Notre-Dame-des Neiges Cemetery

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Introduction: Site-specific Characteristics of the Place

I am a sculptor, and my profession includes a specific skill to design and execute gravestones. Perhaps because of this professional permanent closeness to cemeteries, I always notice that *genius loci* of a particular territory or city is more easily understood through its funeral landscapes. I see a cemetery as a distillated essence of a city. For me, not only architectural features of these specific spaces, but also the attitude of society to its passed members, the limits of memory (expressed in the degree of tombs' abandonment) are shown there. If, extending Le Corbusier's words, we can say that the city "is a machine for living", that the cemeteries are important functional parts of this machine and not simply the memory's vehicles. A cemetery is not only a place for bringing things alive or a place of symbolic maintenance of the life of the dead for the need of the living. Seeing funereal architectural space as a prolongation of the city's landscape, I can agree with Richard V. Francavigilia that a cemetery "binds a particular generation of men to the architectural and perhaps even spatial preferences and prejudices that accompanied them throughout life."[1] Furthermore, sometimes pieces of memorial architecture symbolize entire powerful civilizations such as Taj Mahal and the Egyptian pyramids.

I decided to focus my research on one of the Mount-Royal cemeteries – Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. I am planning to scrutinize this specific part of Montreal as

a cultural landscape "that represents […] social changes in communities"[2] in Meredith Watkins' words.

To begin with, I am going to look at the cemetery closely – to evaluate the physical and perceptual conditions of the site, which create its specific atmosphere. Situated in the center of Montreal, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Canada, covers 343 acres. According to the Cemetery's official web site every year the cemetery accommodates 5,600 burials. As of this date, there are more than 65,000 monuments and 71 family vaults.[3] On the territory exist: 2 chapels, 8 mausoleums, a crematorium, and administrative buildings. The cemetery is penetrated by the system of roads that make transportation really convenient. The beginnings of the driveways are the three entrances; the main entrance gates are situated on Code-des-Neiges street. The architectural-spatial milieu of the Cemetery is characterized by the presence of the huge quantity of sculptures: they are placed not only in the exterior – as fragments of the monuments and free standing objects, but also in the interior of the chapels and mausoleums. There is also a row of high quality monuments, such as the historical ones that were erected to the memory of the Patriots and to Ludger Duvernay, founder of the Saint-Jean Baptiste Society. This is a nice calm place in the center of a busy, noisy city. From within the cemetery's territory Montreal is almost invisible; it even seems sometimes, that the surrounding city does not exist.

In terms of historical evolution the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery went from being a rural cemetery to a cemetery surrounded by the city. It was founded in 1854 as a garden cemetery in the French style, and designed by the landscape architect Henri-Maurice Perreault. He was sent by the founders of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery

Corporation to study the best and current rural cemeteries found in Boston and New York.[4] As a result the Cemetery has a certain kind of similarity to the best examples of North-American funeral landscapes that were created at the same time. The North American rural cemetery movement assumed the removal of cemeteries from the cities to the suburbs for medical, aesthetic, and economic reasons. At the same time, establishing cemeteries cultivated the "wild" natural areas close to cities. In the case of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, its picturesque green park with paths gave Montrealers (at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries) the perfect place for strolls and picnics.[5] Being gradually surrounded by the growing city, the Cemetery partially carries out these leisure and social functions: nowadays all Mount Royal contemporary recreation activity is situated in the Park of Mount Royal. Nevertheless, now you can walk, run or even drive around the cemetery (but you can not ride a bicycle and can not bring a picnic).

Thus, as we can see, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is an important physical, functional, and social part of Montreal. It has its own history, which is paralleled and interlaced with Montreal's constantly changing urban environment. It is only logical to suppose, that, being an integral part of the city, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery has, consequently, the urban palimpsest's features. Further, analyzing the Cemetery in details, I am going to check up the validity of this supposition.

Cemetery as a Conjunction of Social and Architectural Spaces

Despite the fact that people resting here are passive, or simply speaking, dead, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is the scene of social life. It is a gathering place for more than 175,000 visitors every year.[6] Traditionally, cemeteries are the places of social

rituals for the living, and the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is no exception. According to Kenneth T. Jackson and Camilo José Vergara: "Death and its rituals not only reflect social values, but are an important force in sharing them."[7] Directed by the elders, children attend the ancestral tombs and take part in the rituals. It gives the young the possibility to experience their relationship with family, unity with family (and national) history, and continuity of generations. The young person realizes his/her patrimonial and social sense of belonging, and joins his/her community's cultural traditions. Except for educational issues, the ritual practices (or just attending the Cemetery) contain a series of social issues: maintaining kin's relationship, keeping alive personal memories and community/family histories.

Therefore, the architecture of the Cemetery to a greater degree is mostly functional; despite that it reflects historical stylistic changes. It forms space for social rituals and serves the memoralization (or symbolic representation) of the deceased members of a particular family, community, and society.

Now I am going to examine the "architectural microcosm" of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery with a view to the social features indicated above. The overwhelming majority of the markers in the Cemetery are presented in the architectural form of a monument: gothic, obelisk, cross-vault obelisk, tablet, pulpit, scroll, block, raised-top inscription, and lawn-tape (or plaque, whose top surface is flush with the ground level) in the Francavigilia's classification.[8] The evolution of these types depends on the changes of specific funeral fashion and time-based aesthetic preferences of the living. The forms of monuments correspond also with architectural changes in the Montreal's urban realm. The influence of the historic styles on the monuments is evident

but not determinant. The traditional base function of these objects is marking a place on which a body of the certain person is buried. Notwithstanding visual symbolic and aesthetic qualities, every (even the most forgotten and abandoned) gravestone has its individual number, by which it is possible to identify the deceased and the time of his/her death and burial, using the Cemetery's database. Because of the function of a gravestone as an information container or as a sign on the concrete person (persons), the relation of text and architecture is extremely important in memorial practices. The typical graveyard marker attempts to inform the future generations of a personal memorial message. The unit of architecture and text is crucial here. The message becomes unclear and anonymous in cases when architecture appears stronger and the texts of some Cemetery's tombstones are destroyed by time. Such visual loss of "signifying" transforms a gravestone into a deeply emblematic object, provoking thoughts not about the concrete person, but about the fragility of memory. Nevertheless, the opportunity to obtain personal information always exists – the Cemetery ledgers can establish the belonging of any abandoned or distorted monument. Returning to the idea of palimpsest, there are no wastages in the Cemetery memorial landscape: some erased visual features are compensated on the data level.

The informational function of the gravestones is important, but it is not unique. Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey in "Death, Memory and Material Culture" logically compare a gravestone with passive continuation of the body of the deceased, which accepts the care of grieving relatives:

> The headstone is, in sense, animated as a body of a person in that is washed, cared for, gazed at, dressed with flowers, offered drink, and surrounded by household and garden ornaments.[9]

Thus, it is evident that the social function of the particular Cemetery's marker is to preserve memories – to provide the deceased a social presence among the living. These objects, hereby, can be viewed as encapsulated memory or socially active mnemonic objects. No less important is the apparent domination of personal over public – domination of "the circle of the loving ones" (family, relatives, and friends) and their memories in such kinds of architectural pieces. Gravestone ensembles are important as places of social ritual, of memory, and as places of contact with the dearly departed. In other words, they are places for specific spatially located cultural practices.

The visual semantics of common Cemetery architecture is rather polyphonic. From the point of view of private issues the individual tombstone can be analyzed: firstly, as a symbolic extension of the deceased (as a body of the deceased); secondly, as a space for memory- and nationality-related rituals; thirdly, as a container for the family- and generation-related memories; and finally, as a symbolic space on the border between the world of the living and the world of dead. This functional and symbolical multidimensionality stipulates the traditionally "simple" form of monuments of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery.

In cases when the social value of the person exceeds the boundaries of his or her family, the memorial marker takes up the features and functions of a "monument", which is close to the secular objects of this kind. Such "semi-public" monuments have political or cultural value and often carry the symbolic reflection of the social (political) importance of the deceased. However, first of all, unlike un-funeral public monuments devoted to the same persons, gravestones, as a rule, are focused on private memory practices. These objects exist in the specific public space, which are traditionally

considered sacral, being oriented on the direct private contacts with the deceased instead of sharing generalized statements provided by the public sculpture.

If individual gravestones bear mostly an informative function - and in this sense they are more likely markers or "signposts" - than family crypts and the mausoleums are more connected with the traditional architectural concepts. The space of these Cemetery's edifices are organized as a house – nominal "house for deceased" and a "roof above a head" for visitors. Concerning this specific sort of memorial architecture, the evident visual parallels between crypts and city family manors as well as between collective mausoleums and multiroom apartment buildings seems pertinent. But in the majority, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery's family mausoleums are sealed, closed by a concrete or iron door-wall that shows that these crypts are not entered any more – neither alive, nor dead. Thus, these constructions do not differ from more modest gravestones, becoming only the closed symbols of the passed away families, without internal access for intimate contact to the next generations. The solid stone material of such abandoned structures still resists the destructive impact of time. However, the absence of regular maintenance and restoration has its effect in decay, making it difficult to identify the epitaphs. In cases where it is impossible to establish a family lineage, an anonymous mausoleum reveals a very strange picture: created not only for the immortalization of the wealthy family's memories but also to demonstrate social status and social domination – in absence of individual (or family) markers they appear to be the anonymous demonstration of abstract wealth. Being, among other things, didactic reminders (*sic transit gloria mundi*) the abandoned mausoleums, nevertheless, appear as organizing elements, which structure the common space of the Cemetery. They enrich the

monotonous funeral landscape showing Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery's similarity to the European cemeteries, such as Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Interestingly, desired by the owners of the Cemetery the "European-like" view of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is repeatedly emphasized at the Cemetery web site as its important feature.[10] It is coordinated with specific Canadian love to all "Europeans", which is, perhaps, a consequence of the national sensation of post-colonial inferiority.

Only a few of mausoleums have a keyhole, demonstrating that they are not abandoned – that access is still possible. Crypts created in more recent decades look slightly curious and it is not only a question of stylistics, which by tradition (or inertia) follows the already existing samples. These new mausoleums look "frivolous", superficial – from the point of view of the usage of the new "profane" materials, such as the metal details covered by plastic, toned glass, and ceramic. These materials, which are popular in the everyday contemporary secular buildings, make these modern vaults similar to functional city constructions in the historical downtown surroundings. This choice of materials looks slightly inappropriate in the traditional, primarily stone architectural environment of the Cemetery.

The spacious, over one-storey, collective mausoleums are masterfully incorporated in the spatial milieu of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. Constructed carefully within the existing landscape, these large buildings do not dominate the Cemetery's milieu; they do not suppress it. Some of these architectural structures were constructed as the fence of the Cemetery. For instance, the mausoleums of the east side of the Cemetery adjoined with the neighbouring Mont-Royal cemetery: Notre Dame, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary (1978), John-Paul II (1980), and Saint-Francis

(1982). Others mausoleums are integrated in the natural hills – in this case just the top floor situated above ground level – there are Saints Marguerite-d'Youville (1996) and the Sainte Clare of Assisi (1994) mausoleums. The intentional "minimization" of the architectural forms of these edifices in the exterior environment is not reflected in their spacious interiors. The internal spaces of the mausoleums are characterized by contemporary features, such as the usage of artificial light and tape-recorded classical music. For the additional comfort of the visitors, the mausoleums are equipped with contemporary washrooms and, in some cases, with elevators.

As a result, the ideology of standardization and communality prevails in the Cemetery's mausoleums. The urns with ashes are accommodated in the structural design of the walls. But in the frames of the standard placements, each family has an opportunity to arrange a niche guided only by individual preferences. The open show-windows contain the urns alone with family memorabilia as can be observed in the walls of the Mausoleum St. Clare D'Assisi. In the exterior funeral environment these displays of generational communication and care for the deceased are often short-lived because of the weather conditions and requirements of access for maintenance. But here, locked in behind small glass doors, the urn with ashes is touchingly surrounded with memorabilia and photos of the deceased's successors. At the same time, there are limits on the choice of urns and commemorative relieves (or Memory Medallions) for decoration. There are just a few samples of them offered in the mausoleums to buy at the special stands at the entrances. Interestingly, under the pressure of the practical concerns of the mausoleums' interiors, numerous sculptural objects give these monotonous spaces a sign of individuality and serve also, to a certain degree, as a system of navigational landmarks.

Therefore, we can see that the architectural landscape of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is characterized by the symbiosis between sociality of public spaces and privacy of personal memorial places. Their interaction composes a specific complex narrative of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery.

Motives for Spatial Dividing: National, Social, and Political

The layout of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery mirrors such core social issues as family relationship (in the organization of the family plots and mausoleums, and simply in the epitaphs), the traditions of marriage in the couples' monuments, and in attitudes to children (in memorials to children and their placement).

Moreover, the bodies of the dead are situated within the borders of their local cultural communities united by the same (or close) persuasion, social status, and national/family relationships. For the presentation of current social issues related to the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, religion would be the best way to explore the different cultural communities that are located on this site. There are two main ethnic-religious groups represented in the origins of the cemetery – French-Catholics and Irish-Catholics. Both have their different practices of commemorating the deceased that applied to the cemetery space, which is evident in the design, epitaphs, and even placement of the tombstones. Nevertheless, the nationality of the dead was not so important initially. Catholicism as a metanationality covers both national groups without ideological and, as a consequence, spatial divisions between them. The samples of English and French epitaphs on the close monuments confirm this thesis.

Comparing specific traditions, monuments, and groups ("communities") of graves shows Montreal's local social changes. Initially, the Cemetery predominantly served only

Roman Catholics or rural French Canadians; it is now open to any Christian (though it continues to be a Catholic institution and serve a primarily Catholic community). Additionally, it is interesting that there is a multicultural diversity in the place. A row of non-anglo/francophone communities, such as Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Orthodox Greek, and Polish are represented there.

For the national minority representatives, their communities' burial is symbolically the fragments of their native land. In this sense they are "not quite Canadian"- places for national immigrant communities. In the words of Francis, Kellaher, and Neophytou:

> Immigrants to other countries, living far from their homelands, work to establish and then to maintain community in their new places of settlement by selectively preserving and recovering traditions… Burial place in the diaspora – in the new place of settlement – may be seen as an attempt at "creating communal spaces of belonging.[11]

Often being unable (because of economic or social circumstances), to bury their deceased in the "motherland", immigrant communities symbolically appropriate the cemetery land by turning it (at least visually) into the national "homeland". Visual signs of such appropriation are the presence of the community's national symbol on the graves, and the usage of traditional forms of monuments along with national languages in epitaphs. Indeed, surrounded by the rows of the traditional Ukrainian tombstones of the Ukrainian side of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, there is a strange feeling of not being in Montreal, but in a typical Ukranian cemetery. Cyrillic letters, nationalistic symbols, such as crosses, tridents, along with specific nationalistic heraldry in the design of the gravestones are equal to the graveyards at the physical Ukrainian territory.

Despite the existence of national representation within the boundaries of the funerary topography, these nationalistic, spatial "ghettos" are primarily used by the new immigrants. The official Canadian ideology of multiculturalism, which is inherent to the Montreal community, is traced in the mixing of nationalities in the common mass of burial places. National features, in those cases, are kept in slightly stylized, adapted forms. For example, Polish-Canadian gravestones stand out from the rows of unified markers by their decoration with the Crucifixion; which is a traditional element of the Polish memorial culture. As well, Italian-Canadian memorial spaces are characterized by verbose epitaphs and a repetition of the Virgin Mary motif.

The common Canadian politic of "reconciliation" and coexistence among diverse nations is demonstrated by the fact that in 1993 François Thoronhiongo of the Huron First Nation, who died in 1690, was buried in the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery's ground.[12] This head of the Huron Nation, positioned as "the oldest famous person"[13], indicates symbolically the presence of First Nations in historical and political space of the Cemetery. In this case we observe "a lively politics around dead body" (in Katherine Verdery's definition[14]) but I am going to research this problem more comprehensively in the next chapter.

Not only do religion and nationality divide the dead but also topological social divisions (class, age, and gender) can be found here. Francis, Kellaher, and Neophytou on the example of the City of London Cemetery describe the historical socio-economic segregation of the deceased. In the most accessible and visible parts of the cemetery (along avenues and roads) the first-class vaults and mausoleums were placed. The next rows were for the lower classes, and on the margins of the cemetery were situated the

poorest sepulchers.[15] Those burial distinctions between rich and poor are evident at the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery where more desirable and "frontal" spaces are occupied by costly and splendid monuments of the ruling class.

There is a division in the quality and size of tombstones between different social groups. Such a division is more evident when you compare the density of markers on the margins of the Cemetery with the wide spacing of monuments in the central areas. Perhaps due to the fact that Montreal is a cosmopolitan city, there is no sign of racial segregation.

Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery can be seen as a place of religious, nationalistic, and social divisions. Large quantities of different voices speak simultaneously on the same physical territory of the Cemetery.

Political Spaces and Nationalistic Issues

There are also some contemporary characteristic tendencies of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery in relation to the living, such as specific "memorial tourism". In this case, people visit the Cemetery as a place of concentrated history, memory, and perhaps art (and for the atmosphere of past times or styles). For some people the cemetery is a place to be in contact with celebrities of the past. Because of Montreal's long-term status as the cultural, financial, and political capital, there are many of prominent people at rest in the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. Among them are the politicians Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier, Robert Bourassa, Jean Drapeau; artists Clarence Gagnon, Louis-Philippe Hébert, Jean-Paul Riopelle; writers Émile Nelligan, Aubert de Gaspé, Marie-Claire Daveluy, film stars Roger Baulu, Gratien Gélinas, Ovila Légaré, Jean-Pierre Masson; athlets Maurice Richard and René Lecavalier.

Funeral architecture is appropriated for political discourse despite political struggles in the sacred peaceful funeral surrounding, and are softer than in "real life." We can sometimes see, however, the echoes of political battles at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, such as the defacing of monuments and vandalism. In the socio-political environment (the Cemetery is not exception from it, being a part of a city) the gravestones receive political meanings. Some persons and symbols are significant for French nationalism in the rich polysemantic cultural memorial field of the Cemetery. From nationalistic perspectives, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is filled with the nationalist symbols (such as graveyards of Quebecois cultural and political heroes and commemorative nationalistic memorials) – the Cemetery in this sense looks like a "container," from which these nationalist fragments can be taken and included in the national heritage space.

From the point of view of politics or ideology, the collective social aspects concerning the deceased (whose bodies and, consequently, gravestones are converted to nationalistic values) are more important that private ones. For example, in comparison to the abandonment of many private monuments of the end of nineteenth century, monuments of important figures in Quebec history erected in the same period are carefully restored. Thus, not only the materiality of gravestones, but also collective political memory resists the relentless and destructive qualities of time. In this connection it is possible to consider collective memorials, such as a monument dedicated to the heroes of Saint-Denis. Thus, the interventions of ideology in the private spaces of the Cemetery can be not only destructive but also positive. It is not surprising that the Cemetery is too loaded ideologically – as a continuation or a part of the city in which

different national cultures collide. The revanchist Quebec nationalism contradicts the Canadian ideology of multiculturalism – and all these collisions are traced in the Cemetery milieu.

Connecting socio-cultural characteristics with architecture matters, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery's architecture reflects the borders of the dominant style and ideology. In relation to ideology Watkins notes:

> The Catholic cemetery has two associated ideologies: Catholicism and nationalism. The religious monuments are conceived as moral guidance for the living and the cemetery is viewed as a memorial to all buried within.[16]

The style varied a few times – from Classicism and Modern, to contemporary versions of functional funeral architecture and the Classicism bears the specific role here. This style is thought to most fully express quiet greatness, calm harmony, and idealistic pathos of the funeral ideology, which is, in the official voice of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery to commemorate "the dead with respect and dignity, [to bear] witness to the Christian faith in the Resurrection of Christ and our own future resurrection."[17] Despite the fact that contemporary burial practices (for instance Chinese or Japanese) contradict these declarations, the main atmosphere of the Cemetery remained the Catholic position that is harmonious with triumph of Classicism, close to the architectural space of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The important heritage and historical markers of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery and also a majority of its sculptures echo Classical form. The architectural environment, which is organized within the frames of Classicism, is traditionally fruitful for the synthesis of architecture and sculpture. Indeed, numerous sculptures (including those executed in modern styles), presented in the interiors and exteriors of the Cemetery, coexist harmoniously with neo-classical architecture. The

prominent examples of this are the sculpture of Saints Marguerite-d'Youville mausoleum. However, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery Classicism not dominated directly as a historical style, but presented in the same Classical conceptual features.

The International Style used in the contemporary Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery buildings originated from the functionality of Bauhaus's and Constructivist architecture. Yet, it contains the elements of Classicism. Here we find the harmony of proportions and a trace of the system of decorative partitioning, which are close to the Classicistic Order system. Non-functional usage of space in the mausoleums' facades and halls – just to exaggerate the sensations of grandeur and solemnity – is an important particularity that shows the nearness of the modern Cemetery's architecture to the old Classical one.

Returning to issues of Quebec nationalism, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery can be understood as a place of a French communal heritage, where a great deal of Québécois cultural and political heroes are gathered: George-Étienne Cartier, Émile Nelligan, and many others (some mentioned above). In the continuing political lives of dead bodies not only individual biographies (as in, for instance, the monument of Robert Bourassa, Premier of Quebec) but entire social categories are important and represented spatially/symbolically. These we can observe, for example, in the part of the Cemetery where war veterans are resting. The straight parallel rows of the similar low grey tombstones of veterans with the same repeated sign of a maple leaf on them form the "collective body" that bears collective social significance.

Neighbour's Juxtaposition: Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery and Mount Royal Cemetery

I see also interesting opportunities for analyzing Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery in juxtaposition to the English-Protestant Mount Royal Cemetery. I suppose that a comparative analysis would be helpful to show some important ideological and social aspects of the existence of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, which grew in constant opposition to and competition with its neighbour, Mount Royal Cemetery. Returning once again to the veteran's funeral complex stated above, we can observe this opposition in the split of this memorial into two parts by an iron fence. On the one side (Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery) the Catholics veterans are laid, and on the other (Mount Royal Cemetery) – the Protestants.

The division of the cemeteries looks especially logical considering the circumstances of the cultural and political divisions of the Montreal populace itself. Even the proportional difference in sizes – 343 acres the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery against 165 acres of the Mont Royal Cemetery – is related to the actual social balance between the two main Montreal communities. Following the research of Jason Gilliland and Sherry Olson, on the moment of the Cemeteries' establishment, there were three groups which made up 95% of the city population: one-half French, one-fifth Irish Catholic, and one-quarter British Protestant.[18]

Symbolically and spatially (and, probably, commercially) divided, both cemeteries are operated by different firms: the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery Company and the Mont Royal Cemetery Corporation, which were founded by representatives of the Protestant and Catholic confessions. Bernard Debarbieux however, points to the some similarity in the spatio-ideological organization of both Cemeteries: both companies aimed to create an appropriate environment for their conception of an

ideal cemetery. "Both properties were located on the Mountain and designed to emphasize the specificity of the place… Finally, the symbolism of height was exploited: the cemeteries were closer to the sky than the city."[19]

The organization of spaces of both cemeteries is in opposition representing "French" and "English" types of commemorative parks. The representational ideology of the French park, which is evident, of course, on the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, is a reiteration of rational geometry. Such parks are beautiful from a bird's-eye view, because of the rational organization and division of space into semantic and aesthetic "blocks". In contrast, the English park is usually similar to a natural landscape: burial places are grouped not within the limits of the precise scheme, but as picturesque arrangements. And this sort of game with a landscape is exemplified in the Mount Royal Cemetery. Thus, we see a spatial, conceptual opposition of the organizational principles of the regularity and Classicism of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery and the picturesque natural landscape design of Mont-Royal Cemetery.

Being a "natural" or rural cemetery, the Mont-Royal Cemetery contains more than five hundred different species of trees and shrubs. Specially trained horticulturist supervised the planting of flowers such as lilac and cranberry bushes, wild roses, cranberry, and different varieties of ground cover. Among them are a lot of species that compose the rich arboretum collection of the Cemetery. The bird watching gives one more purpose for the nature tourism in the territory of Mont-Royal Cemetery. The flora and fauna of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is more ascetic and rigorous in comparison to that of its neighbour. There are just fifty-nine species of trees, including mostly deciduous ones, and also many specially planted decorative (not wild and

indigene as in case of the Mont Royal Cemetery) flowers. Concerning the nature, the Mont Royal Cemetery demonstrates aesthetization rather then rationalization of the natural surrounding, in contradiction to the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. But both French and English types of parks are built for control over nature. In the French parks it is an open manipulation of a landscape. In the English parks there is a hidden system of a governing over natural milieu.

The historically based oppositions are softened and concealed today as is visible in the example of the same organization of the veterans' cemetery. This military portion of both cemeteries looks similar from both sides – the same rhythm of identical gravestones, the same placing and intervals. The only unique difference is in the names on the gravestones, which on the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery' side are French and Irish, and on the Mont-Royal cemetery's side are predominantly English.

Other Spaces and Issues

The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery exists not only on the solid physical ground but also in the ephemeral space of the Internet. It maintains its own web site, which contains information about the Cemetery (location, history, famous monuments, etc.), its regulations, and a description of the Cemetery services. In my opinion, there is something strange in putting this mostly private place of mourning and memory in the extremely public space of the Internet. Nevertheless, it certainly creates additional convenience to potential customers, gives the Cemetery good publicity, and, meets contemporary (social) requirements of public transparency and accessibility.

If we are talking about the presence of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery in the informational space, we also have to mention more traditional knowledge mediums,

such as books, guides, and publications in the press. Many of which can be found in the bibliography of this essay. There are many models of representation the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, but among these modes the visual-historical approach is more effective.

Among the issues concerning the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery's architecture, but directly related with the social environment of the Cemetery are the activity of two not-for profit organizations – the Friends of the Cemetery and the Friends of the Mountain (*Les Amis de la montagne*). Each is concerned with education, preservation and propaganda about the cultural and architectural heritage of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, and its special environmental treasures, but the focus of the Friends of the Mountain is wider – it covers all of Mount Royal Mountain.

In addition, there is a lot of social activity, promoted by the founders of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. The first issue of the Cemetery newsletter indicated the intention to support a wide variety of the specific Cemetery-related events, such as conferences, photography contexts, commemorative masses, nature trail, and concerts for "cemetery visitors, who already come here in droves to hike, commune with nature, and study history and art."[20] These hypothetical actions deal with the Cemetery as a "place" of socializing and communication.

Conclusion

As we can see, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery as a place of material culture can be viewed on the different levels of space – architectural, social, political, generational, and even informational. At the same time the Cemetery is not only a storage place for cultural memory but also an important living socially functional part of

Montreal. The evolution of the spaces of "city of the dead" parallels the contemporaneous social changes of "the city of the living".

From the functional, historic, and ideological points of views, the Cemetery's architecture can be viewed as an accumulation of information rather than palimpsest. The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery is the endless manuscript, which is newer erased, just proceeded.

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