, Lee Maracle, Marge Piercy, Kathleen Barry, ...). In addition, there are those who attend: even in Toronto I have recognized many faces at the candlelight vigils, faces of those I know to be committed to and active in feminist and other struggles for social justice; I suspect this sense of recognition may be even more evident at vigils in other, perhaps smaller, sites. In these ways, I suggest the substance of memorial vigils assumes and calls upon the (prior) existence of feminist and womanist (Walker, 1990) communities.

Second, in the context of vigils, what form of community might also be (being) generated through testimonial address? Following Avni's observation, I suggest that (the possibility for) community is being formed precisely at the juncture of memory's speaking and hearing. Or, to translate this into the central language of this project: what is being formed (potentially) is a community of those who bear witness. While this community *may* include all

¹⁸ This has been a dominant feminist theme in response to the massacre that is not limited to memorial vigils, as noted in the above montage of voices. I am also thinking of Joss MacLennan's design, which has been used on posters, buttons, bookmarks, etc, which includes the words: "First mourn. Then work for change" (see the Resource Bibliography for details).

those who gather at a memorial vigil, it is unlikely. Such communities may come into being if, when and how those gathered take on the obligations of bearing witness. In this sense, I suggest that community may be formed on the basis of engagements in which those who witness do so because they/we take on the commitment to hear, be impressed by (in Felman's sense), and (continue to) re/tell what is seen and heard.¹⁹ While those who attend a vigil may be understood as poised to bear witness by their/our presence, presence is not enough. For, as Michael Roth writes, what is necessary is that one "assume a posture of receptivity" (1995: 223), by which he refers to a readiness to listen to the effects of the past, to see how the past is (still) present.²⁰ This is a readiness to hear and see the past of another not as outside of *but in relation to* oneself. As Roth argues, this is an act of piety: "the turning of oneself so as to be in relation to the past, to experience oneself as coming after (perhaps emerging out of or against) the past [that one did not suffer directly]" (16).²¹

By way of illustration, the presence that some men have claimed at vigils is a rather dramatic example of how presence cannot be presumed to be equated with a posture of

¹⁹ This is not to say that one necessarily commits oneself to bear witness at the levels discussed in this text for all those who speak; rather, the commitment, I think, in the context of each vigil, is to hear, take on an impression of and (continue to) re/tell at least one woman's speaking.

²⁰ I want to offer some qualification here. It may be that in the rawness of the aftershock of a traumatic event, presence *is* "enough": in this circumstance, presence is likely to mean a sense of being receptive to the effects of a past which is still highly palpable.

²¹ Since memorial vigils tend to be local events organized at the same time and place each anniversary, it might be anticipated that—some six years after the massacre—communities of witnesses may now also be shaped by a history of remembering. In this sense, a readiness to bear witness may be formed in part through a commitment to annually reinvest one's commitment to live in relation to the past.

receptivity. A number of incidents come to mind: Anne Bishop writes of an experience of a "young man" taking over the microphone "uninvited" at a memorial event in Halifax in 1990, and how this resonated with radio reports, in the days leading up to the anniversary that year, of "men taking over microphones at ... memorial rallies to shout abuse at women present, even to threaten them with a fate similar to the Montréal women" (1994: 105). Lisa Schmidt's (1990) reporting of vigils across the country in 1989 includes references to similar incidents. For example, a decision to hold a women-only vigil in Thunder Bay, Ontario, "resulted in the organizers being severely berated ... [for repeating] the murderer's actions of separating women and men" (7); in Victoria, the Status of Women Action Group received more than half a dozen messages on the answering machine "from men ... express[ing] in one form or another the need to 'finish off the gunman's work'" (7). In the context of the argument being developed in this section, such men are not poised to bear witness as an act of piety: to understand themselves in relation to a past they did not suffer and to bear the impression of a woman's telling of that suffering.

This is not to argue that men cannot bear witness to women's suffering, although I suggest that this requires a posture of receptivity that is not available within discourses that uphold masculinity as right to dominance. At this point, however, I am also cautious about the postures made possible within a "pro-feminist" discourse as it has been articulated in relation and response to the massacre. I am thinking particularly of the "White Ribbon Campaign" (an expression by men against men's violences against women), in which the recognition that men have a place in struggles to end the violences seems only the first step.²²

²² For a thoughtful (and, subsequently, controversial) consideration of this campaign, see Susan Cole, 1991.

In contrast to this stance, I have found the work of Bjorn Krondorfer (1995) useful. Although he is writing on the labour of reconfiguring relations between third generation Jews and Germans, much of what he offers has resonances within the context of this writing.²³ He notes, for example, that there is little available from which Germans may draw to learn about how to "relate to the Shoah emotionally" (33)--a relation that requires, in part, "learn[ing] how to mourn the absence of Jews in Germany (6). I offer that there are parallels here to violences against women, and specifically the massacre in Montreal: in the rush away from possible discursive association with the killer, there has been little evidence of men approaching the emotional impact for them of living in a society in which these murders (amongst others) were possible. To recast Krondorfer's argument, what is "at stake here is not just the 'correct' way of remembering the [massacre] but the identities of [women] and [men] themselves" (21).

To return to the main thread of my argument: how might one be active in the two layers of community (formation) at a memorial vigil? By way of illustration: I include myself as a member of feminist community and attend vigils knowing that there I will find some sense of being in the presence of others, who share dismay at the Montreal slaughters (and most likely also, a concern about violences against women in general), who have some commitment to

²³ It is also significant, however, that Krondorfer's sense of possibility for other rememberings comes in part in the recognition that third generation Jews and Germans are "distant enough in time from the Holocaust not to be paralysed by it, yet close enough to be emotionally attached to its memory" (18). This is clearly not the case for women and men in relation to the massacre and the violences that remain in its wake, and, I suspect, has particular implications for the work of bearing witness.

working for a different world.²⁴ Standing amongst others, I feel the impression of the words of women, spoken, called out, sung, as they express grief, outrage, fear, alarm, hope, urgency, solidarity, etc. At this level, I feel myself to be part of a feminist community remembering, mourning and responding to the massacre.²⁵

At a deeper level, however, what is the relation between this sense of community and my bearing witness to another woman's telling? That is, although the appeal of a speaking may be to a community (of listeners), the address and its impression is felt (and will be lived) differently by individual witnesses. Perhaps it is a mother who speaks her memories of her child murdered in Montreal, and I/i listen as a daughter wounded by and distanced from my own mother. Perhaps in this moment, the mother speaks from the well of her pain, distress, the ache in her of the death of her child, and I hear from the still gaping rawness of the suicide of my father, and my mother's complicity during and after his life. Perhaps the same mother speaks at a vigil the following year and I attend again. This time, the mother is more filled with her anger

²⁴ While this is not all I may desire, these are the broadest parameters of what might constitute (for me) a sense of feminist community on December 6.

²⁵ At this point in the chapter, I want to signal another layer of complexity that puts the analysis thus far under some strain. While I/i continue to believe it is imperative to understand the effects of traumatization in the lives of women, I am beginning to worry about its associated risks. I am concerned that there are times when this writing veers close to a position of inevitability in which women are, to borrow from Sharon Marcus, "define[d] ... by our violability" (1992: 387) or as "preconstituted victims" (Marcus: 391). This is not a position I would argue for explicitly, but I am nervous of its traces in my focus on what women have suffered—a focus that is repeated in part at feminist memorial vigils. I do not know at this point how to reconcile these concerns within the analysis, but suggest they are worth further consideration. My thanks to Kari Dehli for alerting me to this possible reading of the chapter and to directing me to the essay by Sharon Marcus.

than her grief and I am feeling a sense of hopelessness.²⁶

In each of these moments, what may be borne witness to will depend upon how I/i work through my relation to the mother's speaking, the impact (for me) of the earlier juncture on the later one, and (my engagements with) other speakings at and around the memorial vigils.²⁷ At issue here is a question of readiness: my own *and* the conditions for readiness that are created through vigils. When I consider my own receptivity to (this) mother ('s speaking), i wade through more than I can often bear. As I search for ways through, I come across an essay by Alice Walker and find within her words a composition of the betrayal, hope, respect, and distress that I/i experience. She states: "we mothers must stand by our daughters, and protect them from harm, using what wits we have left after five millennia of patriarchal destruction, domination and control" (1996: 172). And, she continues, "we daughters must risk losing the only love we instinctively [sic] feel we can't live without in order to be who we are, and I am convinced that this sends a message to our mothers to break their own chains, though they may be anchored in prehistory and attached to their own grandmother's hearts" (172). Walker speaks as a Black mother and daughter, positions of speaking in which chains have been metaphoric and literal; neither my mother nor I carry the literal legacy, but certainly the metaphor registers in me. Her words offer me a condition for readiness in my life—a way to hear my struggle and the mother's struggle as deeply connected, even though, at times, I/i have taken the brunt of that

²⁶ I offer this telling as one moment in the complexity of bearing witness—an instance of how gender cannot be assumed to provide a ground of commonality across differences.

²⁷ I am thinking here, for example, of media coverage, participation in other memorial events on the same anniversary, etc.

fight in my own mother's life.²⁸

And this returns me to the conditions for readiness created through the vigils. Michael Roth suggests that "[m]ourning, or the historical consciousness that results from it, is not a reparation; it is not replacing the dead but making a place for something else to be in relation to the past. This is the crucial part of the pain of surviving the dead, of consciously coming after them" (225). How might the vigils be(come) a place where the dead are borne in consciousness, in action? And, further, what are the conditions for bearing witness, what are the grounds for readiness, for and from which a community of witnesses may be formed? I return again to Roth who speaks of the need to create a "clearing ... in the present" (221) into which the dead are brought to mind. In his phrasing: "[t]he absence [of the dead] is made present for the community of mourners through a ritual that brings the dead to mind, to voice" (222). He is referring here to the Jewish ritual of Shivah, of mourning, which is observed for seven days after the burial of one who has died; I wonder about his observations in relation to the candlelight vigils for the massacred women. How do we (at and through vigils) bring to mind, to voice the women who were murdered in Montreal, and the women who have been slaughtered in the past year? What kinds of spaces do the memorial vigils, in their current form, create for those (un)consciously remembering the Montreal murders, bearing the pain(s) of survival? How do these spaces

²⁸ I am profoundly aware of the partiality of this telling, the meanings of which seem to lie more in the gaps between sentences than they do in what is said. As a writer, I was faced with two obvious choices: to say more (i can't) or to say something else entirely (i need to tell this). Since neither of these was adequate to a project in which I am attempting to bear witness to my self in my bearing of witness to others, I have needed to create a third option. And, thus, I offer a partial telling and this partial explanation: recognizing that this is an instance in which common memory is elusive, in which deep memory is still too much of my flesh to be transferred / translated on to the page. (For other tellings of this relation with (my) mother, see chapters 3 and 6.)

structure a relation to this past?

Remembering III:

To think through the conditions for readying those gathered to bear witness to the unbearable of the massacre *and* its continuity, I listen again to women's voices at and around the memorial vigils. Engaging their responses splits open the skin of (my) memory: returns me to the grief that wells in my chest, erupts. After a day of this work, i spend hours broken open, an ache in my heart so palpable that I find myself checking for bruises. I wake from a restless sleep, tired, unsettled, still raw, knowing that I cannot yet begin again. And so I attend to my need to be by water and go to a place where I have gone before to grieve and re-form some of the skin over memory. After even an hour (t)here, I feel my shoulders drop and my pulse is again steady.

I remember grieving--deep in the rawness of it. December 1989. At a memorial vigil at the University of Toronto, I stand with others--women and men--to honour the deaths of fourteen women murdered the evening before in Montreal. I/i am in shock, desperate, terrified. This is the first time I have heard "Testimony"²⁹ and I cry and cry at the refrain: *By our lives, be we spirit / By our hearts, be we women / By our eyes, be we open / By our hands, be we whole*. December 6. I stand at a vigil at Queen's Park, on legislature grounds. A friend and I hold each other as waves of mourning wash over us and pull away abruptly as the light of a news camera captures us as (someone else's) image. This part of the vigil is open to women and men. There are speeches by feminist activists. It is bone-deep cold. Promises from government representatives that action will be taken to stop violences against women hang in the air. Then there is a shift in the proceedings: women (not men) are invited to move across from

²⁹ This song was written and originally recorded by Ferron. I have not been able to find out who sung it at the memorial vigil I attended in 1989.

Queen's Park to the planned site of Everywoman's Garden, to "plant" wooden flowers in the name of women subject to men's violences.³⁰ The organizers are clear: this is an opportunity for women to mourn and express their grief with other women. Men are asked to stand aside. A circle forms around the site of the garden, rows deep. I look around me to see men standing amongst the women forming the circles. I am angry, dismayed, frightened. December 6. Word spreads amongst those gathered that more women have been murdered in Montreal in a copy-cat slaying. I find out later that this was rumour, not substantiated, but the possibility is so strong that fear encases me with the approach of each subsequent anniversary. For this too is the power of the legacy of the killings. December 6. I am at Philosopher's Walk at the University of Toronto. What I remember most clearly are the sway of lit candles in cupped hands, the site of red roses lain in memory, the gentle touch of my friends, my lover. There are speeches and songs. Women working in various sites speak of the massacre in a context of the more usual violences that burden the lives of women in their communities. Native women--lawyers--disabled women--poets--older women--translators--Southeast Asian women--activists--Black women--survivors--white women--counsellors--lesbians--songwriters--incarcerated women--musicians. December 6. On each occasion, women read the names of the women who were murdered in Montreal and all women who have been killed by men in Ontario in the past year. Each year, the list seems to get longer. Each year, I am struck by how many names I cannot, will not be able to, remember. December 6. For the first time, I do not go to a memorial vigil. For some weeks, my body has been reverberating with the aftershocks of the deepest remembering of my own history of violation to date. i am still so raw that i know i could not hear another woman's telling of violation, of death; i do not have the capacity to bear witness to her. Overwhelmed with despondency, at how little change there is, I fear that I may be pulled under. December 6. Teaching commitments mean I can't attend a candlelight vigil. Instead, I go to a daytime event at the University of Toronto. I feel mostly distanced from the proceedings and a possible community of witnesses. It strikes me that the elements of these memorial events have become routinized. Bearing witness some years after the murders is not the same as it was in the immediate aftermath or in the early years. Or, at least, not for those, I suspect, who have lived historically, profoundly aware that there is a pre- and post-massacre in feminist struggles to end violences against women. July 1996. Why can I/i

³⁰ This Garden was never actually installed.

grieve here at the water--alone with the rhythms of the earth³¹--when i
can no longer express my grief at memorial vigils?

Remembering IV:

I have been mulling over this last question for days now and suspect that my response lies, in part, with a need for space, for openings. Being with the water provides a certain condition for readiness in my life--a readiness, to recast Roth's language, to consciously *live with* the deadened of my self, to live with the pains of my own survival. In going to the water, I shift the conditions of my life momentarily with the knowledge that I/i will return to its ongoingness; in returning I do not "forget", nor do i, however, remain in the unbearable. I understand this as an experience of moving between levels of memory: living with the past as if present (the level of deep memory) and remembering the past from the present (the level of common memory).

Considered through this lens, what are the conditions of readiness for bearing witness to *both* continuity (common memory) *and* the unbearable (deep memory) at memorial vigils? How might these conditions have shifted over the past six years? By way of beginning to respond to these questions, I return to the narrative of my experience at vigils. With Roth's notion of a "clearing" in mind (into which the dead can be brought to voice in the present), I suggest that--in

³¹ I am aware that this phrasing may be read as evoking an essentializing reference to "the natural". This is not my intended meaning. Nor do I wish to call on a city / nature split as if it were unproblematic; what I am suggesting is that for someone who lives in downtown Toronto, going to the lake provides me with an opportunity to shift my relation to a past-present configuration--to make (more) room for living with the past and *in* the present.

the early years (1989-1991³²)—memorial vigils provided a clearing in the midst of claims that the killings were those of a madman. The vigils worked, for me, for instance, in terms of having a time and place to mourn, to make sense, to work through an event that ruptured my life, pierced the lives of many. I found solace in voices that sang grief and hope, appreciated the opportunity to hear women articulate, without falter, that these particular slaughters were only particular in the time, place and number of those murdered; they are not aberrant.

In those early years, memories of the slaughters on December 6, 1989 were still quite palpable at vigils. My sense of this time is that the unbearable, the horror of these killings seemed to vibrate among those gathered. In this context, it was not necessary for memorial vigils to provide conditions for readying those gathered to bear witness to the unbearable—for these were already the conditions of the rawness of the aftermath, especially for those consciously and unconsciously grappling with life *after* Montreal. What was necessary, instead, were conditions that readied those present to bear witness at the level of common memory, to a sense of continuity with a present and future. Thus, I suggest it is not surprising that speakers' efforts were mostly directed to articulating a sense of connection between the Montreal killings and other acts—articulations that were at the time, I believe, a necessary salve to the wounds of the slaughters in that they gave a way to make them comprehensible.

³² I suggest 1991 as the end marker, because this is the year that the federal government declared December 6 as a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This might be read as a strategy of incorporation into official historical memory, marking a shift away from interpretations of the massacre that had previously dominated. (Readers may recall the discussion in Chapter 2 for example on how the massacre was being remembered and understood prior to 1991 in mainstream media.) That said, I do not intend this marker as definitive; I suspect the sense of a clearing is formed as much by local, personal and community relations to remembrance as it is by the 1991 declaration.

However, now, more than six years after Montreal, I want to argue that recourse to continuity is a limited condition for readying those gathered to bear witness to the depth of the impact of the murders. Over the years, the broader conditions surrounding the massacre have shifted, partly because, I suspect, the unbearable is so hard to tolerate—to remember, to live with—in a society where so much violence, violation and oppression continue to be normative. In this context, articulations to common memory risk becoming consistent with dominant remembrance responses to the slaughters. When the memorializing at vigils is organized on the same structure now as it was in the earlier years, when the same remembrance strategy (making connections) is being repeated, there is little possibility of the vigils creating a clearing into which to bring the dead to voice, to mind (Roth). Instead, those gathered are called on to remember the dead *as past*; to, in the words of Joss MacLennan's poster-image: "*First mourn. Then work for change*" (see Resource Bibliography for details; emphases mine).³³

A key strategy that might be understood to mitigate this common memory level of remembering is the naming of the dead women. Of all the structured expressions of remembrance at vigils, this most directly attempts to bring the dead to voice and to mind; at minimum, calling

³³ My concern here is with the linearity of this phrasing, not its substance. While I have argued for a shift to anger in earlier work (see, for instance, forthcoming in *RFR*), I am now more cautious about ways of thinking that oppose grief and anger—particularly as a feminist-activist remembrance response. (For an excellent rethinking of a relation between mourning and activism for AIDS activists, see Crimp, 1990.) In more recent anniversary activities (1994-5), there has seemed to be a splitting between memorial events, so that alongside vigils there are actions that call women into civil protest (for example, the December 6th Block Brigade, Toronto, 1995), and calls in the media for anger over grief (I am reminded of Sunera Thobani's (re)framing of December 6 in 1994 as: "a day of anger, a day of crisis" [in Monsebraaten, 1994: A12]). I am wondering now about how to think of and work with anger at vigils as well as grief, as the former is as likely to well from deep memory as the latter. In this sense, may vigils not call us to witness the living, fighting back, as well as the dead? Could this not be a part of living with the dead?

out their names, may bring the past into the present (however fleetingly). How might this strategy be understood as creating a condition for bearing witness at the level of deep memory to the women slain?³⁴ I want to consider this question first through some of Judith Butler's comments, in her review of Edith Wyschogrod's *Spirit in Ashes*,³⁵ which render well, I think, how naming the dead has been taken up as a powerful strategy of and for remembrance. Butler notes that the author (drawing on the works of Hegel and Heidegger) argues for naming the dead as a poetic use of language that constitutes a "healing recollection of the past" (1988: 68). In Butler's summation, Wyschogrod is further arguing that, in grieving, the dead are "internally sustain[ed]" and "the act of naming ... is a way of reasserting kinship [or, in the context of the massacre, perhaps sisterhood]" (68). Butler continues: "[a]s Heidegger maintains, the name facilitates a 'calling forth' and occasions the possibility of moral response ... the poetic act of naming constitutes a testimonial, and this narrative of names becomes the internalized legacy of the

³⁴ I want to underscore again that my comments are contextual--in this instance, specific to the practice of naming the dead as I have heard it enacted at memorial vigils in Toronto. Other ways of representing such namings will evoke differently, as I suggest in my reworking of this strategy at the end of the section.

³⁵ Wyschogrod's (1985) text is a "contemporary reflection on mass death [as organized through Nazi death camps] as a kind of philosophical grieving, the work of mourning in which not only 'a lost one', but 'the lost many' must be incorporated into the selves that remain" (Butler, 1988: 60). Given the focus of her text, Wyschogrod is particularly concerned with the effects of naming the dead who were killed nameless. While the names had not been literally stripped from the women who were killed in Montreal (as they were for Jews and others incarcerated and slaughtered in the camps, identified only by a number), they were unknown for a period of time, and more importantly in the context of this argument, were nameless to their killer. The specificities of their own names were explicitly rendered obsolete in the killer's claim against "feminists". In offering these thoughts, I want to both suggest that a notion of naming the nameless is not irrelevant in the context of remembering the women murdered at the Polytechnique, and recognize that the separation of bodies from names was not as severe or totalizing.

survivor" (69).

Butler's questioning of this position is incisive. She asks:

But do names really "open" us to an intersubjective ground, or are they simply so many ruins which designate a history irrevocably lost? Do these names really signify for us the fullness of the lives that were lost, or are they so many tokens of what we cannot know ...? (69)

While I concur with the substance of Butler's questions, I want to recast her use of opposition and to suggest that all of her statements gesture toward a way of making sense of the complexity of the (possible) effects of naming the dead: there is no decisive choosing of one over another in the abstract. From this perspective, I want to take up Butler's questioning in relation to the practice of naming the dead women at memorial vigils. On one level, I am reminded, for example, of my experience at vigils, where the naming of murdered women occurs close to the end of a program of memorializing activities and is finished with a minute of silence. For the most part, this naming is not generated by those present, but is read off of an already researched list. What I have been most aware of during periods of naming (structured in this particular way) is a profound sense of dis-ease with this remembrance activity. Prior to this writing, I had understood my concerns as basically practical,³⁶ and potentially easily responded to. Now, however, I read these as merely illustrative of the deeper issues that Butler is raising: in prying apart the effects of this remembrance strategy, she nicely returns me to concerns of bearing

³⁶ I have worried in the past that there may be a dis-honouring of the dead in moments when either speaking and/or listening seemed troubled. I recall times, for example, when the reading of names was stumbled over, because they were unfamiliar on the lips of those who read; and, more times, of feeling that if the names are not known, there is a risk that they blur into one another in the barely varied rhythm of reading. From a concern with bearing witness as a labour in which one attends to the risks of collapsing boundaries between self and other, this is particularly problematic.

witness: of what is and can be borne, by whom and how.

Thus, on another level, Butler's questions suggest that there is no necessary relation between voicing the names of the dead and bringing them to mind (for those in the present). The most that might be anticipated is that the remembrance strategy calls attention to a past-present relation and marks a space of loss (of women's lives) among those gathered.³⁷ As Butler notes: "language cannot restore life, but it can reveal the historical ground of the speaker's own life, and, in the case of recollective naming, the historical lineage of one's own sociality" (69). In this sense, naming the dead is perhaps a condition for living historically (Avni): for living after and in consciousness of Montreal. Further, "recollective naming" (Butler) may be understood as "a speech act ... that becomes a *rallying point* for the utterer and the listeners" (Avni, 1995: 212, emphasis in original). From this perspective, the powerful effect of calling out the names of the dead lies not in the naming practice, or in its language, but in how it may be used to call on those gathered (as Roth notes in relation to Shiva) to "bring the past to the present [so as to] allow ourselves to experience what we have lost, and also what we are--that we are--despite this loss" (226).

Calling out the names of the dead, then, may be understood as a strategy of address: not, in this context, on Wyschogrod's terms as an address to the dead,³⁸ but an address to those

³⁷ Perhaps there are other possibilities, too: for instance, the names may mark a space into and from which those gathered may imagine the lives of the dead. That such imaginings may bear little to no relation to the actuality of what was lived is problematic on one level, but, on another, is indicative of the task of remembrance in which the attempt is to live with (the impacts of) the unbearable, rather than make (complete[d]) sense of the murder(s) of women.

³⁸ Butler explains that Wyschogrod, drawing on the work of Heidegger, postulates that "the personal name grounds the possibility of being *addressed*, and so 'the possibility of the self's answering for itself'" (68, emphasis in original).

gathered to "find a way of *living with the dead* as the past in the present" (Roth, 226, emphasis mine). Considered as a mode of address, calling out the names of the dead may take a different form than has been usual at vigils. I wonder, for example, about shifting away from a pre-established list to be read and creating space instead for those gathered to call out (as they feel it is timely) the names of the dead women to whom they/we wish to bear witness.³⁹ As a condition for readying those gathered to bear witness at the level of deep memory, I suggest this strategy may make more palpable a sense of who has been lost and that we are "despite this loss". I suspect, for example, that if names were called out across a site, marked by uneven spaces between one calling and the next (because the names would be spoken according to senses of being in the moment), voiced at different sound levels (perhaps some will whisper, some will scream, ...), then names may be more readily distinguished than if they were read by one or two women.⁴⁰

There are also considerations of the sound of the voices in relation to each other--building and faltering--and the possible physical reverberations of standing beside others as they call out names. I wonder, further, about the potential effects of working with this as a remembrance strategy earlier rather than later in proceedings, so that the vigil as a clearing, for

³⁹ My thanks to Ann Decter for a conversation (summer, 1996) in which she recalled an experience of being at an Outwrite Conference (in Boston, 1993), which opened with a request for those present to call out loud the names of those dead who they wished to evoke at the meetings. Her recollections inspired me to wonder about such a strategy at memorial vigils.

⁴⁰ In contrast to the reading of a previously established list, a risk of this strategy is that there would be no necessary collective recollection of the names of women murdered. Thus, a revised version of what I am suggesting here might be to make available at vigils a list from which those gathered could call out (and potentially echo, repeat) the names of the dead and/or add names not listed.

learning how to live with the dead in the present, is a central feature of why we gather. As a mode of address, I suggest that the names, called in this way, are more likely to be voiced from the level of deep memory and to provide a condition, therefore, for readying others at this level.⁴¹ To recall Felman again, perhaps the impression of memory may be felt more deeply if there was a possibility (not a requirement) for those gathered to repeat a name called as it reverberated in a listener.

I want to be cautious here too, however: I do not want these musings to slip into a solidified position that such an address would necessarily come from deep memory, and be felt at this level. Rather, I am suggesting that--from a "now" perspective, looking back over the past six years of anniversary vigils, given the increasing tendency toward the level of common memory formations--calling names as a mode of address might create a condition for living with the dead in the present. As broader conditions change, as the skin of memory is marked by fresh stains of blood, the conditions of vigils will (need to) continue to shift. Perhaps this too is the readiness that I/i am learning to bear, and calling on readers to consider: a readiness to tolerate unanticipated movement between the levels of common and deep memory.

⁴¹ As I wonder about this, I consider the strategy in contrast with the reading of names, which seems to me to be a tightly formed expression of common memory: the list is determined, ordered, and printed outside the context of its speaking; the names are read as a continuous flow and often with some emotional distance; the reading voice(s) emanate from a particular location among those gathered, rather than being spoken from anywhere; in following a list, there is little chance of the spontaneous, the unknown, breaking through. That common memory is not so tightly formed in practice is evident, I think, in how the names are read (see my comments previously, fn. 36).

**Re-considerations of the Women's Monument Project:
Remembering as Forgetting¹**

Alone is a place of unrecorded longing or impatience or exhaustion maybe and nobody there to ask why so sad this place she visits with resolve but stone is precarious in wind and she longs for places still where words are not like scars infinite in breadth but her head is big and full of knowing the limits of possibility her hand to her head in not wanting and wanting to finish what she started. (nathalie stephens, 1996: 69)

At an earlier point in this writing, it struck me as noteworthy that my work and life over the past few years have been oriented to concerns of remembrance--when it is forgetting that is much more familiar to me. As I approach this final chapter on studies in bearing witness, I am reminded of this observation; for the more I/i engage with the Women's Monument Project--and the winning design, "Marker of Change", by Beth Alber--the more I/i find myself wondering about remembrance's other side: forgetting. There are two key reasons for this. First, following the method in previous chapters, I began from a commitment to bear witness to the Project mindful of my trauma history, and, in my grapplings, it is the issue of forgetting that has continued to compel me. Second, since there is no legacy in Canada of permanent national memorials to women murdered by men (or other acts of violence) as part of daily oppression, the significance of the Monument Project lies as much, I think, with remembrance as forgetting--

¹ My approach in this chapter to monuments as a particular public art practice is informed at a broad level by James Young's text, *The Texture of Memory*. While I cite direct reference to this text frequently in the chapter, I also want to recognize in a more general way how important his work has been to me: as a reader interested in Holocaust memorials and as a writer working across sites for remembering trauma.

and I want to examine this dimension further.

My approach here is resonant with conceptualizations of (traumatic) remembering as necessarily, and foremost, a forgetting (Caruth, 1995; Felman and Laub, 1992; Huyssen, 1993). To recall Cathy Caruth's argument: "[t]he historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (1995: 8). Vera Schwarcz offers a sense of the palpability of this power in her observations on "the survivor-rememberer"; she states, "[f]or such a person, memory is not a heroic gesture. It is what slips out in moments when the tyranny of habitual forgetting relaxes a bit" (1994: 48). What both of these writers effectively underscore is that forgetting is a structuring presence itself—it is not, contrary to dominant articulations, remembering's empty opposite. Given this, "where are", to cite Yerusalmi, "the lines to be drawn [between remembering and forgetting]? ... What should we remember, what can we afford to forget, what must we forget?" (1982: 107).

I cannot approach the magnitude of such questions in this chapter, but I propose to hold them as backdrop to what is offered here: for, as much as i want to refuse any consideration of "what we must forget", I am deeply aware that what I live with most *is* forgetting, what I/i struggle with most often is that I(i?) do not remember. From this perspective, I have begun to wonder if the relation between common and deep memory may be understood not only as a relation of remembrance, but also as a relation of forgetting: where what is remembered at one level is simultaneously a forgetting of what is remembered at the other level. How may this conceptualization amplify an understanding of remembering *as* forgetting?

This question shapes the dominant lens through which I will (write about) bear(ing)

witness to the Women's Monument Project. Since the monument is still in the process of creation and I have not had geographic or social proximity to the development process in Vancouver, my analysis depends upon publicly circulated representations of—and in response to—the Project. Some of these are materials developed by the Monument Committee (fundraising brochures; the Design Competition Guidelines); others are reports on the Project or criticisms of it (newspaper articles, letters to the editor, a radio talk show, an article in a feminist art magazine); some are from my attendance at relevant events (talks and an art show); others are from artists who submitted designs (most especially, Beth Alber's winning proposal). While these have proved to be rich resources, I am mindful that I am writing prior to the completion of the monument and the remembrance responses it may elicit, which will themselves be shaped by how the monument is framed in unveiling ceremonies and accompanying media representations.² I am also acutely aware that, of all my engagements with remembrance representations in this document, my bearing of witness to the monument has the most at stake. For my writing is not only a commentary on feminist memorials, it is also an attempt to animate a particular layer of their memory work: an animation that in the case of the monument is being offered on the cusp of its installation. It is, thus, an exciting and an unnerving time to be writing.

I begin by mapping a sense of the Women's Monument Project as it is developed within the terms of the Design Guidelines and the winning proposal by Beth Alber. Using this discussion as my point of reference, I offer four layers of reconsideration regarding: the purpose of this public memorial, the substance of memory it translates, the memorial site, and the risks

² This timing creates a particular partiality to the writing and I look forward to the next stage of developments for how they will layer the perspective articulated here.

associated with a public monument. In each of these layers of reconsideration, I attend first, to how the Guidelines shape what is—and is not--remembered in the monument, and, second, how Alber's design might be rethought if what has been forgotten is also to be remembered.

What I offer here needs to be guided by two central points of caution. First, I recognize that aspects of my argument may not sit well with those who have invested years of time, energy, and political vision into the creation of the Monument Project. I do not intend any disrespect of that work, *and* I believe that there is still much to wonder about in creating public art as a remembrance response to the massacre. Second, the wonderings I offer may at times read to you as a closing down of the indeterminate ways in which "Marker of Change" may be(come) meaningful for a visitor. This is a difficult issue. On the one hand, I imagine that the monument, in its materiality, its visual openness, will invite a diversity of witnessings.³ On the other hand, I am concerned about the ways in which the monument has been shaped—and is being positioned--discursively. In attending to the discursive terms that have been mobilized through the Project (from the inception of the Design Guidelines to the fundraising brochures), I am not turning away from the monument, but turning toward it anew--through other terms for thinking about this practice and form of remembrance, for bearing witness to the unbearable.

³ In this, I am recalling also Daphne Bardahl's observation on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. that: "the open-endedness of the design itself conveys the message that a unified, monolithic statement about the war cannot be made" (1994: 93).

Some Background:

Given the particular conceptualizations being developed in this document, my analytic interest with the Monument Project begins with the Design Competition Guidelines (referred to in this text as the Guidelines) that women artists and architects were required to follow in their submissions.⁴ In assuming that the final design is not separable from these Guidelines, I am interested in how this discursive framing has shaped the (stone) form of the monument itself. A useful orienting point for this discussion is the summary section, "Artist Guidelines", which opens with the following statement: "[g]iven the opportunity to permanently mark our grief and outrage over the murder of women, how do you envision a monument dedicated to their memory?"⁵ This question is followed by a detailed list of criteria, encapsulated here.

First, the artist guidelines suggest that a Women's Monument "should involve the viewer, bearing in mind the potential of public art to initiate social change"; provide a place for "an individual / contemplative experience as well as a public gathering"; "respond to the challenge" of being "accessible 24 hours a day"; "be permanent and not subject to deterioration due to weather, pollution, or vandalism". Further, the Women's Monument "must include the dedication" which lists the full names of the fourteen women murdered in Montreal, followed by the line: "murdered December 6, 1989, Université de Montréal", and then: "We, their sisters and

⁴ One of the Monument Committee's positions was that only women were eligible to enter the design competition. They cite two key reasons for this decision: the history of women's exclusion from the creation of public art in Canada, and the topic of the monument--violence against women (Guidelines, 9). For further background on the Women's Monument Project, see the Resource Bibliography.

⁵ This citation is from the Guidelines, 14; all subsequent references in this section are from the Guidelines, page 14, unless otherwise indicated.

brothers, remember, and work for a better world. In memory and in grief for all the women who have been murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours" (14-15). The design must incorporate ways to represent this dedication numerous times as it will be "translated into a number of languages [including] Braille" (15).

The work should further "recognize contextual issues of the site such as climate, view, the surrounding trees, buildings and neighbourhoods, some of which have a Heritage designation. The original park design should be considered in the Monument design" (15). The Monument design should be "accessible to persons with disabilities", have "no sharp or jagged edges" and consider issues of "lighting and visibility". Lastly, the Monument itself or the site "must include the names of the contributors", which in the Guidelines is estimated at 5,000 (15), and has since been revised to between 7,000 and 8,000 (Alber, 1995).

These guidelines can be read as a template directing artists to what they should (and should not) consider in creating a monument that bears witness to--translates--the injustice of the massacre of fourteen women in Montreal and all women murdered by men. The dimensions of this template can be grouped under four broad categories: the substance of memory (the dedication, its translation, names of contributors); the purpose of this public memorial (to invite contemplation, create a place for gathering, initiate social change); the memorial site (lighting, safety, access, neighbourhood, park design); and, the risks associated with a public monument (an un-monitored public space, climate, the potential for vandalism). While these seem at first glance to be the key components of consideration in the development of any memorial--what is to be remembered (substance), why (purpose), where (site) and with what considerations (risks)--I

suggest that the absence of *how* is noteworthy.⁶ For, engaged at a conceptual (rather than practical) level, how considerations may direct attention to remembrance as problematic and thus open to question the substance, purpose, site and risks of a monument. To explore this point in some detail, I will re-consider each of the four categories for what artists were *not* directed to bear witness to—remember and translate—in the creation of this monument, and how Alber's design may be rethought from this perspective.

First, and in relation to this mapping from the Guidelines, what is the shape and substance of the winning design in the terms presented by Alber⁷ and the Monument Committee⁸? The key element of Alber's "Marker of Change" are fourteen pink granite slabs,⁹

⁶ There are two places in the Guidelines where the *how* of remembrance is gestured toward. First, the Guidelines open with the following words: "[m]onuments have traditionally been built to publicly remember figures and events in history that men have considered important. How would a Women's Monument be different?" (1). Second, as noted earlier, the summary section under discussion here begins with the question: "[g]iven the opportunity to permanently mark our grief and outrage over the murder of women, how do you envision a monument dedicated to their memory?" (4). While both are provocative questions, which could I suspect have yielded a rich discussion, neither is contemplated in the Guidelines any further.

⁷ My thanks to Beth Alber for providing me with a copy of her proposal to the Monument Committee. It has been an invaluable resource for developing the nuances of the analysis presented in this chapter. Since the copy I have is neither dated nor paginated, all references to Alber's proposal are merely cited to the document. To avoid cumbersome referencing in the text, descriptions in this section are from the Proposal, unless stated otherwise.

⁸ Over the years, the Project has produced three fundraising brochures. For clarity and ease of reference, since the brochures are not dated, I have assigned a number to each brochure that references the order of their publication. Brochure 3 was produced after the Jury had chosen Alber's design and is the one referred to in this section of the text.

⁹ I want to draw attention to a distinction between Alber's language and the language that has been put into place through literature developed by the Monument Committee. In her proposal, Alber uses the language of slab and form, suggesting "bench" as a *possible* interpretation. However, the brochure, detailing "Marker of Change", describes the forms *as* benches. I suggest that this is not an insignificant shift in language and meaning: a point I will return to.

equally spaced around a 300 foot circle. The stone circle is intended to recall "the great stone circles of the matriarchal societies of the iron age in England [which] still stand today and have collected a patina of time which reflects their place and history". Each granite form will be "raised six inches off the ground on two plinths of the same material". Horizontal, rather than vertical forms, each "solid mass of stone", cut at lengths of "five and a half feet", will draw reference to fallen female bodies. "A shallow, subtle and textured" oval will be carved into the top surface of each stone form, to "serve as a reservoir for collected water and a vessel of memory--a collection of tears". On each granite form, the name of one of the women murdered in Montreal will be incised into the surface facing the inside of the circle. Seven of the slabs will have the dedication cut into the outside face--each in a different language (Brochure 3¹⁰). The names of the contributors will be "letter punched" into ceramic tiles, laid into the ground in a "continuous ring", starting two feet behind the granite circle.

In her Proposal, Alber describes the monument as "designed to create a feeling of rest and contemplation [with] a quiet but questioning appearance". It is intended to "encourage an individual to stop and rest, or to be a meeting place for larger gatherings or functions"--both of which are made possible by the space between each form. In the Brochure, the design is described as offering "a contemplative setting for the remembrance of women and the honouring of women's lives". The text continues: "[i]t will be a place where women and men can dream

¹⁰ According to Alber (personal communication, October 1996), decisions regarding the languages in which to translate the dedication have still not been settled at the time of this writing. I would think that there are two obvious and contradictory pulls here: on the one hand, the languages chosen for the dedication are significant in that they "create constituencies" (Young, 1993: 30) from the "public" that will engage the monument. On the other hand, there is no way to be "representative" of all the languages in which murdered women may be remembered.

of--and work for--change". Of the clay tiles, Alber writes, "[t]he unending circle of names ... [will] act as a 'frame' for the proposed Women's Monument--a protection, a caring gesture". This point is extended in the Brochure in which the tiles are positioned as "permanently affirming support for a world without violence".

To recall the analytic thread of previous chapters, Alber's monument may be understood as readying those who engage it to bear witness at the level of common memory. I suggest this for the following reasons: each of the granite forms is the same size and shape, positioned evenly around a circle; each form will be honed and polished to create smooth surfaces; the oval on each will be shallow enough to suggest a depression in the stone, but not a cavity; the dedication is expressed in a language that positions a unifying thread in the murder of women by men and maintains a temporal distinction between past and present; the contributors names are to be arranged in a continuous pattern. This is remembrance as contemplation, as honouring, for continuity, where grief is named (the word is incised into stone) but is not given form. This is not a translation of the "physical imprint" (Langer) of deep memory: there are no ruptures in the design, no element unsettles others, rawness is polished over.

While there is an aesthetic argument for the monument in its current form--from the models and artist images I have seen, it seems that it will be quite beautiful--the monument risks being so "pleasing ... that it--and memory--[may] recede into the landscape (and oblivion) altogether" (Young, 1993: 7). In response to such risk, Marianne Doezma offers a rather different notion of aesthetics in relation to monuments. She argues: "[t]he public monument ... has a responsibility apart from its qualities as a work of art. It is not only the private expression of an individual artist, it is also a work of art created for the public and therefore can and should be

evaluated in terms of its capacity to generate human reactions" (in Young: 13). With this perspective in mind, I am drawn to engage "Marker of Change" (as shaped by the Design Guidelines) pedagogically: to consider *how* (in readying those who engage it to bear witness at the level of common memory) it produces a forgetting of what also needs to be remembered about the massacre and "all the women who have been murdered by men": the unbearable that needs to be borne if we (as a society) "are to experience what we have lost, and also, what we are--that we are--despite this loss" (Roth, 1995: 226). From this position, I return to the four categories articulated by the Design Guidelines--purpose, substance, site and risks--to think through the monument's dimensions of forgetting.

my body breaks under his hands. memory pushes and the skin separating me from then, here from now, splits. i remember what it was to have my mother forget me. forget the blood dried to my lips by morning cracked with fear (hers, mine) filled with the shame she could not bear. forget who etched my inner thighs with a deep bruising. forget the hatred disgust loathing of self she taught me to remember. *be a good girl. do what daddy wants.* my mother's forgettings wound themselves into my flesh until they became my own. and it is she who now remembers with ease: i was my father's favourite.

This is the knowledge of forgetting that intersects with my bearing of witness to the monument project: causes my stomach to ache with the impacts of forgetting, makes me suspicious of common memory claims to remembrance, pushes me to attend to what is remembered for how it forgets what is not.

Reconsideration I, the purpose of a monument:

In addition to the Guidelines, which outline a sense of purpose,¹¹ the fundraising brochures, produced by the Project Committee, provide a more elaborated reasoning for the Monument: proffering the dual axes of a concern with violences against women and the imperative to remember. While I will consider the first axis at a later point, my interest here is with the statements regarding the monument as a site of and for remembrance. In reading across the brochures, what I notice is a shifting articulation of the relation between a monument, remembrance and change. Let me detail this process.

In the first two brochures, the following statement appears: "[t]he Women's Monument will serve as a symbol of remembrance and a call for change. It will give us a place to gather and contemplate. A place from which to say, 'Never Again'""¹² (Brochures 1 & 2). In the third brochure, there is a subtle repositioning in this statement to: "[t]his monument will be a national symbol of remembrance, of healing, and of change--a place from which women and men can say 'Never Again'" (Brochure 3). I suggest the shift from "serve as a symbol of" and "be a national

¹¹ These were listed above in citations from the summary section of the Guidelines. An expanded reference to the items is documented in the "Project Concept" section, which includes the following statements: [The Women's Monument] will provide a focus for healing, a tangible symbol of remembrance and a site for many forms of women's resistance to male violence. The Women's Monument will: provide a place for large gatherings and also allow for quiet, individual contemplation; in some way, allow visitors to interact with the art work; promote dignity and respect for the lives of women; strengthen public resolve to end violence against women" (3).

¹² This phrase, of course, has currency beyond the Women's Monument Project and the massacre in Montreal. James Young's insight into the use of this phrase in relation to a Holocaust memorial is worth keeping in mind. He writes: "[w]hat would be 'never again', however, depend[s] upon how the memorial itself [will] be remembered" (363).

symbol of" is significant: where the former may be read as recognizing that the representational form of the monument serves remembrance (but does not itself remember), the latter positions the representation *as* the site of memory. Moreover, it is positioned as a symbol of change rather than the original call for change--suggesting (to me) that change is already incorporated into the creation of the monument,¹³ rather than an ongoing site of struggle (which might be marked in some way by the granite forms).

In the context of this shift, other statements appearing in the first brochure are deleted from the second and third. I note particularly: "[w]e want the murder of women to stop" (Brochure 1, cover), and "[t]he Women's Monument will be a visible and permanent reminder to concerned women and men that the violence will not end until each of us commits to stopping it in our society" (Brochure 1¹⁴). Although neither of these statements appear in subsequent brochures, a less direct version of the latter comment remains in the second, but it too has been removed by the third: "[w]e need to remind society of how much remains to be done to make our world safe for women. We see the monument as part of the solution" (Brochures 1 & 2). In the third brochure, the equivalent statement takes the following form, under a sub-title, "Why Name Male Violence?":¹⁵

¹³ Given that there has not been a history of permanent national memorials to women murdered by men in this country, it could be argued that the monument incorporates change in this sense. I would not disagree with this. However, since the monument was conceived as a response to violences against women, particularly murder, as a social issue, I suggest there is a broader interpretation of change being referenced by the brochures.

¹⁴ It is also noteworthy that this statement appears in a sub-section, entitled "violence against women": a title that does not appear in the other brochures at all.

¹⁵ As I will discuss in the following section, the aspect of the Monument Project that has been conceived as controversial is the phrase in the dedication: "all the women who have been murdered by men". In this context, it makes sense for there to be a section in the third brochure

We are all aware of the systemic violence against women in our society and we would all like to see this violence end. But, in order to effect change and to find a solution, we must first identify the problem. By naming the problem of male violence in the Monument dedication, we are taking a significant step toward change and a better world for all of us. (Brochure 3)

I recognize that the shifting tone of these statements and the moves from an activist "we" to an all-encompassing "we" of Canadian society are not separate from the conditions of fundraising that the Monument Project has faced.¹⁶ Through the lens of interest in this chapter, however, such shifts are illustrative of how the Monument Committee has been caught in remembering as forgetting: even at the level of detailing the purpose for a Women's Monument. For, when each brochure is produced without recognition of the shifts in remembrance politics that the Monument Committee has negotiated and put into place, they can be read as documents to memory's erasure as much as to its presence. In other words, the brochures are not only *about* remembering, they are also documents *of* forgetting.

addressing the Project's position on the naming of male violence. My concerns are with the content of this address.

¹⁶ The Project Committee has been faced with a key tension: generating funds for a monument that addresses violence against women as a social issue, when they are being positioned (by some) as a "special interest group" that should not have access to "taxpayers' money". Ted White, a Reform Party MP for North Vancouver, has been particularly vocal in this stance, arguing against the Monument Project's application for a \$33,000 UIC top-up grant, offered through the federal Human Resources Development Program (Dafoe, 1994; McDowell on CBC, 1994). Presumably White's comments were effective, as the Project was denied this funding (Gale, 1994: A24). White has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the monument, describing it as "strongly anti-male" and "openly offensive" (in Dafoe, 1994: C16). (See also a later footnote regarding the controversy over the phrase in the dedication, "murdered by men".)

Will the skin of memory split on the polished smooth tombs,¹⁷ though there are no ragged edges, nothing from which to tear? Will the shallow, curved depressions on the surface of each form serve as gestures to memory's incomplete, slowly tug at the skin covering the unbearable? If the recesses are filled (with rain water, leaves, sediment, garbage, snow ...), will the(se) elisions in memory be covered over? Will the skin of memory begin to thin, give way, as tomb after tomb comes into one's vision, as one stands in the centre of the circle, surrounded by stones to the dead? And if the skin of memory does rupture, what will become of the memories spilled there? Buried in the tombs? In the landscape? More dead to forget?

If the fundraising brochures and the monument design are taken as two related representations of the Project Committee, how might purpose be reconsidered in light of remembrance as layered and nuanced, rather than fixed and static? In this context, I have been inspired by developments in countermonument work, particularly as this is given expression in James Young's discussion of countermonuments in contemporary Germany. He states:

[w]ith audacious simplicity, the countermonument ... flouts any number of cherished memorial conventions: its aim is not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine, but to invite its own violation and desanctification; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet. (1993: 30)

¹⁷ Alber suggests the granite forms may be benches or sarcophagi (tombs). See my discussion in sub-section Reconsideration III, below.

In reversing the assumptions of commemoration's purpose, countermonuments direct attention to the partiality of remembrance and recognize memory's dynamic relation to forgetting.

(Re)engaging the Monument Project (and Alber's design) through this frame allows me to see more fully how purpose has been rendered. While, at first glance, the monument's purpose does not appear to fall completely into Young's observations on modernist monument conventions, I suggest that these do form the dominant conceptualizing frame. Some points are immediately clear: the Guidelines stipulate that the monument should be fixed, unchanging, everlasting and remain pristine. Whether the monument is designed to console or provoke, how it will engage passersby, and where the burden of memory lies, however, require further consideration. Part of what is at issue here is interpretation of the terms themselves: for instance, I imagine that the Committee would claim the monument as provocative--in terms of provoking social change--whereas I/i find the chosen design (again, as shaped by the Guidelines) to be mostly about consolation--where memory is not (to be) provoked but contemplated, honoured within the parameters of a "common" social understanding of the event of the massacre and violences against women in general. This is not, for example, a monument that gestures to the "hazards in memory itself, which can jeopardize [a] current a sense of well-being" (Young: 124), or a monument that suggests memory may already be traumatic. From this perspective, the monument offers little (to my mind) to ready those who engage it to act for change.

Similarly, while the Guidelines suggest that the design "should involve the viewer" (14) and Alber describes "Marker of Change" as having a "quiet but questioning appearance" (Proposal), there is nothing in the final design that "demand[s] interaction". Instead, I fear that it may indeed become merely a place on which to rest: a possibility that is reinforced, I would

argue, by interpreting the granite forms as benches.¹⁸ Again, to recall James Young, there is little chance in this that passersby will be confronted with the work of remembering or be engaged in "grasp[ing] their own lives and surroundings anew in light of a memorialized past" (128). In this context, I/i worry that the monument will appear to hold memory itself, "reliev[ing] us [and I would add, differently] of the memory-burden we should be carrying" (Young: 127). In the smooth, peaceful appearance of the design there is indeed a gracious acceptance of memory.

While a countermonument perspective, thus, helps me to identify--bring to the fore--the assumptions of memorialization that the Monument Project depends upon, I want to use it for more than this. For my interest is not in discrediting the monument, but in working with this layer of critique in the practice of bearing witness to the common *and* deep memory impacts of the massacre and "all the women who have been murdered by men". To bear witness, then, to what is remembered and what is forgotten and how--and to reconsider the elements of memorialization from this perspective.

¹⁸ This too is layered, however. As Beth Alber has noted (personal communication, October 1996), the hard granite of the forms will not be comfortable to sit on. From a perspective concerned with memory's contemplation, this may be read as problematic in that visitors are unlikely to linger. But, discomfort is not necessarily inconsistent with remembering--particularly from an interest in approaching the deep memory impressions of the massacre.

Reconsideration II, the substance of memory:

It may also be true that the surest engagement with memory lies in its perpetual irresolution ... which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end. (Young: 21)

I have suggested above that the focus for the substance of memory lies with the inscription of the dedication and the naming of contributors.¹⁹ In the Guidelines, the dedication is prefaced with these statements: "[i]n order to: recognize the historical importance of the mass shooting at the Université de Montréal in escalating the struggle for an end to violence against women in Canada; place this loss in the context of the many women lost; and honour and commemorate each life, the following dedication will be located at the site"²⁰ (7). Interestingly, there is no sequence of points to support the inclusion of contributors' names in the design; merely the following statement appears: "[t]he Women's Monument itself, or the monument site,

¹⁹ My understanding here has been generated from a reading of the Guidelines. It might be argued that Alber's design offers an additional element of substance through the physical gesture of the fourteen granite forms to fallen women's bodies. However, I suggest that not only is this reference extremely subtle to begin with, but also further weakened in discursive positionings of the granite forms as benches.

²⁰ These short-form points are given slight elaboration in the fundraising brochures, which draw on three key discursive strands to articulate the Monument Committee's position in relation to violence against women and murder in particular. First, direct reference to the murder of fourteen women at École Polytechnique describes it as "a tragedy of immeasurable proportions" (Brochures 1 & 2) and "the terrible tragedy" (Brochure 3). Second, this massacre is located in a context of violence against women: "[t]he murder of women forces us to take a hard look at the social attitudes that make these murders possible. It is these same attitudes that spawn all forms of violence against women" (Brochure 1); "[t]he extreme end of the spectrum of violence against women, the murder of women, is rarely talked about in our society" (Brochure 3). Third, violence against women is positioned as a social issue: "[w]e are all touched by violence against women. The victims are our mothers, our daughters, our sisters. Our friends and our lovers. The victims are us" (Brochure 1); "[v]iolence is a national concern. With so many of us now deeply concerned, Canadians country wide are publicly demonstrating that violence against women in our society must stop" (Brochure 2).

must include the names of the contributors to the project. We expect to include the full names of approximately 5,000 individuals and organizations whose names represent a commitment to the goals of the project and not just an indication of financial contribution" (Guidelines: 15). I want to reconsider each of these elements from the perspective being mapped in this chapter; I concern myself particularly with how each remembrance is also a forgetting.

To begin, readers may recall the dedication, which lists the full names of the women murdered in Montreal and states: "We, their sisters and brothers, remember, and work for a better world. In memory and in grief for all the women murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours". How does this dedication work as a call to bear witness? In consideration of this question, I will speak separately to each of the key components of the dedication--the listing of names and the memorial statements.

I/i acknowledge the importance of naming the women murdered in Montreal, particularly as this destabilizes the namelessness in which they were killed and reinstates an identification for each woman. However, there are two issues of forgetting in this remembrance that concern me. First, as argued in the previous chapter, I believe the reinstatement of names is not sufficient to ensure remembrance: alone, they risk masking a forgetting. For the words themselves, no matter how deeply incised into stone, for permanence, do not hold memory's meaning. Second, and rather differently, names *not inscribed* cannot be vessels for memory at all. As Caffyn Kelley points out:

the names inscribed on the monument will not be the First Nations women of the neighbourhood who have been murdered in back alleys and beer parlours, left to die in garbage dumpsters or thrown out of hotel windows. In this neighbourhood where women are six times more likely to be murdered than in the city overall--10 to 20 times more likely if they are between the ages of 20 and 45--the monument will be inscribed with the

names of fourteen, white, middle-class women from four thousand miles away. (1995: 8)

In this, remembrance is again a forgetting, an erasure: the names that "count" are not the names that may actually circulate in wails to the dead around the site of Thornton Park.²¹

This leads me to consideration of the second component of the dedication—the memorial statements.²² The women who were massacred in Montreal were clearly targeted as women. However, in anchoring remembrance for all women murdered by men in the slaughter

²¹ Kelley notes that the Monument Committee was "asked by downtown eastside activists to find a way to include women of the neighbourhood in their memorial" (10-11). However, since they could not come to a consensus about how to do this, Native activists have decided to "work to create another women's monument in a nearby location, commissioning a First Nations artist" (11). This is one clear instance of the extreme (social, emotional, political, psychic, ...) cost of an interpretation in which the fourteen women massacre in Montreal come to stand symbolically for all women subject to (male) violences.

²² My interest here diverges from that aspect of the dedication which has received attention in the mainstream media—the phrase, "murdered by men". The following statements of critique are typical. "I feel this [dedication] is racist against men and men only" (E. Doell, 1993: A 39). "The monument's purpose is not to honour slain women but to dishonour living men" (Vancouver columnist in Dafoe, 1994: C16). "The monument singles out men [and] that's the problem ... we have to stop giving grants to every [special interest] group that comes along with its hand out" (Ted White, Reform MP-North Vancouver, 1994). "[W]ith the phrase, 'by men', I felt attacked and I felt as though it was my fault that [the killer] did this incredibly awful act. I feel as though I have been assaulted as much as if I had been in the room with those women [who were murdered]. I believe putting in the words 'murdered by men' only alienates 49% of the population and actually defeats their purpose" (CBC listener on talkback, 1994). I would direct readers to a comment I made in the previous chapter, regarding some men's participation at memorial vigils, which echoes these kinds of comments. I suggest that in both instances, men who take up such positions are not bearing witness to the monument, the massacre, or men's violences against women as a social issue. In contrast, some men have taken positions that demonstrate a willingness to bear witness. For example, following a rethinking of his initial dismissal of the dedication, Henry Gale writes in a *Globe and Mail* article: "[o]nce I plucked the 'male' from 'male violence' out of a misplaced sense of impartiality. By doing so, I rendered violence a causeless phenomena ... But there is a human face behind the fist, and most of the time, it's a man's. If we keep that face in shadow out of a mistaken sense of propriety, then how will the violences cease?" (Gale, 1994: A24). (See also relevant comments in chapter 5.)

of these fourteen, the dedication pulls gender away from country, class, age and colour,²³ in a way that risks forgetting how these intersect in women's lives and deaths. In readying those gathered to bear witness in this way, the dedication offers a remembrance that suggests a commonality across the murder of women, a commonality that potentially hinders remembrances of women who may not only have been murdered for being women. That is, from this perspective, how are we to remember the women who are murdered as Native women, Jewish women, Black women? How are we to remember women who are murdered not primarily because they are women, but because they are Native, Jewish, Black? How are we to remember women who are murdered as lesbians?²⁴

And, to push this questioning further, how is the substance of memory developed through the inclusion of contributors' names in the site of the memorial? Again, there are two key points that I want to make. First, when the names of fourteen murdered women are taken beside the names of 5,000-8,000 contributors, I am concerned that the weight of memory will (be seen to) lie with the latter. For, although the place and size of naming is different--the name of each woman massacred in Montreal will be incised into a granite form, and the contributors' names will appear on the ground, approximately 10 names to a tile (Alber's Proposal)--will not the sheer effect of so many contributors' names outweigh the names of the massacred women?²⁵

²³ I am recalling here the dimensions of difference named in the dedication.

²⁴ The Monument Committee is not alone in facing these kinds of issues. I am reminded, for example, of James Young's discussion of the creation of a memorial at Auschwitz, during 1957 to 1967. He notes that a monument was altered at the last moment to clearly "define the political character of the victims desired by the authorities": the original design had "suggested children, who could not have been killed as political prisoners, but only *as Jews*" (141, emphasis mine).

²⁵ I thank Kate McKenna for drawing my attention to this contrast.

In this, might the monument ready those to bear witness not to the murder of women, but to the support this issue has (apparently) received in the creation of the monument?²⁶ Can a single gesture of financial support be equated with "permanently affirming support for a world without violence" (Brochure 3)?²⁷ Will the names punched into a tile come to be seen as holding memory itself, so that for those who are included there, memory is somehow done, complete, rather than a continuing labour?

Second, what conception of remembrance makes it meaningful to inscribe in a permanent memorial the names of those who gave financial support for its creation? Why are these the names that matter in remembrance? Why are visitors not being engaged to bear witness to 5,000+ names of women who have been murdered by men? Immediately this last question brings to the fore the problematic of memorial work: how would these names be determined when the murders of women one-by-one (the most usual form this act takes in contemporary Canada) are not recorded in one place; what time frame would be used; which countries would be included; would a murderer's relation to the victims be a factor for consideration; would

²⁶ If this, then the monument may become regarded as primarily about an expressed commitment to work against violence against women. (My thanks to Roger Simon for drawing my attention to this point.) While this in itself is interesting (if not the original intention), it too carries a risk: at its worst, the monument could become a marker of contributors (and others) bearing witness *only* to themselves as benefactors and not also to the women to whom "Marker of Change" is dedicated.

²⁷ In this, I am reminded also of the White Ribbon campaign for men against men's violence, organized in response to the massacre. I have wondered in this instance too, can assumptions be made as to a necessary relation between wearing a white ribbon and one's stance on the massacre, the murder of women, violence against women more generally? (Again, for more critical reflection on the campaign, see Cole, 1991.)

spaces be left to add the names as more women are slaughtered, ...?²⁸ While such a remembrance strategy might be understood as displacing the significance of the murder of fourteen women in Montreal as a particular historical event, I suggest it might instead call attention to this massacre in its continuity with the murder of women by men. And by this I/i am thinking of continuity in a very particular way: perhaps the fourteen names amongst the 5,000+ names of women murdered by men might be (marked as) "a shock of the known, the 'I can't believe it' of the known that is not acknowledged--of *unbearable* reality" (Colette Guillaumin, 1991: 13, emphasis in original). What if this were the substance of memory that the Women's Monument Project and Alber's design had translated?²⁹

Reconsideration III, the site:

Like mute and inert stone monuments, landscapes and cityscapes remain
as amnesiac or as memory-laden as the people who live in their midst.
(Young: 97)

²⁸ As I write this, I am reminded of a citation used in an earlier chapter: "[a] Toronto woman was hacked to death last Tuesday and another was beaten to death with a baseball bat on Wednesday. It was a fairly typical week for women in Canada" (*Globe and Mail*, Oct. 8, 1990). After writing this chapter, I also viewed a programming segment (on Vision TV) on a recent work by Teresa Posyniak, entitled *Lest We Forget*, which is very similar to what I am arguing for here: she has created a column dedicated to the women massacred in Montreal, but inscribed with many names of women murdered by men, names she retrieved, for the most part from Mary Billy's "femicide register" (for a partial reproduction of this register, see *This Magazine*, Vol. 26 (4), Oct-Nov., 1992).

²⁹ I suggest that this is not inconsistent with the original impulse for the creation of a women's monument. However, the more I/i read about and engage with the Project's development, the more concerned I am that the final design (as shaped by the Guidelines) is a highly limited translation of the horror of the massacre and all women murdered by men.

Unlike monuments built to mark the history of atrocities on a particular site, the Women's Monument will be many thousands of miles away from the site of the massacre in Montreal. Moreover, as a monument not only to these slaughtered women, but also all women murdered by men, it was conceived *apart from* a site altogether.³⁰ What I want to raise for consideration, however, is an obvious point (perhaps) with complex implications: although the idea for the monument was not site-specific, in actuality it is not separate from the site on which it is (to be) built. Thornton Park is not a benign landscape, but (now) a public memorial space and, thus, might be regarded as part of what constitutes the monument. From this perspective: how might the relation between "Marker of Change" and Thornton Park be reconsidered?

"History of the Site":

"Thornton Park was built during the Edwardian Period ... in an Edwardian style. This style is characterized by a formal and balanced geometry, with walkways that intersect the site creating square components and circular features. Often used in 'railway parks', the Edwardian style of park design has been used in several Canadian cities.

Over time, some walkways in Thornton Park have been replaced or installed in such a way that the original geometry has been compromised. The Park Board would like to re-establish the original symmetry of the design so any walkways planned as part of

Another history of the site:

"I have lived in Vancouver now for twenty-five years, but I never knew the city was a gravestone marking the internment of a vast estuarial habitat until I began working on the Women's Monument. Thornton Park, where the monument will be built, was once a salt marsh where gooey mudflats supported an intricate web of life. Now it is a flat, square path of green, made to stand for nature where there was once all that chaotic life and stink. The city gave away the wetland to the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway. By 1917, the swamp was buried.

The underground rivers and the buried landscape are the unconscious image of this

³⁰ From this original conceptualization of the Project, it is reasonable that attention to the site--which was later secured--would be limited to the types of concerns listed in the Guidelines (i.e. Thornton Park in relation to its neighbourhood; access, safety and ambience in the Park). In bringing a countermonument perspective to bear on the Project, however, I am suggesting that the significance of the site is not limited to this layer of interpretation.

the monument should bear this in mind. The monument design should take into consideration the original design philosophy of the park".

(Design Guidelines: 5)

city, testimony to a violent culture ... What form of forgetting would not remember this?".

(Caffyn Kelley, 1995: 9-10)

In orienting artists toward designing monuments that considered only the original design philosophy of the Park, I suggest that the Guidelines implied a preference for designs that maintained the landscape as unproblematic. Thus Alber's "Marker of Change" translates the philosophy of the site as rendered in the above citation: the granite slabs are of equal size and shape, placed in the symmetrical form of a circle, balanced in relation to each other and a larger sense of the park space; the ceramic tiles placed in a continuous ring on the ground around the stone circle are consistent with this form. To recast Caffyn Kelley's point, however, this too is a form of forgetting. For what the Guidelines do not state is that the Edwardian style grounds of Thornton Park were formed on top of a salt marsh, on what has become "a buried landscape". I wonder, how might the monument be different if *this* history of the site had been "remembered"³¹ in the specificities of the Guidelines? At minimum, I suggest that artists may have been asked to bear witness to a simultaneous sense of the monument as continuous with the current landscape *and* as disruptive of it, calling attention to its formation. From this perspective, the monument may not only be inscribed with a text of remembrance (in the form of the dedication), but also recall the past of the site on which it is located.

In bringing this issue to the fore I am thinking of James Young's discussion of a

³¹ I am not implying here that the authors of the Guidelines intentionally did not remember this history of the site; rather I suggest that this is an instance of how common memory forms the parameters of what is and is not (to be) remembered in particular circumstances.

planned countermonument³² in Berlin on the former site of a forced labour camp under Nazi Germany (1993: 40; further descriptions of the memorial in this paragraph are from the same source and page, unless otherwise stated). Young describes Norbert Radermacher's memorial as follows: "pedestrians strolling ... [on the site] will trip a light-beam trigger, which in turn flicks on a high-intensity slide projection of a written text relating the historical details of the site's now invisible past". This text will slowly move through the trees, over a wired fence, to the sidewalk, where it will be able to be read before slowly fading out. As Young continues: "by overlaying the nearby trees, houses, fence and pavement in this way, the beam literally bathes an otherwise forgetful site in the light of its own past—a spotlight from which neither the site nor pedestrians can hide". The artist "suggests that the site alone cannot remember, that it is the projection of memory by visitors into a space that makes it a memorial. The site ... intrudes itself ..." (41).

While Radermacher's memorial was conceived on substantively different terms from Alber's monument,³³ the former's engagement with the site helps me to think about the women's monument in relation to Thornton Park. I have argued above that, in its consistency with the Park's Edwardian design philosophy (as articulated by the Guidelines), the monument readies those who engage it to bear witness at the level of common memory in relation to the site: a level of remembering that may be understood as a level of forgetting. For this is a memory

³² At the time of his writing, Young is referring to a memorial that had not yet been installed, but was expected to be completed "sometime in 1992" (Young: 41). I have not been able to discern if the memorial is now in place.

³³ That is, Radermacher's memorial was specifically designed to bring to the fore--literally into light--the (invisible) history of Nazi atrocities on a site in Berlin; Alber's monument, following the Guidelines of the Project, was specifically designed to bring to the fore a particular history of violences against women. However, in correspondence with my earlier comments, I am arguing for a broader consideration of the site.

that forgets (does not recall and makes invisible), in this case, the land that was destroyed for the Park's creation. From this perspective, "Marker of Change" is formed on a key tension: while it is designed *for* remembrance, it is premised on an understanding of the site that is itself a forgetting. As such, the monument does not engage the Park's deep memory: the "buried landscape" that has been made invisible in the grounds of Thornton Park's Edwardian design. However, if, in Caffyn Kelley's terms, the Park might be understood as a site of internment, then I wonder if Alber's granite forms might not be re/made to gesture to this also?

If I accept the Monument Committee's language of the pink granite slabs as benches, then this question directs me to considering a possible shift in their design. I am reminded, for example, of the "Benchmarks" Project, also in Vancouver, and a particular bench designed in remembrance of the women massacred in Montreal (see Resource Bibliography for details surrounding this installation). Margot Leigh Butler and Karen Tee created a computer manipulated photograph of a tombstone, for a transit bench at the corner of Main and Terminal (the same location as Thornton Park), that read:

I remember when we walked in fear of men's violence, she said.
SKIN MEMORY We were drenched in vigilance
KIN MEMORY We have been learning by heart
IN MEMORY We are still shredding forgetting
IN LIVING MEMORY. (in Larson, 1994: 05)

While I am not suggesting that Alber's "benches" be inscribed similarly, I do think that the design by Butler and Tee provides a noteworthy point of reference.

First, I find the inscription quite compelling: in contrast to the Monument Project's specification of an immutable text (which can be read to suggest that the names and the dedication can be fixed, will always mean the same), Butler and Tee's shifting SKIN--KIN--IN--

KIN–SKIN configuration points to the instability of memory and meaning, where one letter added or removed (remembered or forgotten) changes the meaning. Further, the reference to "in living memory" suggests that memory is alive, not (stone) dead: it depends upon viewers for its animation. Again, this is in contrast to the Project, where memory inscribed into stone may be presumed to be held there, a presumption that encourages a form of forgetting. As James Young notes: "[u]nder the illusion that our memorial edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return only at our convenience. To the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us, we become that much more forgetful" (5).

Young's statements remind me of an additional appeal (to my mind) of the tombstone inscription: the interpellation of a "we" who has walked in fear, been drenched in vigilance, is learning by heart, shredding forgetting. The "we" may be understood as a direct call to women to bear witness to what Andreas Huyssen refers to as "the slow and persistent labo[u]r of remembrance" (1993: 259), a labour that, based on the terms associated with it in the inscription, is as bodily as it is mindful. This is positioned quite differently to the inscriptions on Alber's benches, as directed by the Monument Committee, where the interpellated we is "sisters and brothers [who] remember, and work for a better world". While I/i do not disregard this call, in emphasizing the work of change rather than the work of remembrance, it risks again assuming that stone holds memory, rather than people.

Second, Butler and Tee's bench-tombstone is also worth consideration for how it recalls Alber's original design proposal, in which she suggests the granite forms may be "benches or sarcophagi": sarcophagi referring to coffins or tombs, especially those that bear inscriptions. While the latter offers a more evocative reading of Alber's design within the framing established

by the Guidelines, it becomes even more interesting, I think, in this context of site consideration. For, as sarcophagi, the fourteen granite forms may not only bear inscriptions to the massacred women (each one inscribed with her name), but also be seen to bear witness to the buried landscape: tombs to the site. From this perspective, the past site may not intrude on the present (as in Radermacher's countermonument), but the monument may at least point to (rather than simply absorb) that which has (already) been made invisible. If the granite forms were positioned discursively as pointing to internment, perhaps they might echo Radermacher's understanding of a memorial that marks "the history of [the] site [as] includ[ing] its own forgetfulness, its own memory lapse" (Young: 42). In this manner, the monument would not add to a further sedimentation of a common memory of the site, but direct witnesses to the deep memory that is buried there.

Reconsideration IV, the risks of desanctification:

As a work of public art that has been the subject of controversy, it is likely that the monument will be defaced in some way. The Monument Committee recognizes this possibility in the Guidelines, suggesting, in a sub-section entitled "Plans for Maintenance", that "the chosen design will [need to] be made of strong materials resistant to graffiti and other forms of vandalism" (8).³⁴ The text continues: "[w]e intend to allow a certain amount of graffiti and

³⁴ On a related note, the issue of maintenance, as determined by the City of Vancouver, is likely to have been quite significant in limiting the forms of monuments that might be considered plausible. The same section in the Guidelines also reads: "[t]he chosen design will not include landscape art or architecture with plantings because of the endless upkeep needed to care for them. The use of water will be considered, within limits. Fountains or ponds requiring

damage to just stand. We would prefer the Women's Monument be defaced rather than have that expression of anger turned on a woman or women" (8). The only other reference to graffiti is alluded to in a later section, where it is noted that breakdowns of the \$115,000 construction budget for the monument must include a 10% maintenance fee "required by the City of Vancouver" (12). I want to consider the issue of defacement--particularly graffiti--further.

I think it is noteworthy that this issue is raised in the Guidelines *only* in the context of maintenance. This suggests to me that graffiti is being positioned as a problem³⁵--something that may impinge on remembrance as it is (to be) represented in the monument. From a perspective in which memorials are intended "*not* to call attention to their own presence" (Young: 12, emphasis mine), the removal of graffiti would seem paramount. While this is a general perspective that the Guidelines appear to concur with, it does not seem to me that the Women's Monument Committee is entirely in agreement with such a position, given their interest in "allow[ing] a certain amount of graffiti and damage to just stand". While there is no indication for what a "certain amount" might constitute and who would be responsible for making that decision,³⁶ I want to contemplate these issues from the perspective of remembrance and/as forgetting.

recirculation pumps cannot be considered because of the associated maintenance demands" (8).

³⁵ Whether its status as a problem has been determined by the City of Vancouver, or the Monument Committee, or both, is not clear. There does seem to be some acknowledgment on the part of the Committee that there is more to be grappled with regarding graffiti than how it is to be erased.

³⁶ Decision-making power would lie, I assume, with the Committee or the City, and I suspect the latter, given that the monument will be on City land and they require a maintenance budget. Presumably, however, the Committee may be in a position to negotiate with the City regarding how to determine the parameters on graffiti "acceptance".

The Committee alludes to the pervasiveness of violences against women by offering, in a sense, the monument as a "substitute object" for (men's) anger. In this, they may be read as "allow[ing] the monument to document the social temperament" (Jochen and Esther Gerz in Young: 35) of anger and hatred toward women (and/or a women's monument, and/or an inscription naming men as the primary perpetrators of violences against women). I want to push this further, though, and suggest that graffiti or damage be considered not only as a social but also a *remembrance* response. From this perspective, the monument may be viewed "[a]s a social mirror [that] reminds the community of what happened then and, even worse, how they now respond to the memory of this past" (Young: 35).

To follow from this point is to argue against erasing graffiti or repairing damage—at all—because to do so would be to continually renew the monument's appearance of stasis, and concomitantly produce this site as outside the violences that are being remembered.³⁷ This provides a basis for suggesting erasure and repair as particularly acute instances of common memory as forgetting: where the imperative to sanctify the form of remembrance erases the very horror it is purportedly designed to recall. Thus erasure and repair may be seen in contradiction to the dedication of the monument: where such a practice risks removing from memory's form the social conditions of actualized and threatened violences as normative—and their effects.

This becomes particularly imperative to consider if the lens on whose anger, and why it might be wielded, is widened. For the graffiti and damage may potentially come (also) from women who, for various reasons, do not feel their lives (or other women's deaths) to be

³⁷ This too is complicated, though. From a remembrance perspective, there might be an argument for erasing graffiti or repairing damage, not as an effort of sanctification, but to allow room for more responses.

represented in the monument's form. What of, for example, women who have intimate knowledge of violences and might insist that the monument be *marked* by those experiences? Would this graffiti be erased? Then, whose monument would this be?

As these questions hang in front of me, I recall Alber's title for her work, "Marker of Change", and wonder if it might be turned onto the monument itself as an interpretive lens. Rather than follow either the Monument Committee's original positioning of graffiti as a problem, *or* a countermonument perspective on graffiti as a signature of social conditions, what if both were taken as valid? Through such a lens, the issue may not be whether (or not) to erase graffiti, but how to mark its presence. Is it not possible that some expressions on and against the monument, some damage, may be marked--identified, noted, explained--in accompanying texts installed on the site? Such a strategy might allow for a form of incorporating multiple (responses to) rememberings: providing conditions for the monument as a place for healing and contemplation, while not erasing that this, too, is a troubling / troubled site. That is, if the monument is considered through a concern with the problematics of remembrance, then graffiti and damage become understood not as a necessary problem, but as indicative of memory as a contested--rather than sanctified--terrain.

As I write this, I want to recall an earlier caution and cast it in the words of Peggy Phelan: "[t]here is real power in remaining unmarked" (1993: 6). In the context of this argument for markers to the unbearable, I do not forget that the very nature of trauma (memory) is that it exceeds frames of understanding and is forever belated in its impact(s) (Caruth, 1996: 7). From this perspective, my desire that "Marker of Change" bear--differently--the marks of the purpose of remembering, the substance of memory, the memorial site and the risks of desanctification

must be set against the knowledge that how this monument will invite a bearing of witness is not static, but will shift according to the specificities of a person's engagement and the conditions of receptivity (Roth).

Recollections

**(Re)collections:
Notes For a Different Future**

I/i recall this text as a theorizing of the traumatic effect of the 1989 Massacre of Women in Montreal *and a telling of traumatic memories*. I/i recall this text as a philosophical contemplation of the bearing of witness for the dead and the deadened *and itself a site of bearing witness*. I/i recall this text as a pedagogical consideration of feminist memorial responses to the massacre *and offer it as a memorial response*.

I have written memory across and between these layers; I hope that you may have read memory similarly. Knowing the complex and at times contradictory dimensions of these tasks, I suggest the following "recollections" as further working through--mindful still of continuity and rupture.

Recollections:

As this writing comes to an end, as I begin to pass the work into the hands of readers, I have in my mind (again) the words of Jane DeLynn: "atrocities ... remind us of who we are, what we tolerate, and what we are willing to forget" (1989: 74-75). In taking up her words as a central motif in this text, I have argued that the massacre of fourteen women at Ecole Polytechnique was an atrocity: both because it ruptured a frame of what was normal and expected for women attending university in Canada, *and* because it recalled, momentarily, the normative violences against women that are, for the most part, tolerated and forgotten. From this perspective, to bear witness to the 1989 Massacre of Women, I have argued, is to bear the weight of remembering these killings as a traumatic event: not because they are outside of what is possible in this country, but because they are (and were) possible in a society where violences

against women are largely treated as matters of personal rather than social integrity.

What this puts into place, I suggest, is the imperative of developing an historical consciousness that can bear not only a cognitive understanding of this massacre, but also, and fundamentally, "the physical imprint" (Langer, 1995: xiv) on those of us living in its wake. While the severity of such an imprint will differ depending on our prior proximity to (the effects of) trauma, what needs to be grappled with is "the shock of the known ... of *unbearable* reality" (Guillaumin, 1991: 13, emphasis in original) that the Montreal murders brought to the fore. On these terms, "common memory" (or remembering oriented toward making-sense) is inadequate for developing an historical consciousness in relation and response to the traumatic event of the massacre. What is necessary is a remembrance stance that can, also, *take in* the incomprehensibility of deep memory and its effects (horror, anguish, despair, terror, grief, rage, ...).

Re-collections:

What I know now (but did not even imagine before December 6, 1989) is that my life has been broken open by an act of violence in another city, against women who I did not know. Seven years later, there has been no healing over of this first piercing of memory's skin. Instead, layers upon layers have given way, spilling onto the surface of my consciousness smells images sounds feelings physical sensations: the forgotten being remembered.

At one time, I held some hope that there would be an "ending", a point at which the ruptures would stop, beyond which there would be no more unbearable to bear. I am not sure when this idea left me, but I/i am clear now: if the nature of trauma is "the inescapability of its belated impact" (Caruth, 1996: 7), then the task is to contemplate rupture as *always*

possible, to live with the unbearable, the horrors, as *not past*, but pressing on, haunting of, the present. This is one of the tasks of bearing witness that I have set for my self in (the writing of) this text. It is one that returns to me now as I/i contemplate the limited possibilities for "closure".

In offering a conceptualization of bearing witness that can take in continuity *and* rupture, familiarity *and* dissonance, the dead *and* the deadened (of ourselves), I have been mindful of attending to its risks. One of the risks engendered by this doubled relationship is the likely repetition of a collapse in witnessing--now, not the "original" collapse in which "the very circumstances of *being inside [an] event* made [witnessing] unthinkable" (Laub, 1995: 66, emphasis in original), but a "secondary" collapse, in the present and formed on the fracture of the past. It is this second level of collapse that is risked when one comes already traumatized to the witnessing of an other--especially when one takes the position, as I have in this text, that it is impossible to "heal" from (past) trauma when the violences and violations continue. It is precisely at the second level of collapse that the possibility for witnessing depends so highly on social conditions and relationships that can support the one who bears witness, to be heard through the (potential) collapse of her self, so as to continue her witnessing of an other.

I/i am lost in the violated body, choking on grief: a response to the intensity of writing over these past months and the disturbances I have borne in the wake of each remembering. Despair has overwhelmed me, burst the skin protecting present (self) from past (self). Layered on top of one another, hope has been squeezed thin. Beyond the reach of words. I come to the water again in search of a clearing--time and space salve to the torn skin of memory--for living *with*--not *as*--the deadened of my self, to live with remembering the unbearable of the massacre in Montreal.

To contemplate what is at stake when one comes to witnessing already traumatized, I have developed a series of close "readings" in bearing witness: considerations of the calls to witness borne in the feminist memorial responses of Katherine Zsolt, Lin Gibson, Pati Beaudoin, The Wyrd Sisters, Women Won't Forget, Beth Alber, and The Women's Monument Project Committee, and, also, the witnessing I/i bear to their translations of the women-hating massacre. I have approached these bearings of witness through the conceptual language of common and deep memory--extending Charlotte Delbo's insights to suggest that this schema offers a way of thinking about not only internal processes of remembering trauma, but also the pedagogical effectiveness of memorial practices.

While representations at the level of common memory may be understood to orient a witness to making (coherent) sense, expressions of deep memory rupture-disfigure-pierce the skin of common memory, to reveal some trace of the horrors that writhe in its tissues. I suggest that when the dominant conditions of remembrance orient witnesses to a distancing from the past, what is necessary are memorial practices that evoke deep memory, that bring to the fore its tactility. This is not to argue, however, that evocations to deep memory alone are sufficient; I suggest memorial practices that lend themselves heavily to either one level of remembering *or* the other are limited. While calling forth common memory alone lacks the potential to be disruptive of current frames of remembrance, summonings to deep memory in isolation risk leaving a witness in an abyss, overwhelmed by despair and/or terror.

In contrast, I propose the most powerful memorial practices for developing an historical consciousness in relation to traumatic events are those that evoke movement between common and deep memory. From this perspective, a productive memorial practice is one that

may engage a witness to: take in the impacts of the unbearable and its subsequent rupture of common memory's sense-making, and/or take-up common memory as a source of continuity and hope in the touch of deep memory's unbearable. While a readiness—or preparedness—to grapple with traumatic impact depends, in part, on the individual witness and the context of engagement, such nuanced memorial practices are necessary, I would argue, for readying a (potential) witness to live with the past in the present (Roth).

Each time i write first from forgetting: in the traumatic moment, i do not remember (I have written this before). In this sense, bearing witness is a labour of repetitions into the unknown: I may recall that the skin of memory gives way, I may recall struggles in (and out of) the abyss, but I cannot anticipate precisely how the skin will split, how deep memory will be lived, how I/i will return from the collapse.

I have argued, also, that one of the tasks of bearing witness is to attend not only to remembrance, but also to forgetting, where "forgetting" references the incomprehensibility of trauma: not only how trauma is originally experienced viscerally *as* a forgetting (cf. Caruth; Felman and Laub), but also how this forgetting is repeated in attempts to make (coherent) sense of traumatic experiences at the level of common memory. On these terms, developing an historical consciousness in relation to trauma requires a recognition that what is remembered is inseparable from what cannot be remembered, and, further that this relation operates individually *and* socially. In this regard, I am reminded of Yosef Yerushalmi's still compelling question: "[i]s it possible that the antonym of 'forgetting' is not 'remembering', but *justice*?" (1982: 117, emphasis in original). If each remembrance is also a forgetting, and each forgetting slips us further away from the possibilities for justice, then it is imperative that feminist cultural workers

and educators (amongst others) develop schema for making judgements about what can(not) be forgotten in remembrance: not only with regard to how to frame the event of the 1989 massacre in relation to other violences against women, but also with regard to the memorial practices we develop and employ.

On one level, this is to recall an earlier argument concerning the problematic naming of the massacre as "symbolic" of violences against women in Canada: a strategy that remembers the gendered nature of these murders, but risks forgetting their class and race specificities. On another level, I am beginning to wonder about an additional dimension of forgetting which I have not previously attended to, but is worth signalling. How may the imperative for bearing witness as a public, social, collective responsibility be reconciled with the needs of those who were close to the fourteen women massacred in Montreal, who may wish to mourn in private, be seeking a healing over of the wound of memory, desire to forget the circumstances of their daughter's (friend's, lover's, mother's ...) death, to remember instead her life?

This question recalls another central thread of my argument: thinking through remembrance *not* as public *or* private, but as public *and* private--where forgetting and remembering are at issue not only within each site, but also between them. From this perspective, remembrance decisions require an exquisite attention to how to remember (forget), why, on what terms, when and for whom--in each memorial situation. What I/i am suggesting is that such decisions need to be guided by an historical consciousness, a consciousness formed by the doubled demands of remembrance: the need to hold a limited understanding of the traumatic past *and* the need to extend beyond such "comprehension" into the unbearable.

I/i am recalling the disturbances borne by this writing of memory as public *and* private, analytic *and* poetic, scholarly *and* bloodied, from the present *and* (as if) in the past. I am wondering about the disturbances borne by you in your reading: discomfort, dis-ease, disbelief, distraction ... bile in the throat of fear ...

A concern with historical consciousness and the paradoxical demands of remembrance is at issue not only in this text, but *of* it: that is, if this writing is understood as a theorization of trauma *and* a testimony to trauma, a conceptualization of bearing witness *and* a site of bearing witness, a pedagogical commentary on memorial responses *and* a memorial response, how then are you (I) to understand the nature of what is required in reading?

Most obviously, each term in these dyads puts into place different demands. From the perspective of engaging theory, conceptual work and pedagogical commentary, reading requires a critical distance from which to discern the comprehensiveness of an argument and the demonstrated conceptual capability with relevant material. In tension with these requirements--and from the perspective of the telling of testimony, the vulnerability of bearing witness, and the offering of a memorial response--what is asked for is a reading that can engage the *tactility* of this text and its address from anguish. In short, while one layer of reading requires a certain scepticism, the other asks for that habitual doubt to be suspended--for the reader to be open to the reconfiguring effects of a knowledge that continuously breaks frames of understanding (cf. Laub; Simon and Eppert).

On this basis, it is clear that readers of this text face an unresolvable dilemma.¹ However, I propose it is a dilemma worth further consideration, especially for those of us interested in revisiting the terms of scholarly investment: not from the perspective of breaking with all conventions, but with an interest in a rather different project--rethinking those conventions *through* the "radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience" (Caruth, 1995: 4). Or, to borrow again from Felman: in a "post-traumatic age", perhaps it is not only teaching about trauma--*but also writing and reading (about) it*--that "should take position at the edge of itself, at the edge of its conventional conception" (1992: 54).

This perspective puts into place a series of pressing questions. For example: when the "postures of receptivity" (Roth) made available within academic discourses are built on critical scepticism, what might it mean to suggest readers are obliged--also--to take in the touch of a text? When the insistence on a stable and secure argument is still dominant in academe, how might readers be prepared to tolerate the incomprehensibility of trauma? When academe remains predominantly a place of the mind, what is necessary for it to become "a place for the body *as well*" (Ellsworth, 1993: 70, emphasis mine): particularly, if the body that returns (t)here--to be read--is the traumatized body?

I do not know how to answer these questions in any detailed way, but they are illustrative of the issues that have haunted me through these last weeks of writing, as I have grappled explicitly with others' readings of this (almost completed) text. I have encountered, for example, readings that attend astutely to the conceptual work and can barely approach the

¹ I suggest this dilemma is not limited to my project, but frames most decisions regarding commemorative practices that are designed to inform a sense of historical memory.

traumatic tellings--and the reverse: readings where the text's references to traumatic effect are felt as relentless, overwhelming any possible theoretical distance.

If readers recognize themselves in these generalizations, it is because, I think, there is so little available to prepare us for the "hazards [of] listening to trauma" (Laub, 1992a: 72). Where Laub's reference is to the specific burdens and difficulties of listening to testimonies from deep memory, I want to argue that such hazards--including, the threat of being "flooded", a sense of inadequacy, a feeling of numbness (Laub: 72-73)--may be evoked here also: because what is at issue, in part, is that I/i am learning to write--and you to read--through what Caruth identifies as "the new ignorance that trauma introduces amongst us" (1995: 4).

Past blurs present and I/i am caught again in the exquisite deciphering of tone of voice, bodily stance, a hand movement: grappling with the costs--current and remembered--of speaking, now.

I want to bring together these insights from Laub and Caruth in a particular way. Their statements recall for me two observations previously unrelated in this text: Shoshana Felman's understanding of ignorance as "a kind of forgetting" (1982: 29), and Toni Morrison's comment that "flooding is remembering" (1990: 305). On these terms, "flooding" and "ignorance" may be understood not only as references to that which is dissonant (in excess of frames of understanding), but also that which is familiar--*the known that is already unbearable*. This returns me to a central argument of the text: while the unbearable may be particularly felt by those who engage (theorizations of) deep and common memory through the fracture of their own traumatic pasts, the impacts of trauma are not confined to individual psyches and bodies, but are borne *socially* in the tolerance of normative violences and through particularly hideous acts that

momentarily remind us of what we--individually and collectively--are willing to forget.

From this perspective, the dilemmas a reader may face in encountering the "new ignorance from trauma" cannot be cast as the problems *of* an individual. Instead, and drawing from my analysis of memorial practices, what is necessary is the development of social conditions and relationships that can support readers to *take in* the effects of living in a society in which "the dead [and the deadened of ourselves] line our dreams" (Audre Lorde, 1986: 31-2). At minimum, this requires: a shift away from dominant understandings of trauma as pathology or abnormal and a recognition that those who suffer from trauma (albeit differently) *include us*; "clearings" (Roth) in academic work--times and spaces in which to ready oneself to consciously live with the dead; and, "communities of readers" who are receptive to the claims--on them--of living in a post-traumatic age. In brief, we need conditions and relationships that would make possible teaching and learning about the development of an historical consciousness in relation and response to trauma as a central task of pedagogy: for the dead, the living and toward a different future.

Resource Bibliography

The following is a descriptive listing of English-language feminist memorial responses (1990-1995) to the massacre in Montreal. While this listing is comprehensive, it is not definitive—my interest has been to provide a sense of the *scope* of response. The listing is organized into six broad categories: (i) visual works and exhibits; (ii) permanent memorials; (iii) memorial vigils; (iv) publications; (v) radio programming; (vi) music and song. Entries within each category are organized alphabetically by title of the work.

Visual Works & Exhibits:

Since this is the largest category, I have sub-divided it as follows: (a) art shows; (b) temporary installations; (c) documentaries; (d) other visual works.

(a) Art Shows:

The predominant public response to the Montreal slayings—aside from the memorial vigils—has been the organization of art shows.¹ I am aware of the following exhibitions across the country, which were generally installed in parallel galleries or other cultural spaces, mostly within the first year of the massacre. All except one of the shows discussed below were installed in major centres; it is likely that there have been other smaller exhibits of which I am not aware, since publicity around feminist memorial responses has tended to be "contained" within particular geographies / communities.²

Art Against Violence Against Women: A Personal Statement. The Centre for Art Tapes, Eye Level Gallery. Halifax, Nova Scotia. Opened December 6, 1990.

This show was positioned as a response to the massacre and to violence against women in Nova Scotia more generally. A non-juried, multi-media group exhibition, it was

¹ In this context, the artist run La Centrale in Montreal is noteworthy. They have chosen silence as the "best" response and questioned the "rush" to commemorative shows and exhibits. See Gagnon (1991) for further details.

² There are two obvious exceptions: the memorial vigils, which although not publicised outside of local commuting distance are sometimes referenced in "national" media coverage; and, the creation of the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver (see the section entitled "Permanent Memorials" for details).

comprised of work by 40 women artists from 10 geographic communities across the province. The participants included professors from the Nova Scotia College of Art and "a three-year old child who exhibited a drawing" (Gagnon, 1991: 24). A hand-made quilt, donated to the Polytechnique by fourteen women in San Francisco, was sent by the Status of Women in Montreal for the exhibition. Like other events around December 6, educational workshops on violences against women were also conducted. [Source: Monika Gagnon, 1991.]

Don't Remain Silent. The Woman's Common (June 6 - July 27, 1990) and A Space (March 16 - April 13, 1991). Toronto, Ontario. Curator: Susan Beamish.

This was one of two major exhibits in Toronto created within a year of the slaughters. Originally organized for and within the Woman's Common, a women-only space in Toronto that has since closed, the exhibit was installed for a second showing at A Space, a parallel art gallery in downtown Toronto. An unjuried exhibit, curated by Susan Beamish [a local feminist photographer and designer], *Don't Remain Silent* consisted of more than 70 works submitted by some 60 women artists, and featured painting, photography, sculpture, poetry, drawings, prints and collage. From inception, the exhibit was positioned as a personal response--by Susan in her call for submissions--to the anguish, rage and desire for change that was sparked by the deaths of the fourteen women in Montreal. In the press release announcing the installation of the memorial art show at A Space, it is noted that Susan's intent was "to allow women to express visually the anger and sorrow they felt over what happened in Montreal"; she goes on to state: "[t]his exhibit gives women the rare opportunity to share their grief with one another. It is a very healing and empowering experience" (1991). These are sentiments repeated in reviews of the show, and across the responses inscribed in the viewer comment books. According to Isabel Vincent, in a review of the show's installation at the Woman's Common, "the show is a distressing and at times very violent look at violence against women" (1990: C11). In the A Space Gallery newsletter announcing upcoming events, the show is described in the following terms: "Some pieces act as memorials for the fourteen women, and some are for all women who are victims of violence. An underlying current of horror is directed towards not only one act by one person, but rather the fact that his deed magnified a social prejudice, reflecting a society that promotes, condones or ignores the demeaning of women" (A Space, 1991a). [Sources: A Space, 1991a; Beamish, personal communication; Gagnon, 1991; Munro, 1991; Press Releases, 1990, 1991; Vincent, 1990]

Fourteen Feminists. The Women's Art Collective, Queen's University. Kingston, Ontario. February, 1990.

This was a collaborative art installation by a group of eight women students at Queen's University. The installation consisted of a real-size mixed media sculpture of fourteen women in a line, each holding a placard citing statistics relating to the social and economic conditions of women's lives in Canada. The work was installed in the University Centre to maximize potential opportunities for engagement. [Source: Jan Allen, personal communication.]

Giving Voice: The Women's Monument Exhibit. The Vancouver Art Gallery (The Annex Gallery), Vancouver, B.C. October 8 - November 8, 1994.

Giving Voice exhibited a selection of stage one (visuals) and stage two (model) works submitted to the Women's Monument Project design competition. Exhibited at stage one and two levels were: the winning design by Beth Alber (Halifax / Toronto), "Marker of Change", and those of the two other finalists: Helen Goodland (Vancouver) and Susan A. Point (Vancouver). There were also 16 special mention submissions (in stage one form only). (For further details, see: *The Women's Monument Project* exhibit, Toronto in this section and *The Women's Monument Project* in the Permanent Memorials section.) [Source: *Giving Voice* exhibition booklet.]

Healing Images. Multiple Sites. Toronto, Ontario. Organized by "a bunch of feminists" collective. November/December 1990.

Healing Images was a month-long series, coinciding with the first year anniversary of the massacre, that consisted of art exhibits, film and video screenings, panel discussions, readings and performances. The series was organized by an ad hoc collective of 10 Toronto-based women artists calling themselves "a bunch of feminists"—a name that re/claims the killer's accusation against the women murdered. The events were mostly scheduled outside of gallery spaces and brought together women artists, activists and community workers in "the creation and discussion of images about violence against women" (Gagnon, 1991: 28). Drawing on a range of knowledge and experience from 40 artists and writers and 26 panellists, the symposium linked violence against women with issues of race, class, sexuality and other forms of oppression. It also included a panel discussion by men against men's violence. *Healing Images* received funding from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, labour organizations, community groups and the Toronto Arts Council. It was sponsored by Ryerson Polytechnique's CKLN Radio. [Sources: "Artists ...", 1990; Gagnon, 1991]

Murdered by Misogyny: These Shining Golden Names. Anna Leonowens Gallery (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), Halifax. Artist: Lin Gibson.

See *Murdered by Misogyny* in sub-section (b) temporary installations below.

Threnody. The Lateral Gallery, Women in Focus. Vancouver, B.C. Artist: Catherine Perrin. Opened December 6, 1990.

This was a multi-media installation that Perrin opened with a candlelight vigil outside of the gallery. Monika Gagnon writes about the name of the show that: "A threnody is a song of lamentation sung on a person's death. Perrin has created an installation using photographic and text collages, desks, chairs and sound to, as she says, 'both lament and attempt to rectify some

of the sorrow ...". She continues: "the work laments some of the lack of honesty and courage in response to the massacre, and the silencing of 14 women's voices, in the media coverage over the months following the assassinations" (1991: 21). [Source: Gagnon, 1991.]

Women's Monument Project. Roloff Beny Gallery, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario. June 10 - September 24, 1995.

This was a second version of what had previously been presented as the *Giving Voice* exhibit in Vancouver (see above). Installed at the ROM, under the auspices of the Institute for Contemporary Culture, the exhibition was sponsored by the Professional Engineers Society of Ontario. This exhibition included not only the models from the design competition finalists (Alber, Goodland and Point), along with images and copies of the proposals in support of the 16 special mention submissions, but also texts lettered onto the walls of the Gallery to establish a context for the visual works.

Running across the first wall of the exhibit, to the left hand-side of the entrance, a panel (in English and French) encapsulated a brief history of the Monument Committee and suggested that the submissions posed a questioning of public monuments: "Why are public monuments built? How do they reflect the values of their designers and builders? How do they change their societies?". To the right of this text, another panel opened with the following observations: "The killing of 14 students by a stranger at the Université de Montréal shocked Canada, but it is uncharacteristic of violences against women in this country. The murders in Montreal are among the most widely publicized examples, but they are only a part of a pattern of violence, especially male violence, in our society. Most women know their murderers or abusers". This statement was followed by statistical details marking out a context of violences against women in Canada.

Two interior columns in the Gallery were also covered in text. On one column, a summation of the design competition guidelines was listed along with the total number of submissions, and, the names of jury members. On another column, facing the first, an alphabetical listing of the names of the women killed in Montreal introduced the dedication to be inscribed on the Monument. Beneath this was the following: "The Women's Monument Project will remember and honour women who are murdered. It will give voice to their lives, and our loss, day after day for hundreds of years. The artists in this exhibit, and the women and men who have supported the Monument Project, are placing their faith in the possibilities of art. Together we are saying, in a completely new way, that violence against women must end". (For further details on the Project, see the relevant section in Permanent Memorials, below.) [Source: personal notes from the exhibition.]

(b) Temporary Installations:

December 6th (installed December 1993 to late January 1994) and *In Living Memory* (installed February to April 1994). Artists: Margot Leigh Butler and Karen Tee. Location: At Main and Terminal Streets, in front of Thornton Park, Vancouver, B.C.

These works were part of the "Benchmarks" series of "site specific art works by 15 artists who used interventionist strategies to produce work in non-traditional sites" (Edelstein, 1994: 02). The project "attempted to create a thought provoking commentary for the travelling public" by intervening in the commercial use of public benches to advertise products and services (02). Butler and Tee's first "bench" was an "ambiguous photograph--no title, no inscription, just a bit of greenery discernible along the edges of a grey blur, through which emerge a few letters (ORY)" (Larson, 1994: 04). This benchmark was conceived in relation to the planned site of the Women's Monument Project at Thornton Park, and, thus, Larson further notes: "[g]iven that the planned monument will one day [be dedicated to all women murdered by men] the image on the bench is a suggestive metaphor for our society's memory of violence against women--erased, obscured, ignored, legible to only a few in 'the know'" (05). Interestingly, the first benchmark was stolen, although given its obscurity, the theft is associated by the author to a "random act of vandalism" (Larson, 05). The subsequent collaboration by Butler and Tee was "more readable" and "not stolen" (05). Larson writes: "*In Living Memory* is a photographic image that seems to have zoomed in on the previously obscured message which in retrospect appears to have been a tombstone" (05). She continues: "This one reads:

I remember when we walked in fear of men's violence, she said.

SKIN MEMORY	We were drenched in vigilance
KIN MEMORY	We have been learning by heart
IN MEMORY	We are still shredding forgetting
IN LIVING MEMORY" (05).	

The suggestion in this piece, as noted by Larson, is that "this memory of violence, though forgotten by 'official culture' is written on women's bodies and 'by heart'" (05). [Sources: Susan Edelstein, 1994; Jacqueline Larson, 1994.)

Murdered by Misogyny. Toronto, Halifax, Winnipeg. Artist: Lin Gibson.

Lin Gibson is a Winnipeg-based artist and was the first director of Osborne House, a Winnipeg shelter for abused women. She produced the most extensive on-going artistic response to the murders, developing four separate works under the same title, *Murdered by*

Misogyny, each with its own subtitle.³

The series opened with an installation, subtitled *Ces Noms*, in the window of Pages Books and Magazines, on Queen Street West in Toronto (March 25 - April 15, 1990). This installation comprises three elements: the most prominent of which were three columns of type applied to the inside of a large (9' x 12') plate glass window; the secondary elements were a vase of fresh flowers, scattered around the base of which were small cards "inscribed with the victims names in gold" (Yeo, 1991: 8).

Gibson applied type directly to the window, dividing the columns into three equal sections. The section on the left was comprised of an alphabetical listing in upper-case letters of the names of the fourteen women slaughtered in Montreal. In the right-hand panel, these names were paired with a list of fourteen feminists' names--Gibson and thirteen friends--also in alphabetical order, but in upper- and lower-case type. Each of these women had been contacted by Gibson within twenty-four hours of the murders in Montreal, requesting permission to use their names in an artistic project that she had yet to define. Gibson writes: "[e]ach woman was asked to remember forever the name of the woman with whom her name was matched and to allow her own name to stand publicly as a feminist alongside the names of the dead" (1990, press release). In the context of the anti-feminist killings this request is not without the threat of danger, as Gibson and Marian Yeo point out. Under the list of the feminists' names, in a smaller type, Gibson set the words "guilty as charged"--referencing and reframing again the gunman's accusation of "a bunch of fucking feminists".

Each of the lists on the window bordered a central panel inscribed with the phrase "Murdered by Misogyny" in large, bold type, and a prose-poem that further emphasized the pairing of the names--and the responsibility of remembering that this pairing puts into place:

These names ... ces noms ... here in black and white for all the world to see. Our eyelids burn, we cannot look. We did not imagine. Ces noms ... leurs noms ... names which might have been our own. Wrapped in our womanly arms. Safe in our feminist hearts. Ces noms ... once inscribed ... imprinted ... can never be erased ... jamais. (in Yeo: 9)

In Marian Yeo's phrasing, drawing on Gibson's statements, the prose poem "underscores the fact that the two lists might well have been interchanged" (9)--not only reinforcing the pairing of names, but extending the gesture to one of reversal.

Gibson explains that the precedent for this symbolic and political gesture toward "guilt" (by association) is drawn from two events. The first occurred during Nazi occupation of Denmark, where thousands of non-Jewish Danes chose to bear an armband with a yellow Star of David, thus not only protesting the order that all Jews identify themselves in this way, but also making it impossible to discern who was and was not Jewish (Gibson, press release; Yeo: 9). Second, in 1971, 343 women protested France's restrictive anti-abortion laws by "signing a newspaper proclamation 'confessing' that each had had an (illegal) abortion" (press release). The

³ Although two of the works are not installations, my preference was to maintain the sense of Gibson's total project by including descriptions of all the pieces in one place.

second event According to Gibson, "[t]he use of feminist names then becomes a kind of testimonial within the context of *Murdered by Misogyny: Ces Noms*, much like a silent vigil in which a position or a point of view, is understood without the need to be overtly articulated" (press release). (For a detailed discussion of *Ces Noms*, see chapter 4.)

This approach to mourning the fourteen women's deaths is repeated in Gibson's second work, subtitled *Here in Black and White*, which appeared as a two-page layout in the 1990 spring issue of *C Magazine*. On the left-hand page of the layout, Gibson has listed the fourteen women's names, alphabetically and in upper-case, with the words, "died December 6, 1989 Montreal" inscribed at the bottom of the column. This is matched by a column of type on the right-hand page with the names of the 13 women Gibson had contacted, plus her own, also in alphabetical order, ending with the phrase "feminist as charged". The "pairing poem" (cited above) is re/printed across the top of this second page.

Gibson's third work in her series is an installation, subtitled *These Shining Golden Names*. Shown at the Anna Leonowens Gallery (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) in Halifax in December 1990, the installation was "part of a three woman show called *Backtalk*, curated on the theme of violence against women" (Yeo: 9). Gibson's exhibition was composed of two panels (22' x 8') eighteen feet apart, visually connected by a line of gold type applied directly to the wall. The right hand panel was inscribed in gold lettering with the names of the murdered women; the left-hand panel, with a version of the prose-poem. The type joining the panels read: "these names ... these shining golden names ... will live forever, toujours" (in Yeo: 9). Gibson's use of "toujours" instead of "always" is representative, she says, "of a desire to 'speak' directly to the slain women in their own language" (in Yeo: 9)--a gesture that is repeated in the prose-poem.

The fourth and final work in the series, subtitled *Forever*, was orchestrated with Plug-In Gallery, an artist-run gallery in Winnipeg, and coincided with the first year anniversary. This multi-site installation consisted of fourteen solid brass plaques (10.5" x 7.5"), each engraved with the name of one of the women, the date of the massacre and the words "murdered by misogyny". On some plaques the text was in English; on others, in French. The use of memorial plaques to explicitly remember women "murdered by misogyny" is subversive of a form that has "customarily [been] used to commemorate men of status" (Yeo: 11).

Each plaque was displayed in a public area of fourteen different locations across Winnipeg, where they remained for the duration of a year. The participating sites were chosen because of their variously expressed commitments to "the betterment of the community" (Yeo: 9). The selected sites were: Winnipeg City Hall, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Art Gallery,⁴ West End Cultural Centre, Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, Manitoba Legislative Building, University of Manitoba's Faculty of Engineering, Women's Health Clinic, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Augustine United Church, Klinik, Manitoba Union Centre, ArtSpace, Plug-In Gallery. Gibson negotiated with each host site for appropriate, honouring, placement of the plaques, which became expressions around which a number of ceremonies were organized in remembrance of the fourteen women. Yeo writes of the Winnipeg installation that, "[t]he memory

⁴ Yeo notes that the plaque at this site was removed at the artist's request, but does not offer any explanation (9).

of the slain student is no longer limited to family and friends: it is incorporated into the public consciousness" (11)--I would extend her point to all of the expressions of *Murdered by Misogyny*. [Sources: Gagnon, 1991; Gibson, 1990 press release for the installation in Toronto; Yeo, 1991.]

(c) Documentaries:

There are four directly-related feminist documentary video responses with which I am aware. In addition, Vision TV, a multifaith and social justice television channel, produced two programming responses, both to coincide with the fifth anniversary.

Video:

After the Montreal Massacre. Director: Gerry Rogers. Producer: Nicole Hubert. NFB (Studio D) and CBC. 1991. (27 mins)

The documentary features interviews with Sylvie Gagnon, who was wounded by one of the gunman's bullets at Ecole Polytechnique on December 6, 1989, and offers viewers a compelling testimony of how she grappled with the effects of being shot, and surviving.⁵ The documentary also includes interviews with: Jack Todd and Francine Pelletier (both well known newspaper journalists in Montreal; Pelletier was one of the women named on the killer's hitlist); a sociologist Linda Mcleod; Leona Hellig from the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre; Charlotte Bunch and Rosemary Brown, feminist writers and activists--all of whom (differently) contextualize the killings in a range of acts of violence against women. The documentary is a solid displacement of the attempt, particularly strong in Quebec, to create the killer as a madman and the killings as an isolated event that were not about gender power relations, an interpretation that is negligent not only of historically articulated gender relations, but also ignores the killer's own understanding of the murders in his suicide note. In a review of the film, Rogers' is quoted as follows: "[after the massacre] you just had to see the faces of women in the Montreal subway. Women were still crying, and not just for those 14 women who were killed. They were crying from clarity. Why would anyone want to deny that?" (in Conlogue, 1991: C2). [Sources: Conlogue, 1991; viewing notes]

⁵ She tells of how she fell to the ground after she was shot and pretended to be dead. While she was lying there, the gunman walked between her and another woman, shot the other woman again (killing her), and then moved on.

Au Delà du 6 décembre (trans. *Beyond December 6*). Director: Catherine Fol. NFB (French Studio).

Based on interviews with Nathalie Provost who was also shot at the Polytechnique on December 6 and survived, this film takes a different approach to the former: where Rogers, Gagnon and others offer a feminist interpretation that links the killings to other acts of violence against women, Fol (also a graduate of the Polytechnique) and Provost take the position that the killings were not about gendered oppression (partly in reaction to Rogers' film). This does not prevent Fol from claiming a feminist position, however. She states: "the people in my film are feminists—they're super feminists. It's just that they articulate their words differently" (in "NFB ...", 1991). Provost was remembered in media coverage at the time of the killings as the woman who stood in front of the killer crying "We're not feminists! We're not against men! We're just women who want to live our lives!" (in Zerbisias, 1991). In the film, "Provost defends her exchange with the killer, asking 'Is it wrong to want to live?'" (in "NFB ...", 1991). The central tension articulated between Fol's and Rogers' films references an alignment to feminist struggles in remembering December 6 and living in its aftermath, a tension that is named in reviews of the films along generational lines. For example, Provost is quoted as noting: "The massacre opened a lot of wounds for many women. We, in our 20s, we don't have those wounds" (in Zerbisias, 1991); a statement from which Fol continues: "Feminists blazed a trail and I'm sure it wasn't easy. Now I go along that trail, just like a man. I don't have to cut down any trees. I have other things to do" (in Zerbisias, 1991). In response to this position, Francine Pelletier argues: "Fol's film is, in a very unconscious, very naive way, part of the denial process of what happened at La Polytechnique" (in Zerbisias, 1991). [Sources: Conlogue, 1991; Couture, 1991; Laframboise, 1991; "NFB", 1991; Zerbisias, 1991]

Reframing the Montreal Massacre: A Media Interrogation. Director: Maureen Bradley. Distributor: V-Tape, Toronto. (26 mins)

Differently to the previously discussed videos, which were produced within the early years of the murders, Bradley's *Reframing the Montreal Massacre* focuses not on the killings per se, but how they have been framed as a media event. One of Bradley's key interests in the piece is to consider what has been left out, or silenced, in the news coverage of the massacre. She makes two points particularly well. First, she notes that the anger many women expressed in response to the murders was consistently absent from most coverage. She recalls, for example, an angry protest in Montreal, in the wake of the shootings, which was not covered at all in the mainstream media and only "recorded" (for history) in a student publication. She asks, "why must the media contain our anger?". Second, she critiques the dominant positioning of the slaughtered women as "daughters" or "students": namings that work as a gloss. As she insightfully notes, positioning those murdered in this way foregrounds a sense of them as "harmless" and drops from view the reason they were targeted by their killer: in her terms, they were perceived to be competent women in a previously male-only bastion. Technically also, Bradley works in a different documentary style to the other videos viewed for this bibliography. Her presence in the piece works, to my mind, not only as a narrating tool, but also in unsettling notions of objectivity

in the production of news (and, I would argue, remembrance). Such unsettling might also be read in the techniques employed in the video—off angle images, a fast pace, layered representations of news clips. [Source: viewing notes]

Tee Hee Hee. Filmmaker: Ling Chiu. Distributor: Moving Images Distribution, Vancouver. (4 mins)

Originally produced as a video exercise at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, *Tee Hee Hee* is a four-minute sequence that Chiu describes as follows: "[t]he dark rhythmic soundtrack quietly filters in. ... Fade up to a blood red atmosphere. Slowly, the camera tracks across fourteen empty chairs as the names of the women of the Montreal Massacre scroll upward toward the left side of the screen" (Chiu, 1996: 53). This sequence is followed by two on-screen statements. The first describes the act of a male student at the University of Toronto in 1991, "reenacting" the massacre by pretending to have a gun and telling women to stay in a classroom, men to leave. The second tells of an incident in Vancouver in 1993, when a male student disrupted a memorial service with machine-gun noises (54). (At a later point, Chiu remade the video on 16mm film, which is better able to handle the colour red, a key element in the work (55).) [Source: Chiu in *Fireweed*, 1996; of note to readers: this article includes an interesting discussion regarding the types of responses Chiu has received on the work.]

Television:

It's about time. Sadia Zaman, host and show producer; Rita Deverell, executive producer. One hour documentary in response to the Montreal Massacre. Originally broadcast December 6, 1994.

This wide-ranging documentary is framed and inter-cut with clips from The Wyrld Sister's performing "This Memory" (see below for details of the song). The first interview is with Suzanne Edward Laplante, mother of Anne-Marie (one of the massacred women) and president and co-founder of the December 6 Victims Foundation Against Violence. Interviewed by Zaman in and around her home, Laplante speaks of her work since her daughter's murder and how she has been compelled to "do something" to keep the women's memories alive and recast the impacts of this tragedy. This work includes the talks she gives around the country (see chapter 3 for some discussion).

Following this segment, Zaman interviews Ruby Reski-Naurocki, a rural Manitoba woman, who became an activist in relation and response to the massacre in Montreal. Reski-Naurocki's remembrance stance pivots on the massacre as a turning point in her life, through which she both makes sense of past experiences and works toward a different future for her daughters.

The focus then shifts to a group discussion with Leonie Scarlett, Baldev Mutta, Lezlie Lee Kam, and Linda Chin. Each of these participants speaks to the impacts of the massacre for

them, which includes the necessity of remembering this particular act of violence against women in relation to a range of incidents of racist violence, and racism within feminist communities. Kam cautions, for example, against positioning the massacre as "symbolic" of violences against all women and notes the differing degrees of vulnerability and risk which women face across race, sexuality and class. Mutta also points to the importance of men positioning themselves in relation to the killings--that they too are implicated in remembrance and change.

The issue of men's relation to the massacre forms the substance of the following segment, with Martin Rumscheidt (a theology professor) and his daughter, Heidi Rumscheidt (an MA student). Having inherited a legacy of denial and silence from his father in relation to the Shoah, Martin Rumscheidt articulates parallels between his positions as a German and a man/father: in both cases he takes on the obligations of knowing more, of coming to understand his responsibilities in a society, and as a christian, in which such acts are possible.

The documentary concludes with interviews with Heidi Rathjen and Wendy Cukier, both of whom have been key activists around gun control legislation in response to the massacre. [Source: viewing notes]

Five-part series on *Skylight* (each segment 8-10 mins). Rita Deverell, host and producer. Originally broadcast December 5-9, 1994. Repeated June 5-9, 1995.

Each segment in the series was given a particular focus, within a thematic interest in feminist artistic and/or ritual responses to the massacre. The interviewees were: Shirley Bear, a First Nations artist, who had recently created a ritual installation in response to the massacre; Beth Alber, the winner of the Women's Monument Project design competition (see relevant sections in this bibliography); Teresa Posyniak, a Calgary-based artist whose work *Lest We Forget* is discussed below (in permanent memorials); Ginette Papasidero Picard, a French-language visual artist who began a series of works within hours of seeing the news on the massacre; Sharon Rosenberg speaking to a selection of work from *Don't Remain Silent* (art) and the possibilities / limitations of memorial vigils (ritual). [Source: viewing notes]

(d) Other Visual Works:

Murdered by Misogyny: Here in Black and White. C Magazine, Spring 1990.

See *Murdered by Misogyny* in sub-section (b) temporary installations above.

Red rose, white lace. Concept and design: Joss MacLennan. First reproduced December 1990.

Reproduced first as a poster design (22.5" x 10.75"), three-quarters of the image is a pattern of white-lace folded on itself and blended into a grouping of 10 partially-open red roses, which represent the only colour against a black/grey/white background. Layered over the image in black headline type and the following format is the text:

14 women died
in Montreal
December 6, 1989.

97 women died
in domestic violence
in 1988 in Canada.

First mourn.
Then work for change.

The last phrase finishes just above the grouping of roses, one of which lies slightly higher than the others and focuses my eye, at least, on the word "work". Layered over the roses in a much smaller, reverse-type are the names of the groups and organizations that sponsored the production of the poster. Twenty names are represented, including a number of women's collectives, labour organizations and unions, an educational institute, and other social justice groups.

This same design [image and headline text], with and without a listing of sponsors, has been issued as a bookmark and on a button to coincide with subsequent anniversaries. This design, along with the memorial vigils, is probably the most well-recognized signifier of the Montreal Massacre that circulates across politically oriented women's, and other social justice, communities.

Permanent Memorials:

December 6 Women's Grove Memorial. Manitoba Legislature Grounds, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Designed by: Cynthia Cohlmeier, landscape architect. Opening Ceremony: September 24, 1995. Financed by: community and union organizations, local government, individual contributions.

A Memorial Garden rather than a stone monument is the substance of the Winnipeg permanent memorial, as a "living commitment to the rights and lives of Manitoba women" (Keith Louise Fulton, committee member, in Money: 11). Prominently located on the Manitoba legislature grounds, the memorial takes the form of "a large encircled garden", and includes a

dedication stone and benches around the perimeter. Cost: \$65,000, which includes an endowment to offset the costs of potential vandalism. [Source: Money, 1995; pamphlet from the opening]

Lest We Forget. Calgary, Alberta. Artist: Teresa Posyniak. Installed: Law Building, University of Calgary, November 1994. Financed by: Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Posyniak's piece is a memorial sculpture, "dedicated to all slain women, but particularly to those murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique" ("Sculptures keep the memory alive", 1994: C1). The work is comprised of a large column inscribed with the names of women murdered since 1989, drawn from Mary Billy's "Femicide Register". [Sources: Money, 1995; "Sculptures ...", 1994; *Skylight*, 1994]

London Women's Monument. Victoria Park, London, Ontario. Designed by Leigh Raney, student artist. Dedicated on December 6, 1994 [not installed as of spring 1995]. Planner/Fundraiser: The Women's Education and Research Foundation.

Like the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver, the London Women's Monument was the subject of significant debate and was barely approved by city council. Whereas in Vancouver the debate was over the substance of the memorial, in London the focus was, at least on the surface, the site, which drew "criticism from veterans (war memorials stand in the same park), heritage activists, citizens who felt London needed a public art policy before such a monument should be accepted, and a local neighbourhood association" (Money, 1995: 10). The \$15,000 monument is to be entirely funded through private donations. [Source: Money, 1995]

Untitled. London, Ontario. Artist: Elaine Carr. Installed: University of Western Ontario's Brescia College, outside of the Bishop Michael Francis Library, December 6, 1994.

Elaine Carr, a Windsor sculptor and print maker, has "created a sculpture each year to commemorate the 1989 murders" (in "Sculptures ...", 1994: C1; all quotations are from this source). Over the years, the pieces have changed; the artist notes that "[t]his one is more about regenerating life" than the rawness and pain of the early years". This most recent work is "a large bronze bowl formed by 14 women dancing. There is a crack in the bowl, which rests on a chunk of white-ribboned, Windsor-mined granite. A seedling sprouts through the fissure". Carr says: "I wanted to show them as young women who had a lot of life ... for me, the dancing shows there is still a lot of hope and a sense of community". Like other memorials, however, no single meaning can be attributed to the memorial; for the manager of the Brescia College's Centre for Women and the Sacred, the sculpture needed to be located in "a quiet reflective place ... to preserve the dignity of grieving". This is the first of Carr's memorial series to be installed publicly and in Canada; "the others are in private collections in the United States". [Source: "Sculptures keep the memory alive", 1994: C1.]

Women's Monument Project. Thornton Park, Vancouver, B.C. To be installed in the summer of 1997. Winning design: Beth Alber, "Marker of Change". Organizer/Fundraiser: The Women's Monument Project Committee. Financed by: individuals, community groups, organizations, government.

The Women's Monument Project⁶ officially began in the winter of 1990-91, when the Women's Centre Steering Committee at Capilano College in Vancouver voted in support of "a student's proposal⁷ to build a monument in memory of the women murdered at the Université de Montréal in 1989 and, symbolically, of all women affected by male violence" (Design Competition Guidelines, 4). A Women's Monument Committee was founded, which expanded and shifted over the years to "include interested women from the various communities of Vancouver" (Guidelines, 4). Feminists involved in the Committee brought experience and skills from working in "education, the media, cultural organizations, political advocacy, visual art and architecture" (Guidelines, 4).

For over two years, the Committee developed and refined a sense of the Project, worked to secure a site, raised funds and devised the design competition (Guidelines, 4). By July 1993, the site had been confirmed and Thornton Park was donated by the City of Vancouver (*Giving Voice* Catalogue). In January 1994, the Project launched the National Design Competition with a May 15th deadline for submissions to stage one (*Giving Voice*). Stage two submissions, requested from three finalists, were due by August 30 (Guidelines, 11) and a final design was chosen by the jury on October 7 (*Giving Voice*). In the summer of 1995, it was expected that construction of the Monument would be complete within a year; this deadline has been pushed back due to fundraising needs (as of October 1996 the Project was still approximately \$30,000 short of budget). Currently, it is anticipated that the monument will be ready for unveiling in the summer of 1997 (Alber, personal communication, October 23, 1996).

The competition was adjudicated by a group of women selected to reflect a recognition of feminist activism on issues of violence against women, and the contributions of feminist women to the arts (Guidelines, 13). Seven women were selected from across Canada to form a jury that would be, according to the Guidelines, "as representative as possible of Canadian cultural and regional diversity and ... reflect the variety of races, ethnic groups, and sexual orientations among Canadian women" (Guidelines, 13). Jurists were paid an honorarium and an allowance for daily expenses; their transportation costs to the jury site were also covered (Guidelines, 13). Although the jurying process was anonymous, their names were subsequently released. The jurists were: Nicole Brossard; Rosemary Brown; Maura Gatensby; Doreen Jensen; Wilma Needham; Haruko Okano; Irene F. Whittome (*Giving Voice*).

Funding for the Monument has been generated from individuals, women's and community groups, unions, corporations and government. The Project requires \$300,000 (Dafoe,

⁶ Subsequently referred to as the Project.

⁷ Although her name is not given in the Competition Guidelines, Christine McDowell, who was a student at Capilano College at the time, is generally credited with providing this impetus for the Project.

1994: C1); \$115,000 of which is allocated to the construction costs of the Monument (Guidelines, 11). In the *Giving Voice* literature that was distributed at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the following organizations are listed for "generous support": Capilano College, Vancouver Parks and Recreation Board, The City of Vancouver, Nancy's Very Own Foundation [Nancy Jackman], B.C. Hydro, Vancity Savings Credit Union, B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality, Employment and Immigration Canada, Canadian Autoworkers Union. The fundraising brochure announcing the winning design lists, in addition: Rock of Ages, Strow Foundation, Canadian Women's Foundation and Air Canada. (For critical discussion of the Project, see Chapter 6. For documentation of the art exhibits related to the Project in Vancouver and Toronto, see the relevant entries in "Art Shows", above.) [Sources: Alber, personal communication; Dafoe, 1994; Design Competition Guidelines; Fundraising Brochure #3; *Giving Voice* Exhibition Catalogue. My thanks to Beth Alber for generously sharing her Project materials with me.]

Women Won't Forget Permanent Memorial. Toronto, Ontario. Installed: Philosopher's Walk, University of Toronto.

Women Won't Forget formed after the Montreal Massacre with the "simple objective of gathering wreaths, in memory and in honour of these women, to first be displayed in Toronto and then sent to Montreal" (information sheet, nd). They have remained a constant presence in remembrance activism, working, in part, for a permanent memorial. This living monument comprises 14 red oak trees planted in memory of the women slain in Montreal and a boulder "signifying women's strength". An accompanying plaque reads: "These fourteen trees are with sorrow planted in memory and in honour of fourteen sisters slain because of their gender in Montreal on December 6, 1989. May commitment to the eradication of sexism and violence against women be likewise planted in the hearts and minds of all who come after. It is not enough to look back in pain. We must create a new future". (These statements are also written in French.) The memorial is located at the north end of Philosopher's Walk, a park-like grounds on the University of Toronto, that runs just west of University Avenue, between Bloor Street West and Hoskin Avenue. Women Won't Forget is also the key organizer of memorial vigils in downtown Toronto, which are held each year on Philosopher's Walk. [Sources: information sheet; personal attendance at vigils.]

Memorial Vigils:

Organized by feminist communities across the country, memorial vigils were held in the days immediately following the slaughters in 1989 and have been key markers of remembrance on each subsequent anniversary. See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of this form of remembrance.

Publications:

This category is sub-divided as follows: (a) poetry; (b) non-fiction books and journals; (c) fiction.

(a) poetry:

"Femicide" by Linda Abrahams in *Matriart: A Canadian Feminist Art Journal*. Vol. 1 (1), Spring 1990, 13. (12 lines)

This poem is an expression of a feminist responding to the massacre of 14 women, assumed to be "feminists". Refusing notions of "evolution", the poem ends with: "I'm 100% proof revolution".

"Not One Step Back" by Allison Campbell in *Contemporary Verse 2*. Vol. 14 (4), Spring 1992, 26.

This poem muses with the question "would they [the massacred women] have been out of the line of fire" if they hadn't been in an engineering class? Stepping back from the specifics of the classroom, the poem is a challenge to notions that there are safe spaces and/or safe ways of being, ending with the stance that a legacy of hatred against women means even newborn girls may be left to die.

"Flashpoint" by Maggie Helwig in *Matriart: A Canadian Feminist Art Journal*. Vol. 1 (1), Spring 1990, 12. (74 lines)

In flashes, or fragments, the poet interplays scenes from the slaughters in Montreal with violences--threatened and actualized--that are more usual in women's lives. The language of the poem is explicitly visceral and bloodied, cut through with references to the blast of a hunter's gun, evoked in "flash" and "flashpoint" (14 times). The poem ends with a listing of the names of the women murdered at the Polytechnique.

"Musings of a South Asian Woman in the Wake of the Montreal Massacre" by Rita Kholi in *Canadian Woman Studies*. Vol. 11 (4), Summer 1991, 13. (67 lines)

As the preface to an article on violences against women, this poem names the specificities of race and class as they shape whose deaths are remembered and mourned, and who remembers and mourns "with a difference". The poet calls on women--specifically white middle class feminists--to recognize that "no woman is free / Till all women are free" and to act against violences against all women. Particularly noteworthy in the poem, from my perspective, is the stanza that recalls the identities of 3 other women who were shot at before the Montreal murders,

but who are not (publicly) remembered. It reads: "Did you know / In Rexdale 2 Black women / And 1 South Asian woman / Were shot at / Just before the Massacre? / Did you? / No. / I am not surprised / I hear that / Answer so many times". This marks, to my mind, a key challenge to feminist remembrance politics.

"Fourteen Women" by Tanya Lester in *Contemporary Verse 2*. Vol. 13 (2), Summer/Fall 1990, 64. (13 lines)

Reference to the Montreal slaughters is not established explicitly in this poem, but pulled in through reference to a radio announcement and a boy child's inquiry of his mother-- "'14? How many it is, Mommy?'" The mother's response comes in a counting out to 14: "1 and 1 and 1 and" and ends with the child's "Too many".

"The Woman who Bled for the World" by Rest Gender in *Matriart: A Canadian Feminist Art Journal*. Vol. 1 (1), Spring 1990, 12. (17 lines)

With the exception of the first and last, each line of this poem is structured by a short statement, followed by the phrase "She bled". The statements are broadly encompassing: referencing the destruction of the planet, hatreds, and the lack of social responsibility. The framing lines of the poem read: "Why are you bleeding? They asked" (opening) and "Know your blood is one, she said" (closing).

(b) non-fiction books/journals:

Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme. Summer 1991, Vol. 11 (4) and Fall 1991, Vol. 12 (1). Toronto: York University.

These two special issues were produced, in part, as a response to the massacre in Montreal. The editorial in the first volume, titled, "Violence Against Women", opens with a naming of murdered women, including but not limited to those slaughtered at Ecole Polytechnique. The issue is "dedicated to those of us who have died and those of us who have survived" (3). Articles speak to the breadth of violences women suffer, situating the massacre in this context. The second volume, "Violence Against Women: Strategies for Change", is designed to "move beyond recovery into empowerment and change" (3). From this perspective, the issue considers "individual, community and institutional response[s]" (3). Marian Yeo's article on Lin Gibson's installation work, *Murdered by Misogyny*, is included in this volume (see above for details).

The Montreal Massacre. Louise Malette and Marie Chalouh, eds. Translated by Marlene Wildeman. Charlottetown: gynergy books, 1991.

A collection of 49 letters and short essays, most of which were originally published in French daily newspapers in Montreal. Mainly responses from feminists, there are also a few contributions from progressive men. In her review, Marguerite Anderson captures the tone of the collection in this statement: "[it] speak[s] of the sorrow and the rage of women and their determination to see in this terrorist act a political one, against women and against feminism" (1991: 146). As the only translated set of responses from French media, it is a particularly valuable resource for English-speaking readers to develop an impression of how the massacre was being made sense of (and challenged) in French Quebec. For example, one theme frequently referenced in the text is the mass circulated viewpoint that the killings were "an unfortunate and isolated act" (in Malette and Chalouh: 58). [Against this position, feminists and others who offered a different interpretation were accused of trying to "claim" the tragedy for their own ends (Anderson: 147).] From a concern with historical memory, the collection is further important in that it provides readers with a sense of the urgency of response in the immediate aftermath. As reviewer Margot Lacroix observes: "several of [the contributions]—letters to the editor, for example—would probably have fallen into oblivion had this book project not been undertaken precisely to slow down the process of forgetting" (1991: 14). [Sources: Anderson, 1991; Lacroix, 1991; Malette and Chalouh, 1991]

(c) fiction:

Nora Kelly. *My Sister's Keeper*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 1992.

This feminist mystery novel cites the massacre as a reference point for forms of sexism and violence on a fictitious university campus, where the detecting character, Gillian Adams, is a professor in the History Department. The most extensive notation regarding the massacre occurs close to end of the novel, where Kelly writes, in the voice of Gillian: "[t]he Montreal Massacre was almost a year ago, but I feel as if it's in the air I breathe. I don't know what to say. We're all shocked at what's coming out. And yet the women who come to my office to talk about their problems with sexism say that its actually gotten worse since Montreal. And I hear the same thing from my counterparts on other campuses. I'll tell you what I think: Montreal ripped the lid off. Now--after the massacre--nobody can pretend that the problem [of violence against women] doesn't exist--not the way they did before. Nobody can pretend that sexism and violence aren't linked--and lethal to women" (209-210). [Source: reading notes]

Radio Programming:

A number of radio stations have produced programming around--or in response to issues of--December 6th. Although I have documentation only of the following program, it is noteworthy in that it included segments from Montreal and Halifax stations.

Remembering December 6 (1993). Toronto: CIUT. Producers: Sian Cansfield and Elizabeth Gilarowski of Syndicated Women's Programming at CIUT. 57.51 minutes.

In 1993, CIUT, the University of Toronto radio station, produced a syndicated program that included segments from Toronto, Halifax and Montreal. Hosted by Elizabeth Gilarowski, the program combines interviews, statistics, readings and music that locate remembrance of the massacre in a context of violences against women.

After a brief introduction, the program opens with a reading from Brian Valee's *Life After Billy: Jane's Story--The Aftermath of Abuse*. This is followed by an interview with the author about Jane Hurshman, the "Jane" of the book title, who killed her abusive husband and later committed suicide. In this opening segment, the emphasis is on the costs of violences against women--both literal [monetary costs] and figurative [the costs to a woman's physical, psychic and emotional well being]. Then Jazz Lee Alston's "Love ... Never That" is played, a song that takes apart the meanings of love and questions what is done, the abuse that is deemed allowable/possible, under "love". This introduces the next sequence, an interview with Mildred Millar of the Halifax Purple Ribbon Campaign by a host at the radio station of Dalhousie University. The emphasis in the interview is on including men in activism against violences against women. Ani Difranco's "make them apologize", a song of her resistances in the music industry, concludes the first half of the show.

Following a second excerpt from *Life After Billy*, the program continues with a segment hosted by CKUT, the McGill University radio station, called "Transformations". This segment combines music with testimonial responses from women remembering how they felt when they first heard of the slayings, and readings from well-known feminist writers, including Audre Lorde and Alice Walker. For me, this is the most powerful segment of the entire CIUT program, in that it engages me not only intellectually, but also--and particularly--viscerally.⁸ The program is brought to an end by: poetry readings that highlight women's strengths and resistances to violence; an interview with Metropolitan Toronto's Police Chief about police initiatives in response to violences against women; a further excerpt from *A Life After Billy*; and a summary of recommendations from the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. [source: CIUT program; personal communication with Elizabeth Gilarowski]

⁸ For a sense of the tone of this segment, see the voices section of Chapter 5 and the citations to d'Souza.

Music & Song:

"Fourteen Women". Composer: Carole Anne Burris, Toronto.

A musical composition that at the time of this writing is not available in a mass circulated recording. Burris has played this composition live at memorial services in Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto.

"This Memory". On *Leave a Little Light*. 1992. The Wyrd Sisters. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Oh Yah! Records.

The Wyrd Sisters are a Winnipeg-based three woman band. At the time of this recording, the band was comprised of: Nancy Reinhold, Kim Baryluk and Kim Segal. The lyrics to "This Memory" are as follows:

Early that morning
Cup of coffee in her hand
Kissed her mother on the cheek
Said "I'm more busy than I planned.
I'll be coming home a bit late
But could you keep some supper warm ...
Oh, just another busy day."

Early that morning
Getting ready by the door
Kissed her lover on the cheek
Said "I'll be coming back for more.
Oh how I love you
We've got so much to live for baby ...
Oh, I'll be coming home real soon."

But it could have been me
Just as easily ...
Could have been my sister
Left there to bleed.
Oh it could have been my father
Or my brother done the deed.
Oh no ... don't let me lose this memory.

Later on that evening turn on my TV
Listen as they're talking
About the news of a shooting spree.

Fourteen young women
Shot dead in Montreal ...
Oh it's the killing of us all.
Yes it's the killing of us all.

And it could have been me
Just as easily ...
Could have been my lover
Left there to bleed.
Oh it could have been my father
Or my brother done the deed.
oh no ... don't let me lose this memory.

And it could have been you
Just as easily ...
Could have been your sister
Left there to bleed.
Oh it could have been your father
Or your brother done the deed.
Oh no, don't ever lose this memory.

Don't let us lose this memory ...
Because it could've been you or me.

(For discussion of this song, see Chapter 4.) [Source: *Leave a Little Light*. My thanks to The Wyrd Sisters for giving me permission to reproduce the lyrics for this document.]

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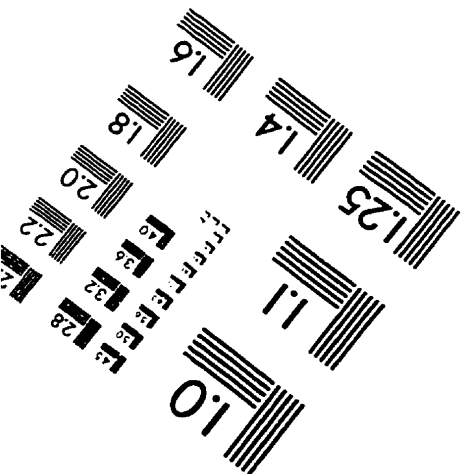
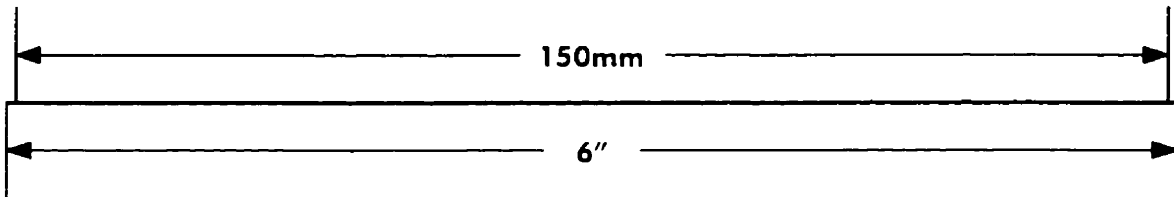
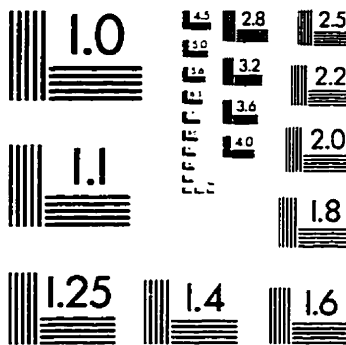
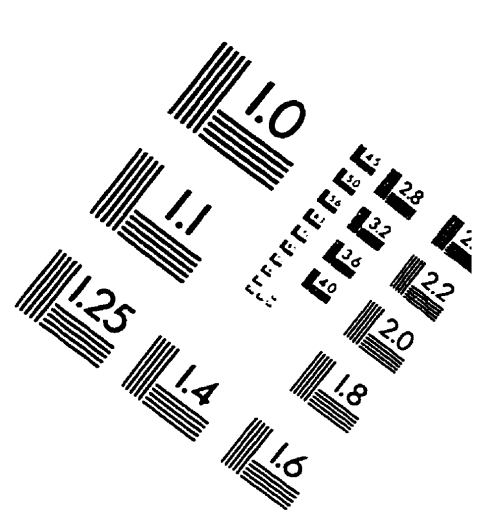
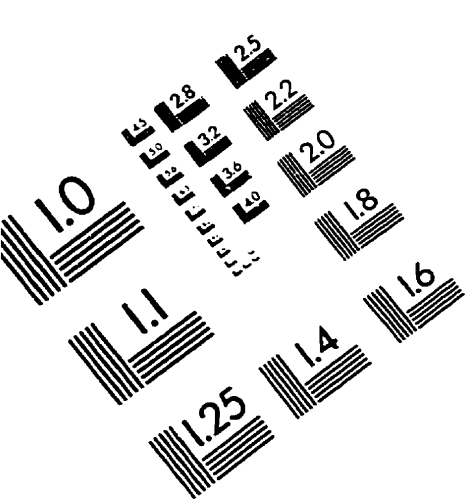
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