

From Sacred Space to Commercial Place
A Landscape Interpretation of Mount Pleasant Cemetery

by

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in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The rural cemetery was a European creation first introduced in the nineteenth century. Relocated outside the commercial city sector the cemetery was promoted as a diversion to the confusion and complexity of urban life. Applying picturesque ideas to traditional burial grounds rural cemeteries became symbolic landscapes for the city and country. The aesthetic nature of its design became an inspiration and eventual model for North American cemeteries.

As a cultural institution, the cemetery is constantly in flux. Centuries of interaction between society and the cemetery have resulted in substantial changes that have shaped the present landscape. Although traditionally in public-trust, cemeteries have become largely privatized, operated, managed and developed as businesses for-profit. The commercially-driven practices of these institutions have had significant impact on the present cemetery landscape. Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery is a good example of a cemetery experiencing this extensive commercial restructuring.

A review of pertinent literature outlined recent transformations within the cemetery landscape citing concerns over the emerging private-enterprise cemetery and its impact on the burial landscape. My fieldwork examined site-transformations specific to Mount Pleasant through an in-depth analysis of the present cemetery landscape. Concepts of commercialization, commodification and heritage tourism framed my analysis of the architecture, landscaped environment and new developments in light of the rising 'cemetery business'.

My findings revealed that by expanding into a multi-purpose cemetery Mount Pleasant is learning to do business in the twenty-first century. Increasingly run as a

private enterprise Mount Pleasant Cemetery remains a historical landmark in crisis, unsure how to remain competitive in the commercial industry of the present, while preserving the integrity and traditions of the past.

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-Chapter One- Welcome to the Silent Lands

The history of contemporary society is an accumulation of humankind's recollections: a preservation of emotionally significant people, places and memories. Every trace of history is a testament not only to its initiators but to its inheritors: not only to the spirit of the past, but to the perspectives of the present. These notions of history, heritage and commemoration embody specific landscapes, imbued with revered meaning, and it is the symbolic nature of these landscapes that has perpetuated my interest in, and study of, the cemetery.

The Cemetery

The cemetery is a window through which society can view hopes, fears and designs of past generations. As symbolically loaded signifiers of meaning they exist as assemblages of humanly produced material forms and serve as cultural records. Cemeteries reflect many aspects of North American technology, business practices, demographics, cultural norms, social relationships and material culture. Existing as community organizations, cemeteries are defined by the institutions, families or individuals that control their management, engineered and designed by professionals and the boards of directors they serve and reflective of the sentiments of plot-holders.

Centuries of interaction between these burial sites and society have resulted in substantial change within the present landscape. The transformations began in the decades following the American Revolution, during which time the centrally positioned graveyards were relocated to the outskirts of growing towns (Sloane, 1991:2). At this time, new, large, rural cemeteries were established, located farther away from the city as 'counterpoints to the commercial atmosphere of urban life' (Sloane, 1991:2).

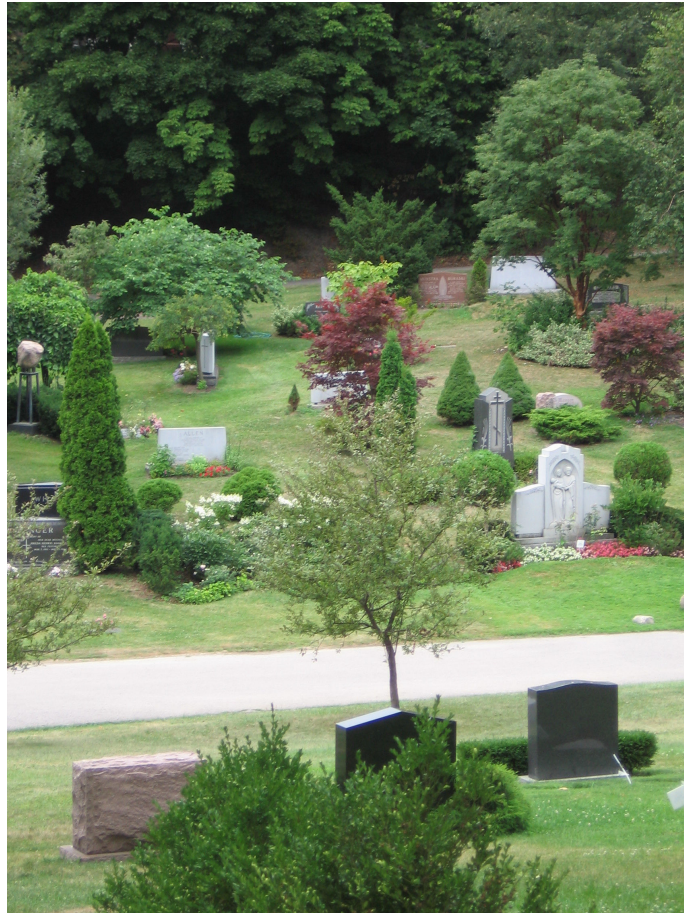
The rural cemetery of mid-nineteenth-century cities was picturesque, designed with inefficient but aesthetically pleasing serpentine roadways, economically impractical wide pathways and natural land reserves. Unlike older graveyards, the vast majority of new cemeteries were owned and managed by private, secular associations established solely for the development of the cemetery (Sloane, 1991).

Situating Mount Pleasant

Development over the past century has prompted urban expansion to such a degree that many city sectors have grown to encompass traditionally rural cemeteries. While some sites have remained virtually untouched by this urban location transformation, others, to various degrees, have undergone development alongside their surrounding cityscape. Mount Pleasant Cemetery, now situated in the core of Toronto's evolving urban centre remains the quintessential example of a landscape in transition. While other cemeteries have experienced and continue to experience change in light of impending urban growth, the extent and manner to which Mount Pleasant is progressing lends itself well to my area of study, establishing it as my site of research.

As Toronto historian Mike Filey argues, 'Mount Pleasant Cemetery has a rich and textured history. It is the keeper of thousands of stories, each of which has contributed to the history of our city, province and country' (1999:3). Since opening in 1876 this well-known green space has provided the final resting place for many of Canada's most prominent people. Its naturalistic setting, complete with rare trees and native specimens houses some of the country's unique and celebrated memorials and mausoleums (see Figure 1.1). Witness to an important phase in cemetery design in the 19th century, it is recognized for the quality and integrity of its layout.

Figure 1.1: South-East Section of Mount Pleasant Cemetery – 2007

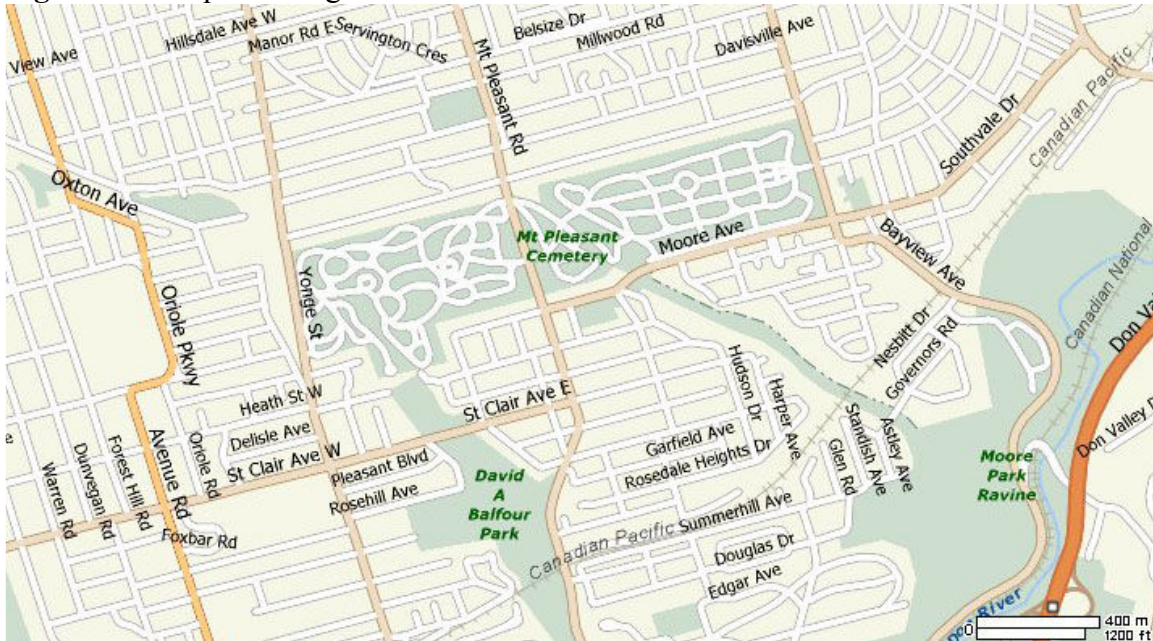


Source: Photo taken by author, August, 2007.

Mount Pleasant belongs to the tradition of rural American cemeteries: its winding paths and roads, irregularly shaped islets, panoramic perspectives, and monuments inserted in a naturalistic setting are all designed to highlight the site's natural and picturesque character. The variety and stature of the twentieth-century granite monuments that adorn the landscape serve as a testament to the wealth of Toronto society. Presently encompassing over two-hundred acres of the metropolis landscape in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Mount Pleasant Cemetery is centrally located at 375 Mount Pleasant Road

(Figure 1.2). With an interred population of more than 180,000 Mount Pleasant Cemetery has distinguished itself as a prominent facet of the Toronto cityscape (Filey, 1999:5).

Figure 1.2: Map Locating Mount Pleasant in Toronto



Source: Map Quest, August 2007.

Since its establishment over one-hundred and thirty years ago, Mount Pleasant Cemetery has remained a site in constant flux. The most obvious clues to these transformations are found within the cemetery landscape. Although, monuments still populate the aesthetically groomed site, the general appearance, management and function of the cemetery has shifted. These circumstances, as they relate to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, frame the research questions and methodological approach of my study.

Existing literature on the cemetery is predominantly historical in focus. My research will contribute to the work of scholars such as Lily Kong (1999) and Scott Howard (2003) to further expand the presently limited, geographical literature on the cemetery. Culturally and historically influenced scholars such as John R. Stilgoe (1983) and William Lloyd Warner (1959) have concentrated their research on the evolution of

burial practices, places and customs, up to, but seldom including, the present-day.¹

Although cemeteries have often been considered static landscapes – despite numerous periods of physical transformation – they remain dynamic and exist as a shifting and functioning institution of modern society. The past two decades in particular have involved substantial change within the cemetery landscape. However, as Julie Rugg, of the ‘Cemetery Research Group’ argues, these changes, especially as they relate to the present cemetery landscape, remain largely unstudied with research on the contemporary burial landscape extremely limited.² My research will help bridge this gap between past and present study of the commemorative landscape by providing an in-depth present-day focused analysis of Mount Pleasant Cemetery. The architecture, landscaped environment and new developments will serve as my central areas of focus when examining:

- How commercialization is manifested within the present landscape of Mount Pleasant and what effects it has had on the identity, overall integrity and conservation of place.
- What role ‘heritage tourism’ plays in the commodification of the cemetery in light of current and future developments.
- What effects these complex negotiations have had on the present landscape of Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

¹ There is no summary volume of North American death customs, but the best overviews are in Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamars, *The History of American Funeral Directing* (Milwaukee, 1981); John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580-1845* (New Haven, 1983); William Lloyd Warner, *The Living and the Dead: A Study in the Symbolic Life of Americans* (New Haven, 1959) and David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity* (London, 1991).

² The Cemetery Research Group (CRG) was established at the University of York in 1990, when a consortium of interdisciplinary academics successfully applied for Economic and Social Research Funding for research on local authorities and cemetery conservation. Since that time, research on cemeteries has continued at the University principally by Julie Rugg, who was appointed by the CRG in 1991 and continues cemetery work under the aegis of the Centre for Housing Policy. The principal aim of the CRG is to expand an understanding of current and past burial culture in the modern period in the UK, by studying the ways in which social, emotional and religious concerns have interacted with economic and political imperatives to frame burial practice.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is presented in three sections: Introductions, Contexts and Findings/Conclusions. Chapters One and Two are presented as Introductions because they serve to provide the historical and methodological structure for my work on Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Chapters Three and Four are considered ‘Contexts’ as they outline existing literature on the cemetery, presenting a theoretical framework from which my study on Mount Pleasant will expand. Chapter Three situates my research by outlining the evolution of burial practices in light of the rural cemetery movement and the establishment of Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Chapter Four begins with a conceptual definition of the cemetery, detailing its shifting nature from a landscape to a ‘deathscape’. The chapter continues with an examination of heritage tourism as it relates to the increased commodification and commercialization of the cemetery. The last section ‘Findings and Conclusions’ provides a detailed analysis of my fieldwork observations, drawing on existing literature to both formulate and substantiate conclusions. Chapter Five provides an overview of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery site focusing specifically on the architecture, landscaped environment and new developments as they exist in the present landscape. These features are then discussed in relation to commercialism, commodification and heritage tourism. The chapter concludes with an examination of the present cemetery industry, with a specific focus on how its profit-driven ideology is manifested within the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape. Chapter Six concludes my study by outlining the potential threats this modern cemetery enterprise has had and continues to have on the present landscape, while pointing to new avenues of research.

-Chapter Two- Investigating the Cemetery Landscape

Geography is the context for every event and interaction (Jacobs, 2004). It serves as a record of past histories and present relations manifested in the material and symbolic landscape. These circumstances, as they relate to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, underpin my research questions, rationale and methodological approach. From a social and cultural geographical perspective I examine the following questions: what is the role of heritage tourism in the commodification of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape in light of past, current and future developments, to what extent has the integrity of the cemetery been compromised by its increasing commercialization, what role, if any, does conservation play in facilitating new developments, and finally, what impact have these complex negotiations had on the physical landscape of Mount Pleasant Cemetery?

Qualitative vs. Quantitative

This research situates itself entirely in the *qualitative* realm. Qualitative research differs extensively from *quantitative* in that it remains primarily concerned with ‘elucidating human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks’ (Winchester, 2000:3-4).³ In outlining the ‘Types of Qualitative Research’ Hilary P.M. Winchester (2000:7-8) points to three distinct and commonly employed methods: the oral (primarily interview-based), the observational and the textual (creative, documentary and landscape).

Encompassing a wide range of activities, the most popular and widely used methods are oral (Winchester, 2000:7). Although not utilized in this study, Biographies, Interviews and Surveys are common methods often employed in the qualitative realm.

Verbal testimony can range from the individualistic, including oral histories, interviews and autobiographies to the more general, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires (Winchester, 2000:7-8). While techniques like the survey and questionnaire border on the *quantitative* realm in that they can be calculated, cross-tabulated and statistically analysed they remain qualitative in nature.⁴

A second significant type of qualitative research in human geography involves different forms of participation within the environment or event which is being researched (Winchester, 2000:9). A common form of qualitative geographical research in the participation realm is participant observation – a method that involves the positioning or re-positioning of the author or researcher in relation to the subject or location of research. While this method is typically utilized when studying populations or groups of people it can be useful when examining, in the case of this research, places and events. As Winchester (2000:10) argues, participant observation enables the researcher to wear a variety of ‘hats’ at one time, becoming simultaneously an ‘outsider and insider’ within the research. By both observing and actively participating in site-organized tours and ceremonies I utilized the participant observation approach throughout my research on the cemetery landscape resulting in a fuller and more complete experience. While altering the position of the researcher in relation to the researched can pose potential ethical issues, this type of fieldwork enables significant relationships with places or subjects to develop, ultimately facilitating a ‘deeper understanding of the research context’ (Winchester, 2000:10).

³ The term ‘research’ is used here to mean the whole process from defining a question to analysis and interpretation.

⁴ Quantitative research involves statistical and mathematical modeling approaches used to understand social and physical relationships (Hay, 2000:194).

The third major type of qualitative research is textual analysis and it is through this approach that the analysis for my thesis is predominantly conducted. Textual methodology is a wide-ranging approach utilizing creative, documentary and landscape sources. Texts considered ‘creative’ in nature include films, art, music and poetry while newspapers, magazines and maps are categorized as ‘documentary’ sources (Winchester, 2000:8). The most pertinent type of text utilized within this study is landscape. Landscape sources are diverse and can range from specific in focus, as is evident in my research design with analysis concentrated on the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape, to more general, such as the analysis of urban cityscapes or as Winchester (2000:8) exemplifies, ‘landscapes of suburbia...’.

Ultimately, the landscape serves as a controversial source for textual analysis. This metaphor of seeing the landscape as a text draws upon the influential work of cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) who suggests that landscapes can be read as a social document, using methods and techniques of literary theory (Forbes, 2000:126). This academic tradition of reading, decoding and interpreting landscapes is an approach aimed to exact meaning and illuminate crucial relationships. It therefore remains the role of the critical reader or researcher to penetrate what Barthes called the ‘layers’ of ideological sediment through the medium of the landscape (Duncan and Duncan, 1988). In discussing the politics of landscape representation Robertson and Richards (2003:5) argue that ‘symbolic methodology does not deny the physicality of landscape but instead seeks to reveal the values and meanings written into these visual images by a cultural group’.

Fundamentally, the symbolic landscape approach is rooted in the belief that ‘landscape is not nature but nature transformed by humanity’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:4). In this way all landscapes are in some way symbolic, changed and redefined by human agency. In *Studying Cultural Landscapes*, Robertson and Richards (2003:4) argue that,

‘this recognition of symbolic meaning in landscape leads to a consideration of the political dimensions of the world/land we see around us and inhabit; and because the symbolic approach recognizes this political dimension and extends also to landscape meanings, then landscapes in this view extend to encompass the mental as well as the material’.

This argument put forth by Robertson and Richards (2003) reinforces the role of societal hierarchy in defining landscapes. Basically, individual people and cultures will reinvent the land in accordance with their own opinions and beliefs. This premise can be extended to include the cemetery landscape, likened specifically to the way in which individuals choose to memorialize themselves or their loved ones. In this view landscapes ‘reveal, represent and symbolize the relationships of power and control out of which they have emerged and the human processes that have, and continue to transform them’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:4). As cultural images, landscapes frequently hide behind the processes that define them. It is the ‘symbolic method’ as cited by Robertson and Richards (2003:4) that investigates these processes below the surface to reveal the economic and political identities that shape and are in turn shaped by landscapes.

For the purposes of this research Mount Pleasant Cemetery served as the site of landscape deconstruction and analysis. Over an eight month period, May 2006 to December 2006, ten on-site visits were conducted, each with a different investigative purpose aimed at decoding the social nuances within the landscape. Broadly, my

investigation focused on the architecture, landscaped environment and new developments evident within the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape. The analysis of architecture inclusive of monuments, memorials, statues, plaques and cenotaphs, framed my primary visits.⁵ The cemetery developed in an easterly direction prompting the emergence of an architectural timeline. This timeline served as a point of reference for my analysis, allowing me to examine the progression of monuments and memorials over the past several decades.⁶ I then examined contemporary monuments within the landscape with a specific focus on their function, physical appearance and location. I derived my analysis technique from ‘semiotics’, the language of signs to demonstrate literally, the in-built presence of heritage, tourism and commercialization discourses symbolically manifested within the architecture (Winchester, 2000:9; Mee, 1994). In her analysis Winchester (2000:9) draws on the work of Richard Schein (1997), a scholar who employs the semiotic method when interpreting ‘landscape architecture, insurance mapping and other elements of a ‘discourse materialised’ to explore the ways they symbolize and constitute particular cultural ideals’.⁷ As her analysis continues Winchester (2000:9) sites a similar study by Gordon Waitt and Pauline McGuirk (1996) who examine both documentary and landscape texts in their study of Millers Point in Sydney. While somewhat different in focus, both of these studies are similar to my research in their approach to understanding how certain concepts or ideologies are enacted within the built landscape.

⁵ The brief architecture outlined does not encompass every aspect of the very diverse and distinct ‘built’ landscape. A more in-depth analysis of the architecture will be presented in later chapters.

⁶ While I did familiarize myself with the non-contemporary architecture within the landscape it was done so merely as a way to better situate my analysis of present architecture and will therefore not be discussed to any great depth within this research.

⁷ Insurance mapping has been central to fire insurance underwriting for much of the past century. Fire insurance maps were in common use in mid-nineteenth-century America in response to the need for detailed information concerning potential fire risks of individual commercial, residential, and industrial structures (Schein, 1997). Insurance maps made risk information available to underwriters who were unable

When examining ‘function’ in relation to architecture within my study I focused my analysis on the new ‘types’ of memorials evident within the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape, specifically benches, steps and picnic tables. In my analysis I examined the role these ‘purposeful’ memorials maintained within the landscape and whether they compromised the integrity of the overall site by positioning these memorials for practical use. When examining physical appearance my research focused on the aesthetic grandeur of the monuments analyzing specifically how the glorified and at times carnivalesque form of the memorials made them sites of attraction within the landscape.⁸ I then focused my analysis further by examining how these memorials were strategically placed to intrigue tourists and passersby. Finally, I examined new ‘alternative memorials’ offered by Mount Pleasant and how these unique memorials were strategically positioned to minimize space, maximize capital gain and decrease interference with new developments.

My later visits involved the examination of gardens, trees, ponds and other aspects of the ‘landscaped environment’ of Mount Pleasant Cemetery, focusing once again on their function and physical appearance. Through an iconography-derived approach I analyzed these ‘natural’ facets of the landscape interpreting what Denis E. Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels call their ‘intrinsic meaning’ (1988:2). Defined broadly as, ‘the theoretical and historical study of symbolic imagery’ iconography; and principles of iconographic study have become widely used in a variety of attempts by geographers

to personally inspect properties. These maps constitute a form of systematic, professionalized knowledge available in standardized form about specific locales and buildings (Schein, 1997)

⁸ The term ‘carnavalesque’ lends itself to the period of statumania that gripped Europe prior to WWI. During this time monuments were used to garner popular support while acting as focal points of gaudy expression. The ‘statumania craze’ was characterized by monument spectacles that extravagantly emphasized the human body. The pioneering work of Johnson (1995), Heffernan (1995), Withers (1996),

to interpret symbolic landscapes in a range of different settings (1988:2). In the geographic realm attention is increasingly being given to understanding the complexity of images written into the landscape, emphasizing what several scholars have called ‘polyvisual’ interpretations (Seymour, 2000; Robertson and Richards, 2003). In this respect, a single landscape like Mount Pleasant Cemetery can be viewed and interpreted ‘simultaneously in a variety of ways’ (Seymour, 2000:194).

An important methodological statement on the interpretation of the built environment was set out by Mona Domosh in 1989. In this paper she sought to develop a multi-layered understanding of the design and construction of the New York Building by linking this important early skyscraper to ‘its socio-economic and aesthetic contexts, and the actors who directly produced and/or created that artifact’ (Domosh, 1989: 347). Throughout her analysis Domosh demonstrates how this particular landscape artifact is informed by a continuous dialogue with the ‘context’ of the history of the city in which it was built and the social and economic conditions of late nineteenth century American capitalism (Domosh, 1989). Historical in approach, Domosh makes an important and pertinent point about landscapes and artifacts, namely that both past and present, remain as symbolic testaments to the competing discourses of the time.

When examining the ‘function’ and appearance of the landscaped environment I focused my analysis on specific aspects of the physical landscape. Sites such as the garden of remembrance, which served both an aesthetic and commemorative purpose within the landscape, were examined in relation to commercialization and heritage tourism. An in-depth analysis of roads, islets and ponds provided insight into the role of

Osborne (1998) and Cosgrove and Atkinson (1998) have illustrated that monuments are bound up with a politics of power, memory and cultural identity.

both aesthetics and conservation within the landscape. Finally I examined the arboretum in light of tourism, conservation and the role it played in distinguishing Mount Pleasant Cemetery as a National Historic Site.

The analysis of new developments within the landscape framed my final visits to Mount Pleasant Cemetery. I examined both physical and built modifications within the landscape, looking for linkages between these developments and the heritage tourism discourse.⁹ I studied the impact recent changes had wrought on the physical landscape in terms of conservation with a strong focus on the current pond removal and road widening campaign. Finally I examined how the size, location and purpose of newly proposed developments further threaten what might be seen as the integrity of the site. In examining the transitioning space of Mount Pleasant Cemetery I drew on the influential work of William Mitchell, who in his book *Landscape and Power* argues that instead of viewing landscape as a static text, it should be seen as part of a ‘process by which ... identities are formed’ (1994:1). Mitchell’s approach focuses not on what the landscape ‘is’ or ‘means’ but rather on what it ‘does’ and how it works as a social practice (1994: 2). For Mitchell, ‘landscape circulates as a medium of exchange, a site of the visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity’ (Mitchell, 1994:2). My analysis of new developments within Mount Pleasant Cemetery focused on this idea of landscape identity with respect to site integrity and how it is being challenged and influenced by competing discourses.

⁹ The ‘heritage tourism’ discourse is the focus of much scholarly literature (Timothy and Boyd, 2003; Light and Prentice, 1994a). Numerous texts examine specific themes like integrated heritage management (Hall and McArthur, 1998), heritage as applied to particular geographic regions (Hall and McArthur, 1993a, 1996), the context of the tourist-historic city (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000), contemporary issues in heritage interpretation (Uzzell and Ballantyne, 1998), and the nature of heritage attractions (Prentice, 1993). Some scholars have addressed heritage from the perspective of specific disciplines such as geography for example (Graham *et al.* 2000; Lowenthal, 1975;1979a), while still others have explored the

While landscape interpretation through on-site visits remained my principal investigative technique, alternate methodologies were used in conjunction with this approach to provide a richer and more rigorous study. This process of drawing on different theories, sources of information or the use of multiple methods to try to maximize an understanding of a research question is known as triangulation (Clifford and Valentine, 2003:8). This multiple-method approach to research is illustrated in the work of Scott Howard. His essay 'Landscapes of memorialisation' describes what Iain Robertson and Penny Richards argue is 'one of the most ancient and still ongoing western engagements with landscape as a place, space and means of expressing and transcending grief at death and loss' (Robertson and Richards, 2003:14). Through the use of poetry, images, memorial architecture and sculpture Howard illustrates how landscapes of memorialisation 'enact the work of mourning' and manifest the idea of 'Arcadia' (2003:14). Arcadia is a landscape of mourning that represents 'a crossroads between nature and culture where loss can be transformed into gain; the tragic past into the desired present and/or future' (2003:14). Howard explores his theme across periods, countries and artistic forms focusing his analysis on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington (Howard, 2003). Through a triangulation of approaches, both landscape and literature-based, Howard presents a detailed analysis of discourses as they exist across time and space. Following Howard's research in both focus and methodological approach, my study employs this critical point of reference.

social and political relationships between heritage and tourism (Herbert 1995b; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996).

Within my study specifically methodological triangulation included the content and discourse analysis of primary and secondary source material and participant observation through role transition in addition to landscape interpretation. The examination of external literature, specifically, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada report and Mike Filey's illustrated guide to Mount Pleasant Cemetery provided a comprehensive framework of the cemetery history that better situated my contemporary reading of the landscape. Discourse interpretations were drawn from discussions with arborist Jack Radeki of Mount Pleasant Cemetery and Carol Philp of Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. These informal conversations served to deepen my understanding of the history, landscape and current controversies that surround the cemetery. Finally, role transition from researcher to participant was a method employed selectively during the on-site visits. By partaking in the site-organized 'Nature Hike', 'Haunted Walk' and the 'Discovery Trail Hike' I was able to alter my role within the environment from a passive observer to an active participant. This change in position allowed for a change in perspective, expanding my engagement and experience with the landscape that ultimately resulted in richer and more inclusive interpretations of how heritage tourism is manifested within the landscape from the perspective of a visitor.

Although a subset of the landscape interpretation methodology, the video diary was another crucially important tool employed to visually document the different aspects of the cemetery landscape. While a relatively new interdisciplinary research technique, it serves as an empirical source that affords the researcher a deeper degree of analysis and interpretation. According to Gillian Rose (2001:2) 'the visual is central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies.' As a modern population we are surrounded by different types of visual technologies such as photography, film,

video, and digital graphics. These different forms of technologies offer views of the world; they render the world in visual terms (Rose, 2001). Academia, as Ruth Holliday (2000) argues, remains ‘largely confined to the conventional format of the academic paper or book;’ however, the visual dimensions provided by the video diary ‘allow the researcher a more inclusive depiction of the landscape or culture being studied’.¹⁰ In my own research, the video diary allowed for the landscape of Mount Pleasant to be visually recorded, enabling analysis of architecture, natural environment and new developments to be completed on-site during taping and off-site during video review. This technology allowed for a more complete investigation to be undertaken.

Critiques of Approach

In geographical research no one qualitative method is perfect. In their work Lawrence Berg and Juliana Mansvelt (2000: 175) argue how ‘the interpretive nature of qualitative research has given rise to a considerable amount of debate concerning how the validity and authenticity of qualitative research accounts might be assessed’. What they term as the ‘reflexive writing-IN’ of research experiences and interpretations does not permit research based exclusively on personal opinion, noting that rigour, integrity and honesty must be maintained (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:175).

Validity and truth as they exist in the realm of social science research remains a contested issue. The process of writing-IN qualitative research requires that researchers present clear criteria that enable the reader to effectively assess the ‘trustworthiness’ of the research and research design (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:176). The way in which the

¹⁰ The use of video diary as a methodological approach is increasingly prevalent in academic research. There are several other studies that have and continue to employ this technique; Sara Kindon (2003) Participatory video in geographic research: a feminist practice of looking? *Area* 35:2, 142-153, Maggie O’Neill, in association with Sara Giddens, Patirica Breatnach, Carl Bagley, Darren Bourne and Tony Judge

depth and complexity of qualitative research can be measured has prompted theorists such as Baxter and Eyles (1997) to argue that a type of ‘standardized’ method of evaluation is needed.

Central in this standardized assessment debate are concepts such as ‘rigour’, ‘validity’, ‘reliability’ and ‘truthfulness’(Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:176). These terms are critical in achieving some sort of universality when assessing research and the research design. With issues like misrepresentation, appropriation and generalization increasingly prevalent in qualitative research a standard method of comparison and evaluation is clearly required, a view that strongly shared by scholars like Denzin (1994).

In their analysis Berg and Mansvelt (2000:177) draw on the work of Clifford Geertz (1973) who argued that good qualitative research comprises what he terms ‘thick descriptions’. As outlined by Berg and Mansvelt (2000:177) these descriptions take the reader to the core of an ‘experience, event or action, providing an in-depth study of the context, reasons, intentions, understandings and motivations that surround that experience or occurrence’. Through landscape interpretation I will generate my own ‘thick descriptions’ of Mount Pleasant Cemetery. I acknowledge that my understanding, observations and interpretations of this landscape are influenced by both my position as a researcher and the site being studied. In this respect, while it may not be possible to assess the ‘authenticity’ of certain observations or descriptions that I make, the ‘validity’ of the interpretations and the manner in which they were generated can be determined (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:177).

(2002) Renewed methodologies for social research: ethno-mimesis as performative praxis. *The Sociological Review* 50:1, 69-88.

The communication of ideas is an integral part of qualitative research. The process of communicating research is underpinned by a series of choices - choices that are ‘circumstances of our own choosing’. In this way researchers often try to maintain a sense of transparency or invisibility in their research by remaining constantly reflexive (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:178). In order to ensure reflexivity in the research design the researcher must acknowledge and make explicit how exactly the choices influenced and affected the interpretation and ‘writing-IN’ of research (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:178). These choices as Berg and Mansvelt (2000:178) argue are often influenced by ‘principles of ethics, truthfulness and rigour’. In using transparency and critical reflexivity as part of the investigative design researchers are able to better understand the limitations and constraints on their interpretations, a process that is critical when ensuring rigour within a study (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000).

Ultimately, communicating qualitative research is as much about ‘how we know, as it is about what we know’ – this is particularly true with respect to the landscape interpretation methodological approach (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:180). For the purposes of this study the point of analysis is not people, but landscape. While issues of power and objectivity are not as pertinent, reading texts and landscapes does involve subjectivity on the part of the researcher. How one understands the world will determine how they decipher the landscape or text. As a qualitative researcher I can not or will not construct myself as a ‘disembodied narrator’, but instead will remain conscious of how power and meaning are inscribed in the words that constitute my research process, and how my ‘subjectivities, standpoint and locatedness’ affect my interpretations and the explanation of those interpretations (Berg and Mansvelt, 2000:180-181). A continual process of self-scrutiny and critical reflexivity will instill confidence in the validity of my interpretations,

while the implementation of multiple methods will aid in ensuring trustworthiness or rigour in my study.¹¹ Finally, the depth and richness of my research design will ultimately strengthen the credibility of my argument.

As the foregoing indicates, no one methodology is perfect and ‘reading’ landscapes, whether past or present remains a complex interdisciplinary activity. Each approach carries inadequacies that must be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions. However if these potential limitations are acknowledged properly an authentic and reliable study can result. What has emerged from the landscape interpretation and scholarly works that have informed my research is the dynamic, interactive and polysemic site of competing discourses that is Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

¹¹ As Kim England (1994) argues, ‘reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher.’ In essence, the notion of reflexivity remains vital to the conduct of fieldwork by inducing self-discovery which inevitably leads to insights and new hypotheses regarding research questions (England 1994). This increasingly reflective and flexible approach to qualitative investigation enables progressiveness within the researcher, enabling he or she to remain liberal when confronted with invasive, theoretically-entrenched challenges within the ideological framework of social science research (England, 1994; Avis, 2002; Pratt, 1992).

-Chapter Three- Urban to Rural: Burial Landscapes in Transition

Prior to the establishment of the cemetery, the burial landscape underwent several periods of physical transformation. The once urban spaces of wild barren nature evolved into aesthetically designed landscapes of memory. This emphasis on visual appeal prompted the relocation of previously urban burial grounds into the pristine rural landscape, a movement that resulted in the eventual creation of the rural cemetery. This chapter will outline these phases of burial transformation citing their importance and role in the eventual creation of Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

From Land to Landscape - Early Burial Customs in North America

The practice of land is quite different from that of landscape. The former is a place of work conceived functionally, conceptualized as a physical, tangible resource that can be ploughed, sown, grazed or built upon. The term long used by geographers for culturally loaded geographies is 'landscape'. As assemblages of humanly produced material forms, they constitute cultural records arranged 'palimpsest-like' through time and space that may be interrogated as artifacts and as symbolically loaded signifiers of meaning (Sauer [1925], 1963; Meinig, 1979, Cosgrove, [1984] 1998, Osborne, 2001). Landscape entails an intangible resource whose definitive feature is a space's appearance or look an idea that emphasizes leisure, relaxation and the visual consumption of place. As Robertson and Richards (2003:1) argue, 'the first practice of transforming land into landscape began when the first caveman/woman placed a rock carefully or scratched a tree on a wall.' Conceptually however, landscape achieved prominence in the sixteenth century with the cultivation of palace gardens, the initial development of landscape painting, and the creation of 'the picturesque' (Robertson and Richards, 2003).

As Eric Hirsch (1995) argues, an ‘ambivalent set of Western attitudes’ underpinned the land transformation during the late sixteenth century. For some, these radical alterations of the land were seen as a form of environmental degradation. Places appeared to lose their individual character, with no prospect of future regeneration (Hirsch, 1995:11). According to the western view however, these alterations were seen as transforming ‘nature’ so it conformed to a pre-existing but positive image, making it appear picturesque (or alternatively, ‘productive’ (Thomas, 1984:267)). Both perspectives co-existed in an uneasy tension, each serving as the catalyst for the other. It was the idea of the picturesque that proved to be a powerful framing device for the way in which non-Western cultures came to be perceived, represented and colonized (Smith, 1985). Ultimately, a clear relationship emerged between land, the picturesque ideology and the emergence of ‘landscape’ (Smith, 1985).

Fundamentally, landscape is ‘a way of seeing’, a way of composing and harmonizing the external world into a ‘scene’, a visual unity (Cosgrove, 1989:121). The word landscape emerged in the Renaissance to denote a new relationship between humans and their environment. Derived from the Dutch *landschap*, and well known for some time as ‘landskip’, landscape was first introduced into the English language as a technical term with a painterly origin (Hirsch, 1995:2). As Hirsch (1995:2) argues, what came to be understood as landscape was recognized as such because it reminded the viewer of a painted landscape. The work of Keith Thomas has documented this development in England between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He argues that, ‘it was particularly during the eighteenth century that this appreciation took a self-conscious hold in the English context: The initial appeal of rural scenery was that it reminded the spectator of landscaped pictures’ (Thomas, 1984:265). Similar to Hirsch’s

view, Thomas (1984:265) argues that the scene was only called a 'landscape' because it looked like a picture.

This idyllic world as depicted in various genres of landscape painting was linked to the perception of countryside scenery and its subsequent improvement; the objective was to achieve a correspondence between the pictorial ideal and the countryside itself (Hirsch, 1995:2). In this respect, as Thomas (1995:253) argued, landscape involves the 'marriage of both town and country', a notion that shares striking similarities with the rural cemetery movement.

It was this aesthetically rooted ideology that altered the western landscape in the early seventeenth century. During this revolutionary period political and cultural upheaval characterized the North American landscape. The old colonial ways were unacceptable in this age of independence; societies were committed to establishing a new history and a renewed sense of identity. Land served as the principal site of physical transformation. In the words of John Urry (1995:77), 'areas of wild barren nature, once sources of terror and fear, were transformed into landscape'. Greatly affected by this period of land-transition was the colonial graveyard.

In this revolutionary atmosphere, societies in the west decided that the colonial graveyard reflected 'older ideas, passé theologies, and social conflicts' (Sloane, 1991:11). American societies agreed on the need for burial reform, however there was no obvious alternative to the long-established graveyard (Sloane, 1991:11). By relocating burial sites and encouraging private ownership, improvements to the graveyard were attempted. While these reform endeavours ultimately failed they served as a catalyst for a new site of burial, the cemetery. Although the cemetery was an urban institution, its design embodied rural values. Influenced by new European events and ideas, Americans situated rural

cemeteries outside cities on large tracts of land later developing them into ‘gardens of graves’ (Sloane, 1991). These rural cemeteries were promoted as an answer to the confusion, complexity and space limitations of urban life, and they became symbolic landscapes for the city and country.

Prior to the development of these new rural cemeteries in the nineteenth century, North Americans interred their dead in four main types of places. In presenting these burial classifications I draw extensively on the influential and well documented work of David Sloane (1991).¹² As he outlines, Frontier Graves, Domestic Burial Graves, the Churchyard and Potter’s Field were the most dominant (Table 3.1).

Frontier Graves

The first burial sites were isolated ‘frontier graves’ positioned at the site of death. These ‘frontier graves’ or ‘pioneer graves’, were influenced by a combination of the pioneers’ European heritage and daily life. Graves were often left anonymous with sites positioned away from the security of European settlements leaving grave protection and maintenance nearly impossible. The contemporary customs of the European settlers did not highly regard the corpse and relegated more dead to trenches and ossuary houses, reinforcing such attitudes toward the grave sites (Sloane, 1991:14).¹³

Gravestone markers were uncommon throughout the colonial period (Sloane, 1991; Curl, 1993). A disproportionately small population of settlers, even within the urban centres, had carving skills. Residents were more likely to use a fieldstone or a

¹² While David Sloane’s (1991) work is in some ways dated it provides a largely comprehensive and detailed examination of the burial evolution in light of the rural cemetery as I have come to understand it.

¹³ I do not discuss the burial practices of the Native Americans but see P. Nabokov and R. Easton’s (1990) work on *Native American Architecture*, or D.R. Mitchell’s (2004) work on *Ancient Burial Practices in the American Southwest*. Their graveyards provide fascinating insights into their culture, but they had little influence on colonial practices. Furthermore, I am primarily interested in outlining the change from historic

wooden post with the deceased initials crudely scrawled. As years passed many site-markers disintegrated leaving numerous graves unmarked leaving the memory of the mourners as the community's only guide to its dead (Sloane, 1991:14).

Table 3.1: Characteristics from American Cemeteries

Name	Period	Design	Location	Monument Style	Monument Material	Type of Manager	Distinction
Frontier Graves	17 th -20 th Century	None	Site of Death	Plain (name, date) Simple, no markers	Wooden, stone	None	Isolated: no design
Domestic homestead graveyard	17 th -20 th Century	Geometric	Farm Field	Some iconographic markers, if any	Wooden, stone	None	Small; family owned; functional design
Churchyard	17 th -20 th Century	Geometric or formal garden	Next to church	Artistic iconographic markers	Wooden, Stone, Slate	Part-time sexton	Religious ownership; functional design
Potter's Field	17 th -20 th Century	Geometric	City Borders	Plain markers, if any	Wooden, stone	Sexton	Public ownership; functional design
Town/City Cemetery	17 th -20 th Century	Formal Garden	City Borders	Three-dimensional markers; monuments; sculpture	Stone, Marble	Sexton	Family or government owned; formal design.
Rural Cemetery	1831-1870	Picturesque, natural garden	Suburb	Three-dimensional markers; monuments; sculpture	Marble, granite	Trustee Superintendent	Private ownership; garden aesthetic; mausoleums

Source: Sloane, 1991.

Domestic Burial Graves

Through the years the solitary grave was replaced by clusters of graves as the pioneers' homesteads expanded into small settlements. In his work Sloane draws on the observations of Harriet Martineau who in 1830 traveled through the North American frontier describing a common site, the family graveyard: 'Wherever there is a solitary dwelling there is a domestic burying-place, generally fenced with neat white palings, and

burial practices to the creation of the cemetery to better situate my work in Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Native American cemeteries had no discernible influence on the cemeteries of later North Americans.

deliberately kept, however full the settler's hands may be, and whatever may be the aspect of the abode of the living' (Martineau, 1838:228; Sloane, 1991:14). Commentators like Martineau viewed these burial grounds as symbols of civilization and domestication, contrasting them to the harsh behaviour of the frontier settlers (Sloane, 1991:14).

The domestic graveyard occupied a high point on the landscape characterized by its natural setting positioned among the trees. Whether open for pasturing or enclosed by a stone wall, the graves were shaded by the trees surrounding the field (Sloane, 1991). As Curl (1993) noted, the domestic graveyard was characterized by irregularly placed markers scattered randomly throughout the burial landscape. During this time-period landscape gardeners and burial groundskeepers were non-existent often leaving site maintenance such as grass-cutting and flower pruning to the farmer and his wife.

Settlers acted in 'marked contrast to their European contemporaries' when burying their dead away from the church and close to home (Sloane, 1991:15). Typically, Europeans had no tradition of family burial practices, although there were examples of estate burial places unattached to churches. For British Protestants, as Sloane (1991:15) notes, there were occasional instances where the rich could afford to entomb their dead in great mausolea in the grounds of their houses, but these were the exceptions.

Ultimately, the small farm burial had its origin in the 'peculiar circumstances of the early population, thinly scattered over a wide country, and separated by distance and bad roads from any place of worship' (Sloane, 1991:17). While churchyards existed in many of the small communities, distances and hardships reinforced the isolation in life and death on the American frontier. According to Sloane (1991), the lack of clergy and churches left settlers to make the funeral a community affair, a process symbolic of the settlement's continuation despite the individual's death. Eventually communities evolved,

becoming less isolated and growing into larger towns and villages. To satisfy this population growth, new towns established community burial grounds that were at first independent of churches however this process of burial evolution continued into the era of the churchyard. As Sloane (1991:17) notes, ‘this American experience with a domestic, nonsectarian burial place was a foundation for the secularization of the burial process.’

Churchyards

Many North American settlers followed the traditionally European practice of interring their dead in the churchyard (Sloane, 1991:17). Churchyards are largely characterized as places of burial made sacred primarily through religious association, reflecting what Rugg (2000:266) defines as ‘ancient beliefs that burial in ground deemed to be holy would carry spiritual benefits.’ From Trinity in New York City to St. Phillip’s in Toronto churchyards served generations of city inhabitants. In the largest cities burial sites included plots alongside the church or entombment underneath it. Essentially, parishioners sought an eternal closeness to heaven and a sentimental attachment to their church community (Sloane, 199:17).

Churchyards were the primary burial place in contemporary Europe and by 1800 had been so for several centuries. During this time Christians retained prohibition against burial of the dead in close proximity to the living. In time however, the Church reversed this attitude and ‘the dead ceased to frighten the living ... the two groups [coexisting] in the same places and behind the same walls’ (Sloane, 1991:17).

It was originally thought that burial within the churchyard would place one closer to the martyrs, and presumably to heaven; however, not every individual got equally close. As Sloane (1991) argues, ‘a social hierarchy of burial was quickly established, in

which the lesser folk contented themselves with the uncertain outdoors in the churchyard.’ Although churchyards were intended to serve the entire parish, exclusionary practices were used as a way in which to punish the ungodly while protecting the sacredness of the site (Rugg, 2000:266). It was thought by high society that the safest spot in any churchyard was the land next to the east wall of the church therefore the wealthiest people typically rested there (Sloane, 1991:19). Individuals of lesser status could only afford the north wall of the churchyard as it was considered most vulnerable to evil spirits, for ‘every earthly trouble from winter gales to Vikings came from that direction’ (Sloane, 1991:19). Such a pattern placed the most successful within the warm church, while those without status and prestige remained outside (Sloane, 1991).

Eventually, the large number of interments exhausted the space available for burials. Europeans thus began removing decomposed bodies from the grave and placing the remains in ossuaries or, as they were increasingly called, charnel houses that were built within churchyards (Sloane, 1991).

It was during this time that Continental Europeans abandoned the churchyard; the English continued the practice, possibly because they were less likely to disturb the dead. As Curl (1984:223) notes, as late as the nineteenth century, ‘corpses were laid in leaden coffins in church crypts, or in brick-lined graves under the church floors; they were buried in wooden coffins in churchyards or they were interred in small burial grounds that were usually associated with a church or chapel’. English churchyards according to Curl (1984:223) were ‘less likely to have a charnel house and only in busy urban graveyards or those of low economic status were graves likely to be trenches with numerous occupants over several generations’.

Regardless of religion, church graveyards were remarkably similar in their layout, monuments, and management. The graves were sporadically situated on land that was rarely more than a few acres in size. Later, in the nineteenth century, caretakers ‘beautified’ many churchyards by straightening the lines of memorials and establishing pathways for visitors (Sloane, 1991:20). It was during this time that the burial grounds first emerged as potential sites of tourism, with landscapes increasingly designed around the visitor. As Stilgoe (1983:221-222) notes, ‘contemporary accounts suggest that few pathways existed, as space was at a premium. Ornamentation of the graveyards was sparse for the same reason. A few trees and scattered shrubs were the expected plantings.’

Physically, neither churchyards nor domestic graveyards were the sacred, closed places that cemeteries became in the nineteenth century (Stilgoe, 1983). Rarely fortified or fenced these spaces were used for markets, fairs, meetings and recreation. This division of space continued contact between the living and the dead; however, the lack of concern for the sacredness of the graveyard made the displacement of the dead and the obliteration of the graveyard much easier.

Potter’s Field

Some individuals who were not afforded a vault or grave at the church were buried in the potter’s field. As Sloane (1991:24) notes, the term was derived from the Book of Matthew (23:7) and applied to any burial place for the indigent. Few graveyards were established exclusively as potter’s fields prior to the nineteenth century. While churches remained steadfast in designating burial spaces for those individuals without adequate means to pay for their own grave, needs often outweighed availability. As a result most towns were forced to provide public graveyards to accommodate individuals lacking the financial means.

Ultimately, the limits of frontier graves, the domestic burial ground, the churchyard and potter's field proved too much for ever-expanding North American societies. Privatization, exclusivity, and size rendered previous types of burial inadequate prompting the evolution and eventual creation of a new and inclusive sanctified burial space known as the cemetery.

The Emerging Cemetery

The Industrial Revolution propelled both political and cultural upheaval in North America following the turn of the nineteenth century (Sloane, 1991:11). Instigating change in an age of independence this period of enlightenment involved a shift from and rejection of, the colonial ideals of the past. Throughout this period of reinvention Americans and shortly thereafter Canadians, established a new history and a new sense of identity. Issues of temperance, prison reform, asylums, women's rights, alternative religions, the new factory system and family life provoked struggle and threatened change in this new age (Sloane, 1991). This progressive atmosphere enveloped all facets of the nineteenth-century community and landscape, including the graveyard. It was the enlightened mentality of the time that prompted the cemetery movement.

Graveyards had become a colonial product of the past reflecting older ideas, past theologies, and historic social conflicts (Schuyler, 1984). In the pre-enlightenment period the dead were seen as nothing more than cargo, unprotected, uprooted and moved from place to place as cities and towns grew. It was throughout this period that burial space became increasingly scarce with widespread epidemics escalating mortality rates thereby limiting places for the deceased (Schuyler, 1984). The recurrence of yellow fever dramatically increased the death rate, causing a crisis on the burial front. During this time, it was the strong conviction of the community that the dead ultimately threatened

the existence of the living (Sloane, 1991; Curl, 1993; Schuyler, 1984). As Sloane (1991:37) argues, believers in ‘miasmatic transmission’ remained resolute that a relationship existed between the graveyard and transmission of yellow fever. It remained the mentality of the people that, ‘only the most obstinate theorist would not accept the position that the putrid exhalations arising from graveyards, will not only feed and strengthen yellow fever when introduced, but will generate disease equally malignant as yellow fever’ (Sloane, 1991:37). In addition to the potential health hazards, communities had grown tired of the discriminatory practices under which graveyards and churchyards operated. Through their process of hierarchical selection these burial grounds continued economic distinctions in life as well as in death, honouring the successful and obscuring the failed. It was the culmination of these undesirable acts employed by the traditional graveyard that resulted in its ultimate demise propelling North America into a stage of burial reform at the turn of the nineteenth century.

While communities were in agreement that restructuring needed to occur, there was no obvious alternative to the graveyard. A large movement of burial improvement was undertaken, established graveyards were situated in more protected locations and families were encouraged to own and embellish the land (Schuyler, 1984). However, these changing burial legislations prompted citizens to question whether urban graveyards were the ideal method of interment. As Sloane (1991:39) points out, in a New York City legislative meeting an alderman argued that ‘the gravesite should be a place for those sacred feelings that bring tears of affection,’ and he questioned: ‘Are our graveyards in the city fit places for feelings like these?’ In essence, Americans were searching for a burial place that did not evoke the city’s fast pace or commercial life. In Canada too, a new attitude towards death, overcrowding of older graveyards, fear of

epidemics, and religious and social concerns favoured the creation of burial grounds located outside towns and cities, often in replacement of older sites crowded by urban development. The graveyard reform plan was adopted following several state-wide legislative efforts to protect the interment of the dead.¹⁴ After several unsuccessful alternatives, the urban burial restructuring strategy was abandoned, replaced instead by a new mentality that better reflected what David Schuyler (1984:291) terms, 'the values of the time'. The rural cemetery was born, characterized by a move away from the urban, embracing the privatization and beautification of the mid-nineteenth-century landscape.

The Origins of the Rural Cemetery

The name cemetery, from the Greek word for 'sleeping chamber,' was defined by Curl as a 'burial ground, especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the deposition or interment of the dead' (1999:14). The title cemetery embodied the idea of death as sleep, a transition from life to eternal life, which was more in keeping with the emerging optimistic religion and exuberant nationalism of the time (Curl, 1999). Although it eventually achieved prominence in North America the concept of the cemetery originated in Europe, conceived in 1804 as an initiative of the French government.¹⁵ As Schuyler (1984) argues, the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris is considered the first great rural cemetery. The urban setting had traditionally remained the resting place for the departed throughout Europe; however, at the turn of the nineteenth century this practice received extensive criticism. In response to this societal upheaval cemeteries were brought outside the towns not only to appease individuals unsatisfied

¹⁴ State-wide refers predominantly to the legislative changes affecting American states however similar laws were passed in Canada mirroring the burial transformation pioneered in the US.

¹⁵ The initiative of the cemetery was intended as an innovative response to the dreadful situation then prevailing in Parisian cemeteries. Overcrowding, proximity to houses, foul odours, anxiety over the risk of

with urban burials, but also to provide a natural setting appropriate for personal and familial commemoration. Paralleling this movement in Europe was a developing passion for British aesthetic theories that encouraged a marriage of art and nature (Schuyler, 1984). English gardens of the eighteenth century, furnished with neoclassical monuments arranged in a natural picturesque setting would later serve as a source of romantic inspiration for the new cemeteries (Curl, 1993; Sloane, 1991).

The Père Lachaise defined itself by its rural location, winding paths and panoramic view of Paris, applying picturesque ideas to the burial landscape. As Blanche Linden-Ward (1989:102) argues, ‘The arrangement of natural tableaux and the presence of monuments dedicated to the memory of the great transformed the cemetery, in the course of its first twenty years, into a memorial garden that fostered melancholy, rather than sadness...’. Following its establishment, the Père Lachaise Cemetery acquired a rapid global reputation, it remained widely popular among Parisians who utilized the space as a recreational park and became a point of reference in the English-speaking world for newly planned burial grounds (Linden-Ward, 1989).

Beginning in the 1820s, the new European cemetery model was adopted by North America as a solution to the problems of burial in the urban contexts of the time while simultaneously creating vast public spaces that embodied what Linden-Ward (1989:63) terms, ‘the British Romanticism ideology’. Following the Industrial Revolution the American landscape underwent significant transformation. Civic improvement through natural beautification collided in the City Beautiful Movement, a progressive reform development in American urban planning and architecture that flourished in the mid-to-

epidemics, theft and vandalism were some of the problems associated with the burial techniques of the time that led the French authorities to move them out of the urban setting (Curl, 1999; Sloane, 1993).

late-nineteenth century. With the intent of using beautification and monumental grandeur in cities to counteract the perceived moral decay of poverty-stricken urban environments, the movement, which was originally most closely associated with Detroit, Chicago and Washington, D.C., did not seek beauty for its own sake, but rather as a social control device for creating moral and civic virtue among urban populations (Goheen, 1994). As Deryck Holdsworth (1994) argues, advocates of the movement believed that such beautification could provide a harmonious social order that would improve the lives of the inner-city poor. Colonists had long believed that nature had no place in the urban landscape. Throughout the Industrial Revolution vegetation was removed from within the city to enable cultivation for development purposes. However following this period of modernization cities attempted to reunite city and country by beautifying the cityscape with trees and foliage. Urban residents welcomed nature back into the city and as Sloane argues, 'they viewed the reintroduction of nature as a moral virtue destined to make city life less harsh, less immoral, and less barren' (1991:30). This new City Beautiful mentality originally specific to urban transformations, entered into the rural realm altering the structure of new developments, the cemetery included.

The 'rural cemetery' was first introduced in 1831 with the creation of Mount Auburn Cemetery at Cambridge, Massachusetts, which combined elements of eighteenth-century English gardens, American domestic graveyards, and the flowering orchards of the surrounding countryside.¹⁶ Similar to Père Lachaise years prior, the English-inspired commemorative landscape of Mount Auburn was intended as an innovative response to

¹⁶ The 'cemetery' replaced traditional generic terms such as 'graveyard' and 'burial-ground'. The rural cemetery was often referred to as a garden cemetery and while it remains a less misleading and more apt description, 'rural cemetery' or 'cemetery' remained the dominant terms and will be used interchangeably within this paper.

the cemetery problems of traditional society. Through its removed location, topography and design Mount Auburn epitomizes the rural cemetery. The landscape is closed and protected, situated on a hill overlooking a river, ideal for laying out winding paths and roads, irregularly shaped islets, picturesque views and expanses of water. Trees are a dominant facet of the landscape ornamenting and accenting the geometric design.

Weeping willows specifically emerged as a symbol of the rural cemetery, emphasizing the regularity and stability of the institution while signifying a renewed sense of propriety in commemorating the deceased (Sloane, 1991). In light of its beauty Mount Auburn was viewed more as a pleasure garden rather than a place of graves. As Stanley French notes in his work, a Swedish visitor was so enchanted with Mount Auburn that he declared, ‘a glance at this beautiful cemetery almost excites a wish to die’ (1974:55). In her study of Mount Auburn Linden-Ward was so impressed that she remarked, ‘this cemetery is a testament to an unprecedented vision of death, nature and secular commemoration’ (1989:5).

The romantic and picturesque layout of Mount Auburn became an inspiration and eventual model for other American cemeteries. By the end of the 1850s, many American cities had a rural cemetery. At a time when the urban park was relatively unheard of this new model of cemetery allowed citizens to go outside the city and establish contact with nature. Mount Auburn quickly became a famous facet of the American landscape repositioning the cemetery as a site of tourism by attracting visitors worldwide. As French (1974:8) argues, ‘Brochures and guides identifying the most interesting plants, sculptures and monuments contributed to the popularity of these sites and to the diffusion of their design principles.’ The continued popularity of the rural cemetery would later prove influential in the eventual design and establishment of urban parks. Although

derived from a European concept, Mount Auburn was the pioneer in the establishment of rural cemeteries creating a landscape that evoked harmony and continuity in the presence of nature (Linden-Ward,1989).

The Canadian Rural Cemetery

The moral, social and medical factors coupled with the development and growth of cities that jointly led to the appearance of new cemetery models in Europe and the United States also underpin the rural cemetery movement in Canada between 1840 and 1875. Canada similarly experienced a new attitude towards death, overcrowding of older cemeteries, fear of epidemics, and religious and social concerns that prompted the establishment of cemeteries located outside towns and cities, typically in replacement of older sites threatened by urban development. Developers often sought inspiration from the great American rural cemeteries frequently emulating the unique topography of the landscape. Mount Hermon at Sillery was the first rural cemetery in Canada, established in 1848 from plans prepared by Major David Bates Douglass.¹⁷ The model was quickly adopted influencing not only large but more modest burial grounds.¹⁸ As Table 3.2 illustrates at least seven rural cemeteries were established in Ontario and Quebec prior to 1860 with five more constructed shortly thereafter.

As Table 3.2 highlights, many of these cemeteries share certain fundamental characteristics – level of planning, integration of islets, picturesque character of the site, and insertion of monuments in a landscaped setting; however, there is an evident variation in terms of dimensions. Given that larger cemeteries have perforce larger

¹⁷ As cited in the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Mount Pleasant Cemetery 'Request Form' p. 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

numbers of roads, paths, monuments, trees and islets, they are grouped by size to enable a more appropriate and pertinent comparative analysis.

Table 3.2: Comparing Rural Cemeteries

NAME	OPENED	SIZE	ARCHITECT	CHARACTERISTICS	MONUMENTS
Mount Hermon, Sillery, Quebec	1848	32 acres	Major David Bates Douglass	Fenced; winding paths, islets, trees; view of river, entry pavilion by Edward Staveley – oldest rural cemetery in the country.	16,000
Mount-Royal, Outremont, Quebec	1852	165 acres	James C. Sidney	Winding paths; scenic views; pastoral setting, irregular islets; mausoleum; arboretum, picturesque.	10 mausoleums; indeterminate number of monuments (no detailed inventory)
Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, Montreal, Quebec	1855	280 acres	Henri-Maurice Perrault	Rectangular grid and winding paths; irregular islets; pastoral setting; great variety of monuments.	65,000 of which 58 are vaults.
Saint-Charles, Rue Saint-Vallier, Quebec City, Quebec	1855	Approx. 100 acres	Charles Baillairgé	Uniform alleys; French influence; trees, especially around islets; mausoleum; stations of the cross, mixture of French and English influences.	
Notre-Dame de Belmont, Quebec City, Quebec	1859	75 acres	Charles Baillairgé	French and English influence; winding alleys, others straight lined with trees; central section the oldest; chapel by Charles Baillairgé.	
Burlington Heights, Hamilton, Ontario	1849-1850	100 acres		Winding paths; irregularly shaped islets.	
Cataraqui, Kingston, Ontario	1850	100 acres	Frederick Cornell	Winding roads; trees; islets.	
Ross Bay, Victoria, B.C.	1872	27.5 acres	Edward Mallandaine	Winding paths; islets, near the ocean; arboretum.	27,000 monuments, 13 mausoleums.
Notre Dame, Ottawa, Ontario	1872	50 acres	Canon Georges Bouillon	Rectangular; trees along roads and islets; rectangular grid; formal in character.	
Beechwood, Ottawa, Ontario	1873	160 acres		Picturesque and wooded, scenic proximity to Notre Dame.	
Mount Pleasant, Toronto Ontario	1876	200 acres	Henry A. Engelhardt	Winding paths; irregular islets, arboretum.	180,000 interred. No inventory of monuments.

Source: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (Adapted from Request Form), 1998.

The establishment of Mount Hermon in Sillery, Quebec in 1848 was followed quickly by the opening of Mount-Royal in 1852 in the tradition of North American rural cemeteries.¹⁹ Situated in a small valley Mount Royal epitomizes a picturesque landscape inherent to rural cemeteries. It occupies 165 acres of the northern flank of Mount Royal and is bordered on the southwest by Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. Closely situated, the cemetery of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges was dedicated in 1855.²⁰ Occupying 280 acres on the North Slope of Mount Royal it embraces three topographical divisions: a plain, a plateau, and a summit. While both cemeteries were inspired by the rural cemetery tradition, their topographies and religious philosophies exemplify distinct landscaping solutions. Mount Royal is described as more ‘natural and picturesque’ while Notre-Dame-des-Neiges exudes a more ‘formal and monumental appearance... with memorials more visible and the reminders of death more omnipresent’.²¹

Beechwood Protestant Cemetery in Ottawa was established in 1873 encompassing 160 acres of land. In the tradition of North American rural cemeteries, islets of irregular shape were created and numerous trees and shrubs planted. To the immediate south of Beechwood is the Catholic cemetery of Notre-Dame developed in 1872 on 50 acres of land.²² Distinct from its neighbour this comparatively smaller cemetery is located on an L-shaped plot distinguished by its rectangular grid layout, tree-lined straight roads and square or rectangular islets. When compared to the Beechwood landscape the trees are notably less numerous and monuments more omnipresent. The development of cemeteries such as Notre-Dame and Beechwood signaled the approaching end of the

¹⁹ Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery ‘Request Form’ p. 16-19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16-19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

mass rural-cemetery movement but not before the establishment of what would later become one of Canada's most recognized, distinguished, and celebrated cemeteries, Mount Pleasant in Toronto, Ontario.

History of Mount Pleasant

As Mike Filey (1999:14) argues, 'the origins of Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery can be described as being older than the city itself'. In 1825, nine years before the town of York became the city of Toronto and fifty-one years before Mount Pleasant would be established, a small group of community leaders – Thomas Carfrae, Jr., Peter Paterson, John Ewart, Thomas Morrison, and Thomas Helliwell – convened to discuss an issue causing social unrest within the community (Filey, 1999:14). During that time period burial space was limited with the only two authorized cemeteries in York consecrated for adherents to either the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England. Therefore, any individual who was non-adherent to either of these religious faiths and had the misfortune of passing-on within the city limits remained unburied, lacking ceremonial commemoration. To rectify this growing crisis a six-acre portion of rural land – situated far north of the town limits - was purchased in 1826 (Filey, 1999:14).

The new cemetery, entitled Potter's Field began burials immediately and by 1855 more than 6,000 souls had been interred in the six-acre cemetery (Filey,1999:14). Coinciding with the community's suburban cemetery expansion was the growth of the adjacent town of Yorkville (Filey,1999:15). The villagers felt that the cemetery was stifling Yorkville's development thus petitioning the provincial authorities to have Potter's Field closed and the remains relocated (Filey,1999:15). The villagers' request

²² Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery 'Request Form' p. 16-19.

was agreed upon by the authorities who subsequently enacted legislation permitting the owners of Potter's Field to form a non-profit entity entitled the Toronto General Burial Grounds Trust with the authority to acquire land for burial purposes.²³ Shortly after its establishment the Trust acquired a fifteen-acre cemetery on the west bank of the Don River.

The new cemetery designated the Necropolis, which translated to 'city of the dead', became a division of the new Toronto General Burial Grounds Trust on July 11, 1855.²⁴ Many of the deceased unearthed following the closing of Potter's Field were re-interred in new Necropolis plots. However, as the population of the city continued to grow – '42,000 inhabitants in 1855, to 47,000 in 1865' – so too did the number of deceased (Filey, 1999:15). Toronto was developing into an important centre of regional trade, transport, and finance. As Filey (1999) notes, the need for burial space inevitably outweighed availability propelling the Trust to seek out additional land on which to develop a new cemetery in 1872.

In 1873 a 200-acre farm was purchased located on the east-side of Yonge Street, in the Third Concession from the Bay in the township of York. As Filey details, 'At a meeting of the Trustees called to confirm the acquisition of this new property...it was agreed that the third of the Trust's non-sectarian cemeteries would be called Mount Pleasant' (1999:16).

To construct Mount Pleasant Cemetery the Trust enlisted the expertise of Henry A. Engelhardt, a German-born landscape gardener renowned for his successful development of public grounds, gardens, and cemeteries in numerous American and

²³ Toronto General Burial Grounds Trust was later changed to Toronto Trust Cemeteries, then to Commemorative Services of Ontario and, in 1998, to the current Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries (Filey, 1999:15).

Canadian cities (Filey, 1999).²⁵ Born in Prussia in 1832, Engelhardt studied civil engineering in Berlin (Filey, 1999). Following his arrival in Baltimore in 1851 Engelhardt retained work as a landscape gardener. He contributed to the design of New York City's Central Park before finally immigrating to Canada in 1870. Once positioned in Ontario he developed landscape plans for the 'Ontario Institute for the Deaf and Dumb' in Belleville and the 'Ontario Institution for the Education of the Blind' in Brantford.²⁶ Following these projects he designed the Union Cemetery in Port Hope and the Belleville Cemetery. His work in Belleville in 1873 prompted one journalist to write:

Mr. Englehardt, the architect has succeeded in a very short time in transforming a large portion of the cemetery grounds into a most delightful park-like spot, with winding roadways, and paths diverging in almost every direction, and the Directors may congratulate themselves in having secured the services of a man so thoroughly competent in his profession...²⁷

In 1872 Engelhardt published one of the first Canadian books on horticulture, *The Beauties of Nature Combined with Art* in which he intended 'to advance the art of rural improvement to a higher perfection'. In his analysis of cemetery design Filey (1999: 17) draws on the work of Engelhardt (1872:28-29) who writes:

It is most earnestly to be desired that every city, town, and village, may have, at no distant day, one cemetery, where all, of whatever creed or denomination, may rest side by side. The narrow limits around our churches and chapels must no longer be used as burial grounds, and should at once be made pleasant for the worship assembly, and suitable places for burial be secured beyond the limits of town or city.

²⁴ Conversation with Carol Philp of the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries, September, 2006.

²⁵ Engelhardt is variously identified as a landscape engineer, landscape architect, or landscape gardener. I use the last of these designations within this chapter.

²⁶ Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery 'Request Form' p. 10-12.

²⁷ Coatsworth, E.S. 'The Toronto General Burying Grounds.' This document was provided by the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries.

The site for a cemetery should be well chosen, at some distance from the turmoil and bustle of active life, yet should be always easy to access. If the site chosen possesses natural advantages, such as hills and dales, groves and creeks, so much the better, but the improvements should agree and conform to the natural features of the place.

It was 1874 when Engelhardt was selected by the Toronto General Burial Grounds Trust with constructing the preliminary plans for Mount Pleasant Cemetery.²⁸ Following approval, Engelhardt began his development in the later months of 1874. The terrain had every characteristic recommended by the landscape architect for cemetery design: gentle hills, valleys, and small watercourses that lent themselves to the creation of the rural cemetery (Filey, 1999).

The design of the new cemetery interested the members of the board of management to such an extent that they visited Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, a rural cemetery established in 1838 (Filey, 1999). Aspects such as the creation of a network of roads and paths, the displacement of watercourses to create small lakes and the planting of trees and foliage appropriate to the site intrigued the board to such an extent that they advised Engelhardt to add more curves, roundabouts and small circular plazas to his original plan (Coutts, 1986:9-10). The horticultural aspects of the site remained of primary importance to Engelhardt who frequently ordered new tree and plant species from American and Canadian catalogues often favouring conifers, weeping willow, oak, and birch (Filey, 1999:10).

²⁸ Information adapted from both the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery 'Request Form' p. 4 and conversations with Carol Philp of Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries, September, 2006.

On the afternoon of November 4, 1876, Mount Pleasant Cemetery officially opened.²⁹ At the time of the opening fifty-three acres of cemetery had been developed. In just over two years Engelhardt had succeeded in transforming ordinary farm fields and a ravine into a picturesque site of remembrance that exists today as Mount Pleasant Cemetery. During its opening one of the board members proclaimed, ‘Mount Pleasant is one of the finest combinations of natural scenery and art, it will undoubtedly become one of the handsomest burying grounds in America’ (Filey, 1999:11).

²⁹ While the official opening was in 1876 the first interments took place from July 1875 when remains which had originally been interred in Potter’s Field and which had not been reburied in the Necropolis were transferred there.

-Chapter Four- The Cemetery Landscape – A Cultural Institution in Flux

As a cultural institution the cemetery remains in flux defined and redefined by the society in which it exists. In recent years the cemetery has experienced substantial restructuring in light of heritage tourism and the emerging cemetery business. These commercially driven processes have altered the commemorative landscape to such a degree that the tradition and sacredness of the cemetery institution remains in jeopardy. This chapter will discuss these movements and the influence they have had and continue to have on the present cemetery landscape.

(Re) Defining the Cemetery

The present society lacks a standard categorization or definition for the cultural institution known as the cemetery. Periods of substantial burial change, especially in recent decades have resulted in further diversification of an already ambiguous concept. The complex process of defining burial places serves as the chief point of analysis in the work of Julie Rugg. As Rugg (2000:259) notes, ‘Although there is a substantial literature that rests on the implicit assumption that cemeteries constitute a specific burial form, no study has yet attempted a detailed definition of the basic essentials of that form’. While some scholars such as Sloane (1991) and Linden-Ward (1989) have written extensively on various aspects of the burial landscape, they fail to offer a concrete categorization for these complex spaces. In her work Rugg posits that J.S. Curl is one of a select group of writers to have ventured into the task of defining different types of burial spaces. As Rugg (1999:260) notes, the cemetery according to Curl (1999), ‘is a burial ground, especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the deposition or interment of the dead, not being a churchyard attached to a place of worship’. In defining

the cemetery Rugg draws on the work of Jacek Kolbuszewski (1995). The broader approach taken by Kolbuszewski proposes that not every burial space is a cemetery. According to Rugg (2000), Kolbuszewski's (1995) argument examines the practice of 'ethnic cleansing' in the former Yugoslavia focusing specifically on the establishment of mass graves. These 'graves' served as a place of disposal, where corpses could 'disappear' (Rugg, 2000:260). In drawing on Kolbuszewski's work Rugg (2000:260) attempts to illustrate the way in which ritualized burials can facilitate the repositioning and redefining of the cemetery as more than simply a site of human remains disposal. Cemeteries can be active cultural institutions imbued with meaning, defined not always by their inherent purpose, but by the memories of the people they represent. They can house more than tangible memorials – often embodying fluid emotions left displaced after a death. In drawing on the work of both Curl and Kolbuszewski, Rugg attempts to illustrate this by pointing to the relatively expansive and complex nature of cemetery definition, highlighting that although both analyses are useful, the definition can be expanded to include a variety of factors and burial space types.

The complexity of the cemetery institution can be better understood by examining the cultural processes that underpinned its transformation. To highlight these changes as they related to Mount Pleasant Cemetery I drew extensively on the work of scholars such as Sloane (1993) whose analysis focused on burial evolution, pointing to trends and patterns and their role in creating what has emerged today as the cemetery. However, many scholars, Sloane for example, fail to extend their analysis to include a contemporary definition of a cemetery. While many have focused their work on aspects of the burial landscape – such as architecture, environment, and emotion - few have attempted a conceptual 'working' definition of the cemetery institution as a whole. It is

for this reason that I once again point to the work of Julie Rugg (2000) whose analysis affords a definition by outlining the distinctive characteristics that in her opinion make a cemetery, a cemetery. In constructing this definition she cites several key factors considered critical in cemetery categorization. According to Rugg (2000:261) location is a primary point of distinction arguing that although cemeteries are situated close to populated areas, they are seldom located in the central urban core. In the 18th and 19th century during their period of widespread introduction many were laid out roughly half a mile away from the more populous areas of town (Rugg, 2000:261). As Rugg (2000:261) argues, this placement trend reflected an attempt to reposition the corpse – which in the 18th century was increasingly considered to be a danger to public health – from ‘inner-city churchyards to a site near the edge of town’. Relocating these cemeteries to the outskirts of populated areas afforded them the opportunity to grow substantially in size, sometimes in excess of 10-15 acres – notably larger than the previously overcrowded churchyards (Rugg, 2000:261). While much of Rugg’s definition pertains specifically to the burial landscape of Mount Pleasant her analysis of cemetery location fails to exact the same accuracy. Mount Pleasant Cemetery today – unlike many rural cemeteries of the time – is situated in the centre of Toronto’s urban core, a reality that differs from Rugg’s claim that burial landscapes are typically situated far from the urban realm. While this notion is true when examined in relation to the initial establishment of the cemetery it does not accurately describe the landscape as it exists today.

Although situated in the urban core of the metropolis Mount Pleasant distinguishes itself from the surrounding community through a well-established border – a second defining characteristic that Rugg argues categorizes a cemetery. In some cases a boundary is marked by ‘a hedge or other planting’, more prevalent however are more

substantial structures: typically a wall, railing, or a combination of both (Rugg, 2000:261). As Rugg (2000:262) notes, ‘a secure boundary has a dual purpose: protecting the dead from disturbance and – increasingly in the 18th and 19th century – sequestering the dead from the living’. Images and designs such as torches and snakes were commonly integrated into entrance gate architecture often representing notions such as ‘the termination of life, eternity and the passage of time’ (Rugg, 2000:262). As Rugg’s position illustrates, features such as the boundary and the entrance gates are pivotal in defining the cemetery as they differentiate it from surrounding land.

Another categorizing feature of cemeteries as defined by Rugg (2000:262) is that ‘they offer the possibility and context for, memorializing a particular individual,’ more specifically that the memory of a deceased loved one can be enshrined in the site’s inherent design. To ensure this process is done in a logical and appropriate manner the cemetery landscape is constructed with roads, islets, and pathways. Each grave is provided with a specific address or plot number registered as such in the site’s documentation providing each family with a sense of ownership and control over their purchased land (Rugg, 2000:262). These ‘ownership papers’ as Rugg (2000:262) argues, ‘offered burial rights ‘in perpetuity’, granting families rights over burial plots from which the remains would never be removed’.³⁰ This tradition of land-rights not land-ownership is actively practised at Mount Pleasant Cemetery at the present time. While individuals do not actually own the land housing the deceased individual, they own the rights to that land thereby controlling the remains which are interred there. In this respect a defining characteristic of the cemetery centres around issues of private control – a notion

³⁰ As Rugg (2000:262) notes, ‘perpetuity graves have some sort of marker, ranging from elaborate statuary and monumentation through to single plaques set into a lawn’.

increasingly prevalent in the current cemetery landscape. Rugg touches on this idea briefly in her analysis citing the importance of rights to physical space in popularizing the cemetery in the 19th century. For some historians she notes, drawing on the work of Cannadine (1981), ‘the popularity of the cemetery in the 19th century hinges on its capacity to give families space for such a marker, as an expression of both grief and status’ (Rugg, 2000:262).

While physical attributes are critical in distinguishing a cemetery, purpose and ownership remain equally important when seeking an adequate definition. The fundamental function of a cemetery – as is the case with other burial sites – is ostensibly the interment of the dead (Rugg, 2000:262). However, a facet often overlooked yet pivotal in importance is not the departed individuals who rest in the landscape, but instead the larger population they represent (Rugg, 2000:262). As Rugg (2000:262) argues, cemeteries can serve a complete community, with the ‘catchment area’ constituting an entire district or town. In this respect the purpose of a cemetery can be extended beyond the needs and desires of the deceased individual concerned instead with those still living. This shift in focus from those gone to those who still remain illustrates the types of changes that were increasingly characteristic of the society at the time. These notions of societal division or exclusion often influenced and in some ways defined the emerging cemetery and still remain dominant aspects in their categorization.

Another distinguishing feature of cemeteries is the extent to which they are regarded as ‘sacred’ spaces. Theorists such as Hubert (1994) and Rugg (2000) caution that ‘sacredness’ is a slippery concept. The degree and manner to which a space is considered sacred is often unique to each individual. The dictionary definitions give the word a range of meanings, ‘the holy’, ‘consecrated’, implying spiritual element, to

‘protected from irreligious action’ and the more secular meaning, ‘worthy of or regarded with reverence, awe or respect’ (Rugg, 2000:263-264). Generally, however, cemeteries are considered sacred only in so far as the site itself is ‘regarded with respect’. As Rugg (2000:264) notes, ‘much of this respect rests largely on the fact that the site acts as a context for grief, and it is the bereaved that need to be protected from inappropriate activity’. To ensure that proper respect is maintained in and around the sacred site certain behaviours deemed unacceptable by ‘society’ are often restricted. What is considered to be ‘inappropriate behaviour’ is often defined by cemetery management, and these rules both directly and indirectly govern activity in and around the burial landscape.

The sacredness of space is a final point considered when categorizing the cemetery. Housing displaced emotions such as grief and loss that are often left fluid following a death, the cemetery remains an emotionally charged site defined largely by the memories it preserves. Often maintaining the only link individuals have with lost loved ones, the cemetery as a cultural institution emerges as a socially significant and sacred space. Rugg’s definition builds on this idea by citing two closely related aspects that combine ‘as a measure’ of burial site sacredness - pilgrimage and permanence. Pilgrimage is proposed by Rugg (2000:264) to describe visits to a burial site for the purpose of tending or viewing a particular grave. While this classification remains rather broad it does point to the chief rationale behind cemetery visitation. In discussing reasoning of this nature Rugg (2000:264) draws on the work of Francis *et al.* (2000), Hartman (1986), and Rojek (1993) outlining what she considers to be the three most intertwined reasons ascribed to grave visits: the private and personal, the overtly or inadvertently political, and the recreational. While recreation and politics can and do occasionally prompt cemetery visitation, the individual desire to remember lost loved

ones remains the predominant motivation. It is through continued visitation and patronage that cemeteries come to satisfy what Rugg cites as the second requirement – permanence. According to Rugg (2000:264), ‘the high incidence of visits over a protracted period of time means that the site becomes sacred and is afforded some degree of permanence’. When this criterion is met the cemetery landscape is to a certain extent safeguarded from obliteration, having achieved a degree of perceived sanctity in the larger society. This new respect for the dead is unique and not indicative of older, more traditional places of burial, further differentiating the cemetery from alternative commemorative rituals.

Although still contested and largely undefined, Rugg’s (2000:264) analysis affords the cemetery institution some degree of classification citing them as;

specifically demarcated sites of burial, with internal layout that is sufficiently well ordered to allow families to claim and exercise control over their particular grave space, and which facilitate the conducting of appropriate funeral ritual.

As Rugg’s (2000) work has illustrated, cemeteries remain conceptually difficult to define. Existing as sites of human interaction, burial landscapes are constantly shifting and evolving. Elements traditionally characteristic of the cemetery landscape can and have changed over time, shaped and defined by a dynamic and interactive system of cultural processes. The cemetery thus emerges not as a static text but as a landscape ‘in process’.

Landscape as a Cultural Process: the Shifting Cemetery Landscape

The landscape is a dynamic facet of present-day society, shaped, defined, and redefined by human agency. It serves as a critical point of reference in understanding how society emerged, evolved, and has come to exist in the present day. The examination of landscapes has been the focus of numerous scholarly works not only in the geographical

realm but in all disciplines. Scholars such as Robertson and Richards (2003) have been influential in furthering the geographical study of cultural landscapes. In their influential work, *Studying Cultural Landscapes* (2003:2), Robertson and Richards tackle landscape conceptualization. They attempt to understand the complex nature of the term through an examination of the myriad of meanings – physical, iconological, and ideological in nature – that are often encoded within the landscape. Their view is largely concerned with the critical meanings attached to cultural landscapes, pointing out that while landscapes can exist as representations, they can in-turn represent the ‘processes out of which they have emerged’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:2).

Viewing the landscape as a cultural process is not a new phenomenon. Many theorists have pointed to the shifting and evolving nature of the term. At the forefront of the ‘landscape as a cultural process’ debate is the revolutionary and oft-cited work of W.J.T. Mitchell (1994:1) whose analysis attempts to shift understanding away from seeing landscape as a static text to seeing it as a ‘process by which ... identities are formed’. Like many theorists, Robertson and Richards (2003) draw on the work of Mitchell not only to introduce, but to situate their own position. Their view, much like Mitchell’s, suggests that the landscape is never stagnant; it is always considered ‘active and dynamic’, or as they argue, it ‘does work’ in both the mental and material senses (Robertson and Richards, 2003:7).

While this view is not exclusive to the geographic realm, it has achieved prominence to such a degree that an increasing number of scholars are examining landscape and culture in light of each other. The work of prominent geographer Lily Kong reflects how the fusion of these two concepts culminates in the realm of deathscapes. She cites new directions in cultural geography to better frame her

discussion, analysis and interpretation of landscapes of the dead. In doing this Kong (1999), like Mitchell, is attempting to re-theorize the long-established concepts of culture and landscape. Her study not only draws on, but in some ways parallels the work of Cosgrove and Jackson (1987) by affording a somewhat redefined notion of culture. This process of conceptual re-theorization parallels the work of influential scholars such as Cosgrove and Jackson (1987) who stress that, in redefining culture ‘*inter alia* contestations’ between groups should be taken into consideration, especially they argue, ‘in the appropriation and transformation of artifacts and significations from the dominant culture by subordinate groups as forms of resistance’ (1987:96). In this view then, while often misconstrued as independent processes, unaffected by competing discourses, cultures are inevitably politically contested institutions and as Kong (1999:2) argues, cultural geography should pay close attention to processes of ‘domination, hegemony, resistance, particularly as it is manifested within the landscape’.

The work of Kong centres largely on the deconstruction of the landscape, or specific to her study, the ‘deathscape’. Kong points to theories on landscape to illustrate the role and influence of social construction in these commemorative spaces. In this respect her work shows how even landscapes of the dead can sustain multiple meanings, imparted and influenced by the larger society in which they exist. Drawing once again on the work of Cosgrove and Jackson (1987:96), Kong (1999:2) argues for ‘an increasingly complex concept of landscape, recognizing it as a cultural construction, a particular way of composing, structuring and giving meaning to an external world whose history has to be understood in relation to the material appropriation of land’. In citing the inadequacies of the present landscape conceptualization Kong reaffirms the need for a more accurate and all-encompassing definition. Previous landscapes were at times viewed one-

dimensionally without proper consideration for the dynamics that underpin their construction. However, these limitations in conceptualization are lessened when the landscape and its construction is viewed as a complex process. An important consequence of this approach, as outlined by Kong (1999:2) is the insistence on landscape as a construction and the need to acknowledge the centrality of ‘symbolic landscapes which ‘produce and sustain social meaning’ (Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987:96). This notion is critical when examining changing landscapes, or ‘landscapes in process’, especially those of the dead.

Robertson and Richards (2003:7) suggest that, ‘it is within the fields of archaeology and anthropology that the notion of landscape as cultural process finds its most consistent expression...’ While these disciplines do utilize this progressive conception of landscape, the field of geography, although often overlooked, remains at the forefront in employing this method of classification, deconstruction and interpretation. These ‘methods’, however diverse in nature, are all aimed to exact the same outcome – a better understanding of the landscape being studied. The way in which the landscape is understood is often based upon what Robertson and Richards (2003:7) term a ‘phenomenological stance’ wherein ‘the manner in which people experience and understand the world’ serves as the primary issue of analysis. In this view, the physicality of landscape is considered critical because it serves as the site where ‘humanly created locales occur’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:7). This idea extends the notion of landscape far beyond something that can be understood one-dimensionally. To further strengthen their view of landscape complexity Robertson and Richards (2003:7) draw on the work of Tim Ingold, whose position outright rejects the notion of landscape as a cultural or symbolic construct, arguing that by viewing it this way one is falsely

separating the ‘mental and material worlds’. Ingold (1993:157) instead proposes a temporality to landscape in order to incorporate ‘the processes of social life’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:7). This concept as Robertson and Richards (2003:7) note, enables Ingold to view the landscape as ‘part of and as product of the dynamic process of dwelling in which it, the landscape, is never complete; neither ‘built’ nor ‘unbuilt’, it is perpetually under construction’ (1993:162). This, Ingold argues, is why ‘the conventional dichotomy between natural and artificial (or ‘man-made’) components of the landscape is so problematic’ (1993:162).

Ingold’s theory subscribes to this ‘landscape as a process’ ideology. According to him, landscape is derived from what he terms ‘taskscape’: a process involving a series of interconnecting cycles that build themselves into the landscape and which the landscape embodies (Ingold, 1993; Robertson and Richards, 2003). In drawing on Ingold’s work Robertson and Richards (2003:7) point out that ‘these processes are dwelling ‘tasks’, the concrete practices of *work*; and the whole array of tasks forms the taskscape,’ which as Ingold parallels, ‘relates to landscape as music does to painting’. Just as with music, the forms of landscape are generated in movement, or more specifically a ‘process’ and, in the same way that painting can be seen as a frozen form of music, landscape can be ‘understood as the taskscape in its embodied form: a pattern of activities ‘collapsed’ into an array of features’ (Ingold, 1993:162; Robertson and Richards, 2003:7). This idea of seeing the landscape as a process or transitioning space underpins the argument set out by Ingold because for him, ‘landscape is a congealed form of taskscape’ (1993:162).

This notion of ‘taskscape’ put forth by Ingold is a highly regarded if not universally accepted mediation on landscape (Robertson and Richards, 2003:7). By arguing against a restricted and in some ways simplistic negotiation of landscape Ingold’s

position has inspired the work of other scholars like Christopher Tilley (1994). While Tilley agrees with Ingold's assertion that it is problematic to conceptualize the world in terms of a 'binary nature/culture distinction', he finds fault in Ingold's belief that cultural knowledge can only be attained through systematic progression, or more specifically occurring at one point in time (Tilley, 1994: Robertson and Richards, 2003:7). This facet of Ingold's argument seems almost contradictory to his progressive and process-oriented position. Tilley (1994) argues instead that 'the cultural construction of the environment is both 'prelude' *and* 'epilogue', instead of one or the other (Robertson and Richards, 2003:7; Tilley, 1994:24; original emphasis). Tilley's analysis of 'process' goes further to incorporate notions of memory, narratives and what he terms 'spirit of the place' to illustrate the role of culture and more specifically, the symbolic in transforming space and place.

The work of scholars such as Ingold and Tilley remains critical in understanding the cultural processes that inform landscape. While they differ in their position on how knowledge can be attained, they agree on one important point – that landscape is never complete. As a dynamic site fashioned by human agency landscape, as these theorists have argued, emerges as a cultural process.

Influential in the realm of landscape analysis the work of Tilley and Ingold has informed the work of other scholars such as Eric Hirsch (1995). In his work, *The Anthropology of Landscape*, Hirsch proposes an in-depth approach to understanding complex landscapes. In their work, Robertson and Richards (2003:8) draw on the work of Hirsch (1995) to illustrate that, in taking a similar approach to Tilley, Hirsch does not completely dismiss a 'representational reading' of a landscape, but instead argues that it offers an incomplete interpretation. He fears that by using such a limited approach when

analyzing landscape one or more of the critical relationships influencing a space might be lost or unintentionally excluded. As a cultural geographer Hirsch firmly believes in viewing the landscape as a process that both incorporates and reacts to experiences of daily life. In this regard Hirsch's position is not that unlike the work of Ingold and Tilley in that it subscribes to the idea that landscape is multi-faceted, subject to a variety of readings. However, Hirsch refuses to limit his analysis to a pre-determined set of criteria on-which interpretations can be measured, and in this respect his method provides a stronger, more comprehensive and thus complete reading of the landscape and the cultural processes that define and inform it.

Increasingly landscapes are being regarded not as static spaces untouched by human agency but as locations of progress, change and transformation. According to Robertson and Richards (2003:8), what has occurred in the 1990s is a shift in landscape perception that involved a 'move away from what some commentators perceive as the static nature of the symbolic reading to an emphasis on the dynamic and constitutive nature of landscape' noting that the most persuasive commentators 'incorporate the symbolic approach into a multivocal reading of the concept' (Robertson and Richards, 2003:8). While all perspectives have afforded a slightly unique position, theorists like Robertson and Richards, Tilley, Ingold and Hirsch have been resolute in their attempts to show the importance of culture and the symbolic approach when attempting to understand any part of a 'scape'. Their work reiterates that landscape does not exist independent of social pressures of the time, but instead as a product of those pressures, emerging therefore as a process. In drawing on the work of S. Seymour, Robertson and Richards (2003:8) make the critical point that 'Landscape does not simply mirror or distort 'underlying' social relations, but needs to be understood as enmeshed within the

process which shape how the world is organized, experienced and understood, rather than read as its end product’.

Studying ‘Deathscapes’

Debates surrounding the ability to ‘adequately’ experience and interpret various ‘scapes’ have resulted in the emergence of new and unique approaches to landscape analysis. These innovative and in many ways expansive research techniques have intrigued some scholars, prompting them to take a renewed interest in many long ignored spaces and places - especially, landscapes of the dead. Using a culture-sensitive approach to landscape analysis W. Scott Howard attempts an in-depth and spiritual engagement with the often overlooked commemorative landscape in his work, ‘Landscapes of memorialisation’ (2003). Considered revolutionary in the realm of deathscape analysis Howard’s (2003) work describes what has been called, ‘one of the most ancient and still ongoing western engagements with landscape as a place, space and means of expressing and transcending grief at death and loss’ (Robertson and Richards, 2003:14). In his analysis Howard (2003:47) focuses on relationships between ‘works of art, mourning and memory’ drawing on Greek and Latin nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry, visual images, memorial architecture and sculpture. Howard (2003) views landscapes of memorialization as multi-faceted in that they can simultaneously enable the act of mourning while manifesting the idea of what he terms, ‘Arcadia’. Arcadia is a landscape of mourning that represents a real or imaginary world where loss can be transformed. These landscapes of memorialization are as Howard (2003:47) argues, ‘idealised other places – visions (and versions) of Arcadia – that exist apart from this place of human suffering’ yet they provide regions and places where individuals can visit to displace feelings of grief, sorrow and loss’ enabling them to eventually move forward. Howard

concludes his study by analyzing the Washington Vietnam War Memorial in relation to the 'idea of Arcadia' substantiating it as a site of successful negotiations between public and private experiences of loss.

Through his work Howard (2003) has ventured forth in landscape analysis to incorporate the often under-researched but potentially revelatory landscapes of the dead. In his study he points to the complex and evolving nature of a particular landscape, and taking a similar position as other scholars like Tilley and Ingold, illustrates how one space can be subject to a variety of different interpretations and experiences. Howard is strong and successful in his pursuit to illustrate that even landscapes of the dead can be dynamic and shifting spaces, often emerging as a cultural process that can and does transform over time. Although unique in depth and focus Howard's work remains influential in cultural geography as it both advances and broadens the understanding of the commemorative landscape. While Howard does not draw largely on the literature of others in his analysis, he does point to the work of other deathscape theorists like Lily Kong and Elizabeth Teather to illustrate the significance their contributions have made in the realm of commemorative landscape research.

Howard's work argues firmly that there is a definite need for more research in the realm of deathscapes. This idea parallels well the work of Lily Kong who takes a similar but notably broader position on the limits of cultural geography research in this area of study. In her work 'Cemeteries and Columbaria, Memorials and Mausoleums', Kong (1999:2) addresses not only deathscapes, but prominent issues that often inform all 'scapes'. According to Kong (1999:1), these issues often include, 'the ideological underpinnings of landscapes, the contestation of space, the centrality of place and the multiplicity of meanings'. In this regard deathscapes, like other neglected '-scapes'

(sound, smell, body) can and often do embody a myriad of meanings and values wrapped in multiple narratives, inviting interpretation' (Kong, 1999:1). While larger questions concerning the allocation of meanings to particular places and how power relations can be drawn into the understanding of place creation inform her research Kong's central analysis focuses more specifically on how 'these questions and perspectives have infused the study of deathscapes' (1999:2).

The contested space of deathscapes that Kong alludes to in her study is further explored by cultural geographer Elizabeth K. Teather in her article, 'themes from complex landscapes: Chinese cemeteries and columbaria in urban Hong Kong' (1998). In analyzing cemetery space in Hong Kong Teather focuses on the political, cultural and religious tensions that have come between the individual and the state. According to Teather, in land-scarce Hong Kong, 'persuasion and control of the state' has forced many Chinese to adopt the practice of cremation following the loss of a loved one (Teather, 1998; Kong, 1999:3). While some cemeteries still remain symbolic spaces for individuals desiring a burial, many have been changed – restructured in light of planning and land use concerns (Teather, 1998; Kong, 1999:3). This act of physical restructuring lends itself well to the 'landscape as process' position, an idea that Teather clearly subscribes to in analyzing the burial landscape as a 'changed' space. It is this perspective that prompted Kong to cite Teather's study as a point of comparison in her work.

Kong acknowledges a similar parallel in drawing on the work of scholars, Yeoh and Tran (1995). In their work on deathscapes in Singapore, Yeoh and Tran (1995) illustrate how the 'colonial state adopted a utilitarian view of burial space', focusing specifically on both the unsanitary nature of burial grounds, and, as viewed by some - their misuse of valuable land (Kong, 1999:3). They highlight how deathscapes are

restructured with focus increasingly centered on deriving revenue instead of site preservation. In this respect, Yeoh and Tran, much like the work of both Kong and Teather, situate landscape as not only a conflicting but a transitioning space, strongly affected by social, cultural and political processes.

This focus on land use conflicts specifically in regards to their perceived worth is an issue reflected in the work of anthropologist Michael Bollig (1997). As Kong (1999:3) notes, Bollig's work illustrates how 'ancestral Himba graves in Namibia are contested places between the state and the local society'. Bollig (1997) outlines this divide further through an examination of the 'state dictated developmental plans for a hydroelectric dam' noting the controversy this potential expansion sparked within the larger society (Kong, 1999:3). The impacts these developments would have on the symbolic and religious meaning of not only the graves themselves but the overall identity of the space is an important point of concern raised within this study. The work of Bollig (1997) argues well how landscape remains a contested resource often manipulated to satisfy the needs of the society at the time.

As these articles have argued, 'deathscapes provide a means of understanding how space is a contested resource in social life' (Kong, 1999:3). The work of scholars like Kong, Teather and Bollig illustrate how these spaces of the dead can and do exhibit multiple meanings. As their work exemplifies, deathscapes and the significance ascribed to them extends beyond 'intersections of nature and culture' embracing alternate issues like politics, conservation and increasingly tourism. This interaction between the commemorative landscape and notions of tourism is best described in the work of Jason Berry (1997). As Kong (1999:6) points out, Berry's (1997) work on New Orleans highlights notions of conservation and tourism as they relate to the realm of deathscapes.

In his analysis he notes that the lack of public funds in New Orleans, perpetuated by the greater need to tackle social problems such as underprivileged public schools and failing infrastructure have meant that little economic attention has been given to historic burial grounds (Berry, 1997; Kong, 1999:6). His argument critically details how a non-profit collective of people have committed themselves to preserving the historical cemeteries by ‘turning them into recreation and tourism grounds to which visitors can be bussed in for night-time tours’ (Berry, 1997; Kong, 1999:6). These burial grounds and their preservation occur as a result of definition reform or what Kong (1999:6) calls the ascription of ‘multiple meanings’ to deathscapes. Ultimately, this process of landscape or more specifically ‘deathscape’ restructuring through multiple meaning attribution involves repositioning concepts of preservation, conservation and increasingly heritage tourism.

Heritage and Heritage Tourism

Heritage is intimately tied to the past. It represents a type of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations, both in terms of cultural traditions and physical relics. With a landscape that houses row upon row of historical artifacts serving as testaments to individual legacy, the cemetery exists as an active site of heritage.

As Dallen Timothy and Stephen Boyd (2003:2) argue, ‘heritage is selective. The historical record is incomplete, and not all heritages are what society values; what is desirable to keep are selections from the past’. Society filters heritage through a transitioning system of value that changes over time, space, and across society (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:2). In defining the meaning of heritage and heritage tourism Timothy and Boyd (2003:2) draw on the work of Peter Fowler (1989:60) who argues that, ‘the past per se, but perhaps not that party of its produce which we call heritage, is emotionally

neutral. It is neither exciting nor dull, good or bad, worthwhile nor worthless without our intercession'. In his work Fowler argues that all heritages assume some aspect of inherent value. The spectrum on which the value of heritage is measured however can be highly complex and often contested. As Timothy and Boyd (2003:2) argue, this spectrum can range from the highly individualistic, or what they describe as 'personal or family heritage' to the general, involving nations and communities. In their work Timothy and Boyd (2003) cite important distinctions between what they consider to be individual and general facets of heritage. The former relates largely to personal legacy and memory, while the latter, as they argue, shapes a collective identity through the inclusion and protection of 'symbols, icons and mythologies' (2003:2).

Scholars have long focused their efforts on situating heritage in the local, regional and global context however the relatively diverse application of the term has made it difficult to define. In their work Gregory Ashworth and John Tunbridge (1999:105) have attempted a definition seeing heritage as,

'the contemporary uses of the past ... The interpretation of the past in history, the surviving relict buildings and artifacts and collective and individual memories are all harnessed in response to current needs which include the identification of individuals with social, ethnic and territorial entities and the provision of economic resources for commodification within heritage industries.'

However, as Timothy and Boyd (2003:3) argue, there remains much controversy concerning the conceptual definition of heritage citing the work of Nick Merriman (1991:8) who argues:

'On the positive side the word is used to describe culture and landscape that are cared for by the community and passed on to the future to serve people's need for a sense of identity and belonging. In this context, the use of the term 'heritage centre' in for example natural parks, covers institutions, which aim to care for them. These positive values of care and identity are in sharp contrast to the more

negative and pejorative views of the term heritage. In this sense, as used in the 'heritage industry', the word has become synonymous with the manipulation (or even invention) and exploitation of the past for commercial ends.'

An important point that Merriman draws on in his definition is that heritage is becoming increasingly commercialized. Often scholars focus on how to classify heritage without properly examining issues that influence its present state. For example, in addition to dealing with the past, heritage sustains linkages with notions of power, identity and economy in the present. Although this is a diverse and broad-based definition, it affords a more inclusive and complete conceptualization of the term. As Timothy and Boyd (2003:3) caution, 'it is important that a holistic and inclusive understanding of heritage is present in thinking, as heritage has too often been abused for social, political and economic reasons'. While dominant ideologies typically govern interpretations of heritage it remains a concept that is capable of being understood differently within a single culture at a single time (Graham, 2002:1004). In this respect heritage is viewed as diverse in nature as there are a multiplicity of heritages, the contents of which change over time and across space (Graham, 2002:1004).

As Graham (2002:1004) argues, 'heritage does not engage directly with the study of the past, instead it concerns itself with the ways in which select material artifacts, mythologies and memories become resources for the present'. It is this position that underpins the changing landscape of the cemetery in contemporary society. Ultimately, 'the contents, interpretations and representations of the resource are selected in accordance with the demands of the present' (Graham, 2002:1004). The meanings and functions of memory and tradition are conceptualized in the present with presumed significance giving value, both cultural and economic to material artifacts of the past (Graham, 2002:1004). As Graham (2002:1004) argues however, the heritage artifacts of

the present may be later discarded as the demands of the present societies change or are reinvented. In this respect, heritage – like landscape – is a cultural process affected by societal change and restructuring. With its value and significance both reflective of and dependant on the collective norms of the time, heritage, as Graham (2002:1004) argues, ‘is as much about forgetting as remembering the past’.

In their work Timothy and Boyd (2003:4) make the important point that, ‘people erroneously equate heritage with history. History, however, is the recording of the past as accurately as possible in so far as it can be accurate given present-day limitations of knowledge’. They continue however by arguing that heritage is simultaneously part of our past but, ‘it includes a range of aspects such as language, culture, identity and locality’ (2003:4). Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996:6) situate these differences well by stating that ‘history is what a historian regards as worth recording and heritage is what contemporary society chooses to inherit and to pass on’. Ultimately, what is understood from the work of Timothy and Boyd (2003:4) is that heritage does not simply constitute the past, but the modern-day use of the elements, whether ‘cultural or natural, tangible or intangible’.

These associations between culture and heritage remain evident, with heritage an integral facet of past and present cultural landscapes. By escalating the intellectual and economic profile of heritage what has emerged according to Timothy and Boyd (2003:5) is ‘an expansion of the terms to apply not only to the historic environment, both natural and built, but also to every dimension of material culture, intellectual inheritances and cultural identities’. This trend of ‘inflated meaning’ is not specific to heritage and has been applied to numerous other dynamic and contested concepts. As Graham (2002:1005) argues however, ‘Tunbridge and Ashworth’s thesis of dissonant heritage

(1996) represents the most sustained attempt to conceptualize... heritage and its repercussions'. Dissonance, as defined by Graham (2002:1005) involves the 'discordance or lack of agreement and consistency as to the meaning of heritage'. Critical in their analysis is the view of heritage is an economic commodity comprised of 'tangible and intangible place products' that are sold and interpreted by tourists and consumers (Graham, 2002:1005). Expanding in analysis Tunbridge and Ashworth draw on 'landscapes of tourism consumption' to show how one individuals commercialized space can be another individuals sacred place (Graham, 2002:1005). This idea further illustrates the potential issues that can arise from multiple-meaning ascription – a complex and at times disputed understanding of particular concepts. In this respect, the work of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) acutely outlines how diverse and conceptually contested the heritage discourse remains.

What has clearly emerged from the work of these scholars is a dynamic, multifaceted and widespread profile of heritage that has grown to encompass concepts that apply not only to the historic environment, both natural and built, but also to dimensions of the mature culture and cultural identities (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). This same trend of 'inflated meaning' has been applied to the use of 'culture in relation to tourism' (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:5). In their work Timothy and Boyd (2003:5) draw on the influential work of Richards (2001a:7) who examines linkages between the 'heritage tourism', 'cultural tourism' and 'arts tourism' discourses. Similar to landscape, Richards (2001) views culture as a process vulnerable to change. The outcome of these processes extends cultural tourism beyond the visitation of sites and monuments to include consuming or understanding the way of life of the places visited (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:5). Richards (2001) analysis is critical in this respect as it successfully extends the

view of cultural tourism to include the important but often overlooked experience of place – a critical component of heritage tourism. Ultimately he argues that with cultural tourism involving ‘cultural products and contemporary culture’, it encompasses both ‘heritage tourism’ (related to artifacts of the past) and ‘arts tourism’ (related to contemporary cultural production).

As the work of Richards illustrates, concepts of heritage, tourism and culture remain intertwined, multi-faceted and notably complex. Timothy and Boyd (2003:5) expand upon this position by drawing on the influential work of C. Michael Hall and Heather Zeppel (1990a:87) to illustrate the connections between cultural and heritage tourism;

‘cultural tourism is experiential tourism based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts and festivals. Heritage tourism, whether in the form of visiting preferred landscapes, historic sites, buildings or monuments, is also experiential tourism in the sense of seeking and encounter with nature or feeling part of the history of a place.’

In their work scholars like Richards and Hall and Zeppel have outlined extensively the connections and links that underpin concepts of heritage, culture and tourism. As these fields have grown however, distinction between them has become clouded prompting some theorists to further distinguish between concepts. The later work of Zeppel and Hall (1992) for example repositioned heritage tourism within a broader field of ‘special interest travel’ citing that aspects of tourism have grown to encompass not only ‘physical remains of the past’ but increasingly ‘natural landscapes’ and ‘cultural traditions’ (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:5). Presently heritage tourism remains one of the fastest growing forms of cultural tourism, a phenomenon that has prompted other scholars to adopt its independent classification, distinguishing it from cultural tourism.

While the heritage tourism discourse has sought more prominence in recent decades its classification has not gone uncontested. Many scholars still view heritage on a spectrum or as an industry, but not as a defining concept through which experience or classification can be measured. This skepticism is evident in the work of Yaniv Poria *et al.* (2001). These scholars dispute the merits of heritage tourism as a subgroup of tourism based on the historic attributes of a site or attraction. They instead suggest that heritage tourism is a discourse ‘based on tourist motivations and perceptions rather than on the specific site attributes’ (Poria *et al.* 2001). Their analysis situates heritage tourism as, ‘a subgroup of tourism in which the main motivations for visiting a site is based on the place’s heritage characteristics according to the tourists’ perceptions of their own heritage’ (Poria *et al.* 2001:1048). This view however, has been strongly contested in the academic realm. As Timothy and Boyd (2003:6) argue, their position fails to consider the perspectives of individuals ‘supplying’ the heritage tourism experience. In addition, this definition falls short on what Timothy and Boyd (2003:6) call ‘tautological grounds’, ignoring the issue of dissonant heritage, a notion strongly argued in the work of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). While the work of Poria *et al.* does make some compelling arguments it remains incomplete, lacking inclusiveness within the experiences it incorporates. By failing to adequately involve and represent the perspectives of all affected individuals, the conclusions drawn by these scholars remain flawed. Regardless, what the work of Poria *et al.* (2001) illustrates is that although much disagreement remains, the meanings of heritage and heritage tourism continue to invoke interest from scholars of various disciplines.

In their analysis Timothy and Boyd (2003:7) develop a general model of heritage and heritage tourism. The model is approached from a behavioural perspective and is

based on ideas prominent within behavioural geography. This model draws on the idea that 'heritage' exists as part of a world of physical and social facts, namely the phenomenal environment (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:7). Only when it is perceived by society and cultures to have value and some utilitarian function does it truly become part of the behavioural environment. Drawing on the work of Hall and McArthur (1998) it is argued that, heritage is ultimately formed from those elements of the past that we wish to keep (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:7). In this respect, heritage, and what is selected as such are products of numerous filters decided upon by larger society. In essence, something needs to be perceived or accepted as heritage in order to move 'from the phenomenal to the behavioural environment' and in this respect, it is only heritage that is valued as a commodity that forms and embodies the heritage that is marketed to visitors (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:7). It is ultimately through this process of economic filtering that heritage truly takes on an 'economic function', and as Timothy and Boyd (2003:7) argue, 'it is around this that a heritage industry has emerged'.

The experiences that are provided by certain sites remain a key outcome of heritage tourism. Diverse in nature, the heritage tourism experience is influenced and shaped by a mix of elements: supply and demand, the nature of the heritage landscape, the impacts heritage creates and leaves within destination regions, how heritage attractions and resources are managed, how it is interpreted, the role of politics and finally the role of emotion (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:7). While all aspects influencing the heritage tourism experience are important, emotion remains paramount because as John Urry (1995) argues, emotions are intimately tied into place. In his analysis Urry (1995:78) points out that 'there is a lack of distance between people and things'. There is no inherent identity to places; it is the actions of humans at specific locations that turn

objective space into subjective place constructed by human behaviour. This notion is especially reflected in the heritage tourism experience. As Brian Osborne argues (2001:3), 'there remains a complex array of symbolic relationships with physical surroundings, what is termed as the 'ideational resource' through which individuals constitute their surroundings and invest them with value, significance and emotion'. These symbolic relationships define the heritage tourism experience, in that individuals are pushed to travel – specifically to heritage sites – to experience a place, space or artifact deemed historically significant. This relationship or experience with place, as Urry (2000) argues, can be achieved through several distinct 'gazes'.

The tourist gaze, as Urry (2000:78) outlines, involves the culmination of 'collective travel, the desire for travel, the techniques of visual reproduction and the emotion of landscape'. His analysis extends further by sub-dividing this gaze into two distinct forms, firstly the 'romantic gaze' and secondly, the 'collective tourist gaze' (Urry, 2000:78).

According to Urry (2000:78), the 'romantic gaze' emphasizes a 'solitudinous, personal, semi-spiritual relationship with place'. People expect to experience the place privately or with a small group of significant others (Urry, 2000). However, as Urry (2000:78) contends, 'large numbers of other visitors intrude upon and spoil the lonely contemplation desired by western visitors'. The contrasting 'collective tourist gaze' involves conviviality (Urry, 2000). This experience of place involves large groups of people, whom through interactions give liveliness or a sense of movement to that space (Urry, 2000).

Urry's analysis stems from the humanistic approach which has greatly enriched geographers' understanding of the ways in which 'spaces' become imbued with meaning

to become 'places' and the significance of emotions in attachment as well as resistance to particular places. It was through this approach that an understanding of heritage spaces was fostered. As Urry (2000:79) contends, heritage places are never merely backdrops for action or containers for the past, instead they are 'fluid mosaics and moments of memory, matter, metaphor, scene, and experience that create and mediate social spaces and temporalities'. While some commonalities exist, different types of people demand different heritage experiences. Citing the work of James Maken (1987), Timothy and Boyd (2003:70) argue that as the population ages, there appears to be an increased interest in understanding one's roots, prompting a heightened interest in historic sites as visitor attractions. Trends indicate that older individuals are more inclined to travel for personal heritage reasons (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:70). This movement is evident when noting the growth of genealogy or family history research, as a form of serious interest and the tourism that it provokes to ancestral lands, genealogical centres, churches and most importantly, cemeteries. These sacred sites are often littered with people attempting to reaffirm their faith and seek divine blessings (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:70). As Timothy and Boyd (2003) argue, tourists at thana (death) attractions might be motivated by a morbid curiosity about death or simply a fascination with famous people. As some theorists have argued, visiting sites like cemeteries which are associated with one's personal heritage can be linked to nostalgia or an innate desire to discover one's individual roots.

Recently many scholars and observers have directed a great deal of attention to understanding heritage visitation from the perspective of nostalgia. For example, the work of Stacey Baker and Patricia Kennedy (1994) examines the role of nostalgia in the recent drive for heritage site visits.

In their work Baker and Kennedy (1994:169) defined nostalgia as ‘a sentimental or bittersweet yearning or an experience, product or service from the past’. In modern times, as Boyd and Timothy (2003:71) argue, this notion of nostalgia is commonly used to describe the,

feelings people experience which motivates them to visit heritage places of a strong personal connection (e.g. homelands, cemeteries, old homes), national landmarks that evoke strong feelings of patriotism and pride (e.g. national cemeteries, war memorials, battlefields), and perhaps even sites of global importance that induce emotions of awe, reverence and respect for people and events of the past (e.g. Holocaust sites, ancient temples, castles, mines).

As the work of cultural geographer David Lowenthal (1979b:549) has illustrated, the ‘rapid modernization and accelerated destruction [of the past] has deepened nostalgia for the supposedly simpler, safer, and more livable world of the past, a search for roots and historical identity’. In an increasingly commercialized age, people are not only proud but intrigued by their pasts and the pasts of others (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:72). It is this sense of pride as Timothy and Boyd (2003:72) argue that has guided travelers to places that represent values and lifestyles that are rapidly being lost in the industrial world. Often, the people of contemporary society exist without roots in the past, with facets initially designed to preserve these links, such as cemeteries, increasingly destroyed or restructured. This movement has propelled a communal desire to rediscover heritage and history, prompting the world’s traveling population to turn to the past, not only as an economic resource, but a psychological one. This idea is further explored in the work of G.M.S. Dann (1998:29) who argues, ‘today a great deal of time and energy is devoted to looking backwards. Our quest is the capture of a past which, in every conceivable manner, is portrayed by the media as far superior to the chaotic present and dreaded future’ (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:72). As Urry (2000:79) cautions however,

these sacred places of the past should never be thought of as an 'abstract Cartesian space' unaffected by economic pressures, rather they are centers of 'many material activities, which increasingly include the purchase and use of goods and services'.

Gradually, as Urry (2000) argues, many places across the globe are being restructured as places of consumption, or what Fainstein and Judd (1999) term 'places to play'. These sites are complex and remain in a constant struggle against economic restructuring. Increasingly 'sites of intense and heightened consumption' these places are often defined by the goods and services they offer (Urry, 2000:79). Eventually, it is through the consumption of certain commodities that place itself comes to be not only experienced but defined. As Urry (2000:79) argues, 'the good or service is metonymic of that place, with the part standing for the whole'. Increasingly, this economic process of place restructuring is colliding with sites of heritage through the process of heritage tourism.

The worth attributed to heritage artifacts or landscapes rests less in their intrinsic value than in a complex array of contemporary values, demands and even moralities. As many scholars have argued, heritage is currently being discussed in the context of entertainment, tourism, and economic development as communities recognize the power of cultural capital in 'place marketing in placeless times' (Graham, 2002). As Ashworth and Howard (1999:88) have argued, the past is increasingly being regarded as an economic resource integral to plans for regional development (Ashworth and Howard, 1999:88). In this respect, 'heritage, or the simulacrum of heritage, can be mobilized to gain competitive advantage in the race between places' (Graham, 2002). As Graham argues (2002:1006), heritage is an undeniable economic resource; 'one exploited everywhere as a primary component of strategies to promote tourism, economic

development and rural and urban regeneration'. To further his point Graham (2002:1006) draws on the work of Sack (1992) who argues that, 'heritage places are places of consumption and are arranged and managed to encourage consumption; such consumption can create places, but is also place-altering'. Often, Graham (2002:1006) continues, 'these landscapes of consumption... consume their own contexts'. In this respect commercialization and economic restructuring threatens to not only commodify, but trivialize the past to such a degree that what results is the complete destruction of heritage resources.

In his analysis Graham (2002:1007-1008) cites a similar argument put forth by David Lowenthal (1985,1996) who suggests that the past, and its interpretation as history or heritage, confers social benefits as well as costs. In his work Lowenthal outlines four main traits of the past which in his view, illustrate its importance.³¹ Firstly, its antiquity conveys the respect and status of antecedence while underpinning the idea of continuity and its 'essentially modernist ethos of progressive, evolutionary social development' (Graham, 2002:1008). Secondly, societies produce emblematic landscapes wherein specific artifacts acquire cultural status because they connect the present to the past in an unbroken trajectory (Graham, 2002:1008). Thirdly, the past provides a sense of termination in that 'what happened in it has ended' (Graham, 2002:1008). Finally, it affords a sequence, enabling individuals to locate their lives in linear narratives that connect past, present and future (Graham, 2002:1008).

As Graham (2002:1008) points out, Lowenthal's analysis remains couched largely in cultural terms and while it mostly ignores the idea of the past as an economic

³¹ These traits of the past can be taken as synonymous with heritage in this respect. They have been discussed to some degree by Lowenthal in both his 1985 work, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, and in his 1996 work, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, as well as cited in countless other works.

resource, it illustrates well the cultural and socio-political uses of heritage. In the present society increased commodification and site restructuring of historic spaces and places is continually justified as necessary social or political development. These movements have prompted the emergence of a great deal of academic literature provoking debate over acceptable and appropriate uses of heritage. Often in contemporary culture, preservation and conservation techniques are overshadowed by campaigns focused on resource development and capital gain – with economics increasingly underpinning the commercial heritage industry.

Ultimately, it is this commercial heritage industry that has manifested itself within the lands of the departed. Cemeteries or ‘deathscapes’ are increasingly sites of commercialization and tourism. As places of individual, societal and national heritage cemeteries serve as a testament to the past as symbolically loaded signifiers of meaning. Increasingly private enterprises, all levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal – are recognizing the economic potential of marketing death places and stories as consumable heritage. As Brian Osborne (2001) argues, ‘a growing demand for the consumption of historical-tourism and entertainment has prompted an array of theme parks, ghost tours, romanticized murals, and ‘historical’ re-enactments and displays’. This ‘movement’ has encouraged cemeteries to adopt promotional advertising practices and management restructuring techniques focused on capital gain. What has emerged from this commercial process is a ‘cemetery business’.

The Cemetery Business

The 1960s saw the rise of what is now termed the ‘cemetery business’. It was during this time that concerns first came-to-light regarding the emerging relationship of death and private enterprise. In North America, societal skepticism peaked following the

publication of Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death* (1963:1978).³² In her work Mitford examined the increasingly prominent and often appalling commercialization of death in America. Through extensive research Mitford premises her work on the idea that Americans in the twentieth-century are too often encouraged and even forced into having an elaborate funeral ceremony. She argues that this new phenomenon has enabled funeral directors to make huge, outrageous profits from ceremonies that often left families of recently departed loved ones in financial ruins. Her argument involves an outright rejection of the 'psychological justification' for the ornate funeral, stating that although 'authentic sounding,' it remained merely a rationalization for high costs (Mitford, 1963).

Throughout her work Mitford extensively revealed the depths of commercialism in the funeral industry. Her argument highlighted methods funeral directors took to steer mourners toward the more expensive caskets while discussing the common hidden service costs which dramatically increased funeral bills. In her analysis Mitford detailed comprehensively the 'phone bank' and 'direct-mail' campaigns that cemeteries commonly utilized to attract business.

The argument put forth by Mitford was influenced largely by the burial customs of England at the time. English funerals had become increasingly simple with cremation the leading method of burial technique. In England at the time, death was denied completely; as Sloane (1991:231) argues family members were encouraged to forego the funeral entirely and to 'continue on as if nothing had happened.' Unlike North America, the English had turned the business of death into a public service.

³² At the same time that J. Mitford released *The American Way of Death* (1963), Ruth Mulvey Harmer released *The High Cost of Dying* (1963). While both authors' extensively examine undertakers, cemeteries, funerals and the general industry of death, Mitford's book was the more widely read and acclaimed and will therefore be discussed in greater depth within this chapter.

In her discussion, Mitford applied the lessons of England to America. She argued most importantly that the family should retain control over the funeral services instead of the funeral director and stressed the need for self-education. In arguing for more individual control over funeral practices Mitford hoped less power and money would end up in the hands of the funeral directors ultimately changing the American way of death.

Decades later Jessica Mitford published a continuation to her first highly acclaimed book, *'The American Way of Death'* (1963). *'The American Way of Death Revisited'* (1998) once again examined the industry of death and how it had changed in the decades since her first publication. In this work, Mitford focuses more closely on the changing cemetery movement examining the impact of 'the cemetery business' on the burial landscape.

In her chapter, *God's Little Million-Dollar Acre* (1998) Mitford outlines the progressive transformation that has encapsulated cemeteries throughout the United States. Her scope narrows with an in-depth case-study examination of Forest Lawn Memorial-Park. Located in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale, this cemetery as Mitford (1998:102) argues, 'confirmed the extraordinary stability and vigor of the cemetery business'. Visited every year by over one and a half million people Forest Lawn Memorial Park, while operating funeral parlors and flower shops in each of its locations, maintains the core of its business through the sale of burial plots (Mitford, 1998:102). Creator Hubert Eaton, the Dreamer, the Builder, inventor of the Memorial Impulse – is the anointed regent of cemetery operators. According to Mitford, Eaton, 'had more influence on trends in the modern cemetery industry than any other human being' (1998:101).

With a population of over 200,000 in 1960, new arrivals have augmented at a rate of 6,500 a year in Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Mitford, 1998:103). As Mitford (1998:104) notes, a ‘life-size replica’ of Michelangelo’s David stands at the entranceway while hourly showings of the *Crucifixion* and a stained-glass reproduction of *The Last Supper* serve as sites of attraction. Behind the Hall of Crucifixion stand the museum and gift shop. In explaining the museum Mitford (1998:104-105) cites the cemetery creator Hubert Eaton who argued that if a museum is established people will become accustomed to visiting the cemetery for ‘instruction, recreation, and pleasure’ ultimately extending its purpose or function (Mitford, 1998:103). He continues by arguing that: ‘It has long been the custom of museums to sell photographs, post cards, mementos, souvenirs, etc. The visitor is summoned to the gift shop...by one of those soft, deeply sincere voices that often boom out at one unexpectedly from the Forest Lawn loudspeaker’ (Mitford, 1998:104). Ultimately Mitford’s work draws on Forest Lawn to highlight a larger movement – commercial cemeteries. Sites like Forest Lawn are increasingly prevalent throughout the North American landscape. As Mitford’s (1998) work suggests, these sacred spaces are now concerned more with choosing a cemetery view that will adorn the cups and saucers sold at the gift shop than site preservation.

As Bruce Barton once wrote, ‘nothing in Los Angeles gives me a finer thrill than Forest Lawn...The followers of a triumphant Master should sleep in grounds more lovely than those where they have lived – a park so beautiful that it seems a bit above the level of this world, a first step toward Heaven’ (originally quoted in Art Guide to Forest Lawn; cited in Mitford, 1998). Through its commercial design and restructuring, Forest Lawn ‘pioneered the current trend for cemeteries to own their own mortuary and flower shop for convenient one-stop shopping’ (1998:105). As Jessica Mitford (1998) argues, the

landscape reform of Forest Lawn Cemetery symbolizes the current commercial trend enveloping cemeteries across both Canada and the United States.

Selling the Cemetery

Early North American cemeteries did not aggressively sell themselves to the public. Churchyards, domestic graveyards, and public burial grounds did not need to attract landholders – ‘advertising was rudimentary’ (Sloane, 1991:134). While cautious of their selling techniques, rural cemeteries, like Mount Pleasant took a slightly more commercial approach. As Sloane (1991:134) argues, new private cemeteries had to guard against violating the taboo of associating the graves with the trades. Prior to construction developers had to reassure the public that the cemetery was not exclusively for the wealthy and not a commercial venture (Sloane, 1991:134). Secondly, rural cemeteries were founded by men who did not feel that there was any need to sell the cemetery because the community would eventually embrace it, as early North American communities had used the local graveyard or churchyard for burials (Sloane, 1991:134).

As the work of Sloane (1991:134) suggests, rural cemeteries were still ‘providing a supply of goods’ rather than ‘creating a demand for their products’. As private corporations, they utilized newspapers to inform the public of their existence while advertising visitor hours in local newspapers (Sloane, 1991). Although these techniques were intended to increase patronage they did not openly promote the cemetery or suggest that lots were for sale and were thus largely accepted. The anti-advertising campaign that governed society at the time forced cemeteries to create unique and often obscure ways of attracting business. Encouraging individuals to visit the site often resulted in a parade of touring people within the landscape, which when viewed from off-site, made the cemetery highly visible and often times, more attractive.

Newly established cemeteries could not rely solely on their landscape as their advertisement to the community. As Sloane (1991:134) argues, the development of urban parks, arboretums, community gardens, and other aesthetically pleasing sites provided competition for the cemeteries. Rural cemeteries sustained mature landscapes on large plots of land that would often ‘outshine’ the new cemeteries. These new entrepreneurial cemeteries could not compete in size, seldom larger than 100 acres.

Promoters used the newness and smallness of the new cemeteries to their advantage emphasizing that they were more accessible than older, larger, more confusing cemeteries. Landscapes were park-like in design, less cluttered, more open and inviting. In comparing costs promoters of new cemeteries argued that the size of old cemeteries was expensive to maintain, citing how their own compact cemeteries were designed to minimize maintenance costs while providing a naturalistic setting (VanTassel *et al*, 1987:835).

According to Sloane (1991:135), ‘the establishment of a new generation of cemeteries increased the competition for business.’ Certain cemeteries relied on informal economic, ethnic, racial or social networks to help sell their burial plots. Others who were institutionally affiliated with a synagogue or church had ‘guaranteed customers’. By the eighteenth century burial lots far exceeded the demand prompting cemeteries to actively compete for one another’s customers (Sloane, 1991:135).

As Sloane (1991) argues, this new competition, coupled by new motivations for establishing a cemetery prompted a management restructuring model with a strong emphasis on sales and revenue. New cemetery founders recognized the importance of landscape however their focus remained on finances instead of horticulture. Ultimately,

the interest of new managers was on expanding the business rather than developing communities through common institutions.

Struggling to reach an elusive market in such a competitive atmosphere, advertising became (and remains) an integral component of the cemetery business. Public attitude toward the increasing commercialization of cemeteries was critical and the operators had to find ways to inform the people without offending taste.

Cemeteries often used their grounds as a selling point, publishing small booklets and lithographic and photographic views of their landscape. These booklets, which commonly included the cemeteries' 'rules and regulations, suggestions for permanent-care funds, and forms for gifts to the cemetery,' were used to both attract new customers and tie plot-holders to the site (Sloane, 1991:137). The plot-holders were informed of charges for new services, burials, care-packages and other features of the service-oriented cemetery, while potential customers were introduced to the business spirit and aesthetics that characterized the landscape (Sloane, 1991:137).

Older, rural cemeteries encountered the same need to reach the public, reacting to the new conditions by generating their own publications. The notices published by the cemetery became more suggestive, through both availability and information they provided. Some cemeteries sent direct mail to households in neighbourhoods selected by income. As Sloane (1991:237) notes, applicants for sales positions were screened with psychological tests to judge how they matched a profile of a successful salesperson. Subtle television advertising was added to radio and newspaper spots. In addition to standard burial-planning brochures many establishments offered information on estate planning, wills and spiritual matters to potential customers drastically expanding their 'business' focus.

In recent decades Cemeterians have taken greater risks in order to draw attention to their ‘products’; their actions are the result of the threats for competition, the improvements in technology, the pressures on sales and the desire to derive capital. In the 1980s for example, both Mount Auburn Cemetery and Spring Grove added abstract sculptures as major attractions within the landscape (Sloane, 1991). These sculptures not only suggest a new artistic vision within the landscape but they signal further commercial-induced change.

As Sloane (1991:240) argues, newly established park-cemeteries have generally been less willing to take such risks when drawing attention to their ‘products’. Citing Pinelawn as an example, Sloane (1991:240) draws on the Garden of Normandie and the Garden of Peace arguing that they are suggestive of the direction in North American landscape design. In the Garden of Normandie for example, the statue *Peaceful Normandie* stands thirteen feet tall, providing a bright golden landmark in the green landscape of lawn which surrounds it.³³

According to Sloane (1991:240), ‘the new art in Mount Auburn, Spring Grove, and Pinelawn reflects a more important development in cemetery design: the perceived necessity to focus the landscape around an art object’. However, in addition to being a commercially-driven movement, the priorities that seem to govern the present cemetery landscape can be better perceived in the types of art adopted. In Spring Grove, Oakwood and Elmwood as Sloane (1991:241) notes, new burial sections were ‘*respectively*’ planned around a ‘statue of Johnny Appleseed, a bronze Bible open to the Lord’s Prayer, and a granite relief map of Vietnam honoring America’s participants’ (Sloane, 1991:241).

³³ The gardens are described in various Pinelawn Memorial Park brochures.

In recent years the burial landscape has been re-designed to both attract customers and to ease the expense of site-expansion. Whether for-profit or non-profit North American cemeteries have become more aggressive in site restructuring and marketing campaigns threatening not only the delicate balance between financial success and burial preservation but in some ways the sacredness of the institution itself. The effects of these commercial movements are evidenced in the burial landscape of not only Forest Lawn but an increasing number of cemeteries in the US and Canada. What Forest Lawn has illustrated however is that this process of business restructuring has put the cemetery institution in crisis. These commercial movements, specifically as they relate to the burial landscape of Mount Pleasant will be examined in the next chapter.

-Chapter Five- The Contemporary Landscape of Mount Pleasant Cemetery

Heinz Mueller once said, ‘Show me your cemetery, and I shall tell you what society you live in’ (as quoted in Filey, 1999:17). This notion remains true of Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto. The existing site, a picture of societal changes in Toronto over the past 150 years exhibits much of the picturesque charm and original landscape of the early design: winding roads and paths, irregularly shaped islets, and memorials of various styles set in a natural setting. The variety of monument styles illustrates the social and aesthetic transformations in burial practices that have occurred since the end of the nineteenth century. Mount Pleasant remains an active cemetery with more than 180,000 persons interred there. The memories of those who have died before live on in this sanctuary of remembrance. However, the historic architecture, aesthetic landscape and new developments extend its functionality beyond exclusively a cemetery. True to its 19th-century origins, Mount Pleasant operates as a park, an island of verdure and tranquility detached from the urban bustle.

In 1874 the Trustees of the Toronto General Burying Grounds hired H.A. Engelhardt, who was in the forefront of landscape gardening in Canada, to plan the transformation of ravine and plateau farmland into Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Two years later on November 4, 1876 Mount Pleasant Cemetery, a burial ground for Toronto’s non-conformist – Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist - community was dedicated (Filey, 1999). Its establishment echoed the ‘rural cemetery movement’ that had previously transformed the burial landscape within Europe and the United States. This new model of cemetery integrated natural and romantic elements into the picturesque landscape creating a harmoniously pastoral commemorative setting.

Over a century later Mount Pleasant was designated ‘an exceptional creative achievement in landscape design’ distinguishing it as a National Historic Site in Canada (Filey, 1999:20). Conversation with Carol Philp of the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries revealed that until June 1990, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) did not on principle commemorate cemeteries. It made an exception in two specific cases: resting places of Fathers of Confederation, and burial places of archeological interest. In June 1990, the HSMBC decided to broaden application of its policy for commemorating cemeteries. At that point it decided to consider:

as admissible solely those cemeteries constituting remarkable examples of cultural or architectural landscapes and meeting one or more of the following criteria:

1. cemeteries representing an important national trend in cemetery design;
2. cemeteries containing large numbers of noteworthy mausoleums, monuments, steles or horticultural specimens;
3. cemeteries which are exceptional examples of landscapes linked to specific cultural traditions.³⁴

The evaluation of Mount Pleasant under the Historic Sites and Monuments Board criteria for designation was based exclusively on criteria 1 and 2. In light of these two criteria the Historical Sites and Monuments Board examined whether Mount Pleasant illustrated an ‘exceptional creative achievement in concept and design, technology, and/or planning, or a significant stage in the development of Canada’.³⁵

³⁴ Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes of meeting held on Vancouver Island, June 21 to 25, 1990, pp. 17-18, provided by Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries.

³⁵ Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery ‘Request Form’ pp. 16-19.

In its evaluation process the HSMBC concentrated its focus on primarily, the historical importance of place and secondly, the preservation of site integrity.³⁶ When examining the historical value of Mount Pleasant Cemetery two aspects remained dominant in contribution. Firstly, that the quality and integrity of its landscaping embody an important trend in 19th-century cemetery design, the rural cemetery. Secondly, that Mount Pleasant is distinguished by the architectural, artistic and historical richness of the memorials integrated into the setting of its landscape.

When assessing the integrity of the site, the HSMBC found that ‘despite changes and transformations made over the years, Mount Pleasant has preserved its integrity up to the present day’.³⁷ To evaluate this claim, the following aspects of the cemetery were examined: its function, its land, its buildings, and its arboretum.

Since its opening in November 1876 Mount Pleasant’s prime *function* remains a burial ground. It still preserves most of the basic features of its original design. In the older sections, and particularly in those extending from Yonge Street to Mount Pleasant Road, it retains its original natural and pleasing appearance, created by the presence of winding roads and paths, irregularly shaped islets, scenic views, memorials of various styles integrated within groves of trees and shrubs. However, cemetery management has had to meet new public demands for burial services altering the landscape, particularly in the eastern section of the cemetery past the administrative buildings, where the Cremation Garden is located.

The *land* purchased in 1873 by the Toronto General Burial Grounds Trust totaled 200 acres, presently the cemetery measures 205 acres. The original cemetery entrance

³⁶ Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery ‘Request Form’ p. 14

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

was located slightly further north on Young Street. Unquestionably, the most important change was the expropriation by the city of a strip of land to allow construction of Mount Pleasant road in 1919, whose effect was to split the cemetery in two and allow access to it via the new road. Until that time, access to the cemetery was from Yonge Street only, and the entire road network radiated from there.

A variety of *buildings* have been erected on the cemetery grounds over the years. Some have been demolished however the structures that still remain on site are the former offices on Yonge Street, the Islet O mausoleum (Daling and Pearson, 1920), the new administrative offices (1955), the greenhouse, the cremation gardens and the services building.

Originally conceived as an *arboretum*, trees remain a major component of the Mount Pleasant landscape.

The preservation of these facets, according to the HSMBC contributed to the declaration of Mount Pleasant as a National Historic Site. ‘The quality and integrity of its original design, the historic and artistic interest of its monuments... as well as the beauty of its landscape setting make Mount Pleasant a fine example of a large rural cemetery,’ one to be cherished and preserved.³⁸

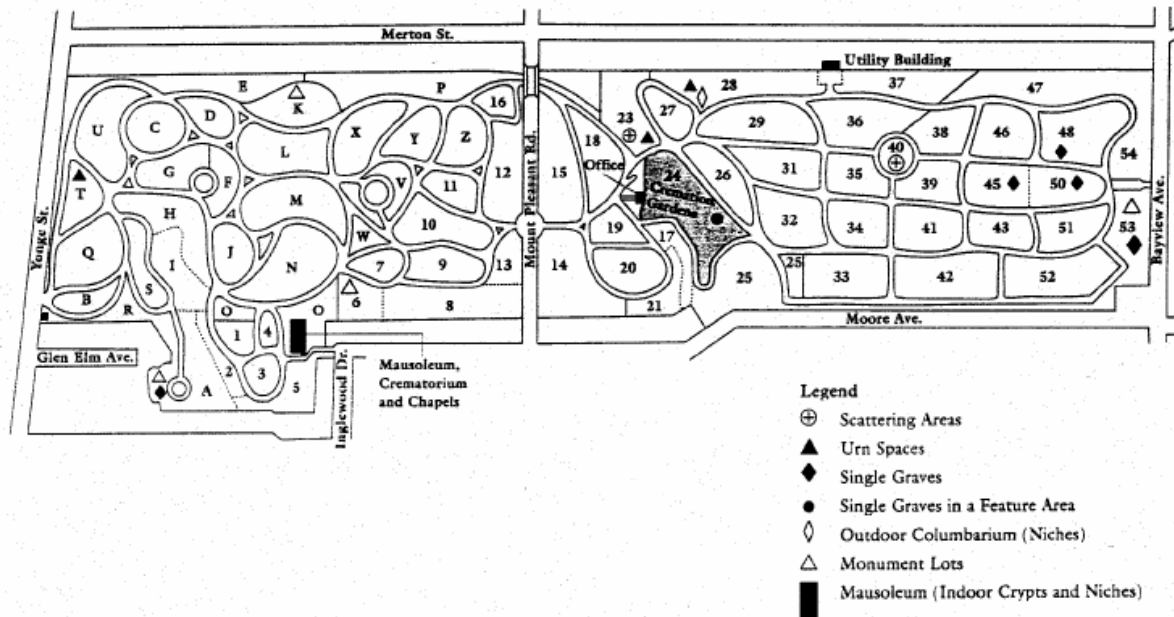
The Present Landscape

Mount Pleasant Cemetery is bounded on the west by Yonge Street, on the east by Bayview Avenue and is divided in two by Mount Pleasant Road running north and south. Its northern and southern boundaries are Merton Street and Moore Avenue, respectively (Figure 5.1). It is enclosed around its entire perimeter by a fence or stone walls. Access to

³⁸ Information adapted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Mount Pleasant Cemetery ‘Request Form’ p. 14.

the cemetery is from Yonge Street, or to either portion from Mount Pleasant Road. There is also pedestrian access through small entrances on Bayview and Moore Avenues.

Figure 5.1: Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto



Source: Filey, 1999.

As my field observations illustrate, the current profile of the landscape indicates a linear development detailing visually the expansion and growth of the cemetery in an eastern direction. The western section of the cemetery from Yonge Street to Mount Pleasant Road is older and substantially more picturesque. This area features a complex network of winding roads and paths, rounded or circular islets and small roundabouts that ultimately add to the natural character of the landscape. Moreover, the uneven topography of this area of the cemetery, with its ravines and valleys, lends itself well to this type of landscaping. The oldest buildings remain in the west area of the cemetery, intermeshed with large family plots. At the Young Street entrance a carriageway gate opens to showcase the former administrative offices surrounded by two brick structures

ornamented with stone motifs in the Gothic style. An imposing classical mausoleum in stone is located in Islet O, on Moore Avenue. The oldest and most diversely stylistic monuments are found in abundance along Moore Avenue, arranged irregularly on islets among a wide variety of trees and groves – ultimately contributing to the overall natural impression.

The eastern section of the cemetery is accessed from Mount Pleasant Road or by passing through an underpass linking Islets 12 (on the west) and 15 (on the east). In this comparatively newer section of the cemetery the network of winding roads and irregular islets has been maintained in a simplified fashion – the islets assume somewhat more regular shapes with notably straighter roadways on less uneven land, especially between Mount Pleasant Road and the administrative offices. Generally speaking, the monuments in this section of the cemetery are more recent: traditional-style stone memorials still remain evident, but the prominence of contemporary-style sculptures and commemorative walls stand as a testament to new styles of burial (Curl, 1993).

Aesthetically Functional: Analyzing Architecture

Death, and the art, architecture, and landscapes inspired by it, serve as culturally significant landmarks within the North American society. As Sloane (1993:I) argues, ‘The knowledge that every human being must die has undoubtedly contributed to man’s desire to commemorate his existence by building monuments, erecting funeral architecture, and otherwise celebrating death.’ These symbolic records left by civilizations and craftsmen characterize the present landscape of Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Early Architecture

Since its creation, Mount Pleasant Cemetery has developed in an easterly direction with the oldest section of the cemetery bordering Yonge Street. The wealth and stature of the monuments in this section reflect Toronto's well-established society evident prior to the turn of the century. The graves were typically located in sizable family lots, adorned by comparably large impressive monuments. These monuments served complete family units – at times housing up to twenty different family members. As Heinz Mueller, Stone Mason and Stone Carver notes, 'these stones generate an imposing image of solidarity and permanence, much as an old country estate does' (as quoted in Filey, 1999:17). When the monuments in the older sections were first erected, the granite industry in Canada was in its infant stage. While stone quarries were operating, they mainly produced paving blocks. A small number of stone saws existed and polishing was extremely difficult. The production in Canada of round polished columns common to this section was impossible. As a result, most of these large polished granite monuments boasting beautiful spires or columns adorned with urns were imported from Scotland and Northern Ireland. As conversations with Carol Philp illustrated, the monuments were delivered from the boat to the cemetery by hand and erected using block and tackle, since cranes were as yet non-existent. The majority of the granite used in the creation of the famous Eaton mausoleum (particularly the columns and expertly carved Corinthian capitals) was imported from Scotland. As the work of Filey (1999:18) notes, the bases of the monuments were constructed of limestone quarried in Kingston, or the Niagara Peninsula.

The limestone, marble, and unpolished granite monuments of the time were shaped and carved completely by hand in Toronto and they are a credit to the craftsmen

of the British Isles. The memorial style within this older section of the cemetery was mainly Victorian with heavy solid bases, but there were also some Renaissance and Gothic styles. Notably popular are the Renaissance styled ladies of sorrow carved in marble imported from Italy. Within the present landscape these sculptures are found encased in beautiful gazebo style monuments constructed of imported granite columns.

The time period leading up to the First World War remains largely represented in the central sections of the cemetery between Yonge Street and Mount Pleasant Road. As my observations illustrate, unpolished monuments are widespread and common within this section. As Carol Philp notes, lead lettering was utilized to ensure a contrast was maintained between the inscription and the unpolished stone. Within this section the memorial styles remain predominantly Victorian with a slightly higher ratio of Gothic styles appearing. Section N remains notable for its abundance of two-grave lots (much smaller than in previous years), characterized by scroll type marble monuments.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the monument imports from Scotland came to an end resulting in a notable transformation in the section directly west of Mount Pleasant Road. The quarries in Scotland were becoming exhausted just as the granite industry in Canada (particularly in the granite centre of Quebec) was becoming more mechanized. As Heinz Mueller notes, ‘it became uneconomical to shape monuments by hand and consequently many of the large granite sheds in Toronto closed and retained smaller operations for lettering, carving and sculpture work’ (Filey, 1999:20). During this period a more standardized look of monuments became evident –eight or ten inches in thickness, with horizontal, rather than vertical dimensions. As Filey’s (1999) work highlights, it was throughout this period that Italian craftsmen such as Marini, Ranzetti, and Temporale began arriving in Toronto to pursue their craft. Likewise, German sculptors such as

Schnoen and Hahn also began making their presence felt (Filey, 1999). Within the Mount Pleasant landscape a notable example of the German sculptor Hahn's work is found in the Cutten monument (Plot O, Lot 18), evidenced by the two female nudes seated on a bench in classical style (See Figure 4.4). During this period the Victorian norm declined as more Renaissance and Gothic styles emerged. The depression in the 1930s had painful effects on Toronto's burial landscape evidenced by the small inexpensive monuments with simple, minimal ornamentation. During site visits I observed that family lots within these sections were notably smaller and although Anglo-Saxon surnames prevailed, Dutch, German and Scandinavian were gradually more common illustrating Toronto's increasingly multicultural society.

My site visits enabled me to see that many cultures have rites in which the grave is visited on special days and certain traditions are observed. Anglo-Saxon remembrance services take place regularly throughout the year attracting large numbers of tourists to these 'impressive group celebrations'. Decoration Day observed regularly in June and Remembrance Day in November remain important events for the entire community. A number of veterans' services occur throughout the year. For example, during one particular site-visit on the Saturday before November 11th I observed the 48th Highlanders hold their special remembrance ceremony at the site of their War Memorial. Service clubs such as the Salvation Army, Masons, Elks Society, Trinity Estonian Society, St. Andrew's Society and many others honour their dead on special dates. Celebrated holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Mother's day and Father's Day are notable event days within Mount Pleasant Cemetery. These culturally and socially significant days often prompt public memorial services at the cemetery complete with monument unveilings by individual families. Increasingly at Mount Pleasant the practice of physically

commemorating an individual is becoming less of a private sombre ceremony and more of a public celebratory event.

Modern Architecture

The newest section of Mount Pleasant Cemetery is situated just east of Mount Pleasant Road in front of the cemetery office. This area is characterized by a mix of traditional steeled monuments interspersed with more polished memorials. Columns, spirals, and other facets of the Victorian design typically characteristic of the site's older monuments have been largely replaced with an increasingly modern and simple Gothic style. This retreat from the European aesthetic practices that once governed traditional architecture and the rural cemetery design has prompted Mount Pleasant to implement what Carol Philp called 'preservation-techniques'. In preserving these traditional monuments, Mount Pleasant applied for 'Heritage Protection' under the Ontario Heritage Act. In their application they cited that the traditional monuments and mausoleums found in the newer section of the cemetery were considered anomalies and thus historically significant. According to Lowenthal (1979a), this hold on the past, particularly in terms of preserving tangible objects, provides comfort, familiarity and a grounded sense of identity. In establishing these once ordinary memorials as important, they have been propelled into a status of what Timothy and Boyd (2003) call historically extraordinary, 'undeniably in need of preservation'. The newly discovered significance of these memorials has transformed them from personal objects of commemoration, to sites of public attraction and distinction.

Figure 5.2: Massey Mausoleum



Source: Photo taken by Author, July, 2007.

In April of 2000 for example, the Massey Mausoleum (No. 1643 Young Street) was designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Massey Mausoleum, the largest and most visible mausoleum located in Mount Pleasant Cemetery was constructed for the Masseys, one of the most influential families in the industrial development and philanthropic history of Toronto (see Figure 5.2).³⁹ It was built in 1890-1894 according to the design of E. J. Lennox, the most prolific Toronto architect at the end of the nineteenth-century.

³⁹ Information as outlined in the Toronto Community Council Report No. 2, Clause No. 31, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on February 1, 2 and 3, 2000.

The Massey is only one of three family mausoleums included in this ‘conservation effort’ implemented by the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. The Northrup-Gooderham Tomb (Figure 5.3) and the French Tomb built into the hillside in Section T near Young Street are also sites of distinction within the landscape.

Figure 5.3: The Northrup-Gooderham Tomb



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2007.

This process of ‘bulk preservation’ as argued by heritage critic Hewison (1991:25) is an illusion marketed by a profitable industry as a way of offering the public some kind of ‘phony reassurance in the present’. By distinguishing these sites as historically significant Mount Pleasant is preserving select aspects of history, while marketing the past.

Through the production and sale of guidebooks and maps detailing the burial sites of certain recognizable individuals, Mount Pleasant has taken marketing in cemeteries –

specifically with regard to architecture – to the extreme. Within the landscape signs with footsteps guide visitors to these famous sites designated as being of architectural, historical and societal value or interest (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Discovery Walk Sign



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2006.

By advertising select memorials Mount Pleasant is using public fascination with the ‘celebrity’ and history to bolster tourism. In promoting the visual consumption of these ‘thana attractions’ as defined by Boyd and Timothy (2003), Mount Pleasant is further commercializing the cemetery landscape, promoting death as entertainment.

Newly erected monuments, although physically distinct, appear to embody the same commercial ideology. Visually, these newly established memorials situated in the

eastern section of the cemetery exhibit more emblematic ornamentation (service badges, Masonic symbols, crests, etc.) than older monuments. These ‘newer’ monuments are physically larger at times paralleling great sculptures in their aesthetic grandeur. Mount Pleasant, like other older rural cemeteries traditionally resisted abstract modern statues and sculptures within its grounds, considering subdued and realistic art more solemn and appropriate. However, as new monuments suggest, increased pressure has prompted commercial changes within the Mount Pleasant landscape. For example, Steve Stavro’s memorial erected in 1998 to commemorate the well-known Toronto entrepreneur is positioned squarely at the west-entrance gates of Mount Pleasant. Towering over nearby monuments Stavro’s statue stands independently, situated on a solitary piece of grass surrounded by roadways (Figure 5.5). As anecdotal evidence suggests, this monument is considered by some as grandstanding with its carnivalesque-like appearance epitomizing the commercial ideology that appears to govern the cemetery landscape. As witnessed during site-visits, the physical location and size of the memorial attracts attention from passersby arguably serving as more of a tourist attraction than a sacred testament. The size and detail exhibited on the commemorative piece illustrates the financial expense incurred to erect such an impressive monument emphasizing further the extent to which memorials have become commodified. Highlighted on brochures, in books, and on maps of the cemetery, the monument stands as a staple in the commercial landscape of Mount Pleasant.

Figure 5.5: Steve Stavro Monument



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2007.

The role of aesthetics on the architecture remains prevalent throughout the cemetery landscape. As discussions with Jack Radecki and personal observations have revealed, flowers, bushes and plants are abundant throughout the cemetery – the property even offers multiple tiers of special-care packages providing decorative ornamentation of the gravesite.⁴⁰ While aesthetically pleasing, newly enacted regulations and rising burial costs have greatly affected the size of the burial lots. These regulations have, and

⁴⁰ Special Care provides individualized attention to the gravesite or lot. One can ensure the neat appearance of the grass and the care of flowerbeds at an additional annual cost. This service is offered from June 1st to August 31st each year.

continue to affect newly established monuments requiring that, among others, the size and materials used meet the guidelines put forth by Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. For example, stipulations require that soft stones (such as marble and limestone) are no longer permitted because they lack durability in Toronto's northern climate conditions. In an effort to improve the quality of the memorials, rock side monuments are no longer allowed – all sides on monuments must be finished. These policies have dramatically inflated the cost of memorialization prompting – as personal observations suggest – the increased prevalence of more cost-effective methods of burial.

Flat memorials on the ground are increasingly prominent within the cemetery landscape (Figure 5.6). These standard bronze or stone markers set flush with the ground enable Mount Pleasant to appropriate from the sale of the plaques profits that formerly went to the monument makers for tombstones while opening up areas to huge power mowers that eliminates all need for hand-trimming of grave plots, saving money in maintenance costs. As Mitford (1998:84) noted, this new type of memorial has become standard in the United States with many modern 'lawn-type' cemeteries banning tombstones altogether.

Newly introduced 'shared monuments' offer a slightly cheaper alternative by enabling different families to own and use each side of the monument. These strategically designed 'companion spaces' are dug double depth, minimizing the space and allowing for more memorials to be erected thereby maximizing the capital gain for Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Figure 5.6: Flat Memorials at Mount Pleasant Cemetery



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2007.

The next trend in burial development at Mount Pleasant involved upward expansion in the form of the community mausoleum. Structurally and functionally, community mausoleums lend themselves to the simplest form of block construction consisting of tier upon tier of cubicles made of reinforced concrete faced with a veneer of granite. Mirroring an old European practice the crypts are stacked upon each other and can reach six or seven high. As Mitford (1998:85) argued, there may be limits to how deep one can conventionally dig to bury the dead, but when building above-ground entombments, ‘the sky is literally the limit.’

In the present cemetery landscape the most popular and comparably cheaper method of memorialization is cremation. The rise in demand for this method of

commemoration has prompted the establishment of the newly opened cremation gardens in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

The Cremation Gardens were officially opened on Sunday September 27, 1998, and, the first of its kind in Ontario, consisted of five themed areas: The Gateway of Hope, Eternal Gardens, Pool of Reflection, River of Memories and the Forest of Remembrance. The gardens cover over four acres within the Mount Pleasant landscape and are located in Section 24 (Figure 5.7) (Filey, 1999).

Figure 5.7: The Eternal Gardens surrounding the Pool of Reflection



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2007.

In the gardens, cremated remains can be buried, placed in a niche, or scattered. Although slightly more cost-effective, cremation, like all services offered by Mount Pleasant Cemetery, remains a capital deriving method of memorialization. As with any burial process, when you purchase interment rights within Mount Pleasant, you do not purchase the land, crypt, niche, or urn space itself. These remain the property and responsibility of

the cemetery. What is purchased is the right to designate who may be buried or entombed in the space. The cremation gardens therefore do not have a maximum capacity in terms of numbers remembered within the space. Ashes upon ashes can be scattered within the gardens without disrupting the interment rights of the purchasers. This coupled with smaller lot sizes for burial and rising prices for all services has prompted the establishment of ‘alternative methods of remembrance’.

Unique and non-traditional memorials are increasingly prevalent within the Mount Pleasant Cemetery landscape. Defining these ‘alternative methods of remembrance’ however can be problematic as the categorization remains extremely broad. Traditionally memorials are classified into three categories; ground burial memorials, cremation memorials and entombment memorials (Curl, 1993). However, issues of space, cost and personal preference have prompted the rise of diverse non-traditional commemorative structures. These new-age memorials are increasingly represented by natural objects within the landscape. As my fieldwork highlighted, aesthetically valuable facets of the landscape such as, gardens, trees, ponds, and stepping stones are commonly named in remembrance of deceased individuals. In doing this a memorial is erected, the cemetery is able to derive capital from the ‘natural’ aesthetic features and the park-like atmosphere is maintained.

‘Purposeful memorials’ are a second type of alternative memorial found within Mount Pleasant Cemetery. These memorials play less of an aesthetic role and more of a practical role within the landscape and include for example, roadways, pathways, benches, bridges and railings (Figure 5.8). Commemorative pieces within this category are multi-purpose – simultaneously they play a role within the landscape while symbolically honouring the life of a departed individual. For example, every bench and

picnic table in Mount Pleasant Cemetery stands as a testament to someone's life – a plaque is secured on the front of each to memorialize the individual it represents. Benches and picnic tables serve as rest stations to accommodate visitors and tourists, enticing them to sit, stay and enjoy the park-like atmosphere. The placement of these benches and picnic tables is planned and deliberate, positioned next to aesthetically pleasing sections of the cemetery (i.e. The Pool of Reflection) to facilitate visitor interest and tourism. While ideal for tourism, by encouraging visitor interest these commercially driven practices of 'purposeful memorial' placement and intentional place marketing threatens to undermine not only the integrity of the site but the sanctity of the monument and the space.

Figure 5.8: Memorial Plaques Mounted on Bridge



Source: Photo taken by Author, August 2007.

In its designation as a National Historic Site, Mount Pleasant Cemetery was praised for preserving the integrity up to the present day despite changes and

transformations made over the years. This conservation and integrity-focused approach typically characteristic of Mount Pleasant appears to be shifting increasingly toward a site guided by commercialism and driven by capital gain. Instead of conserving aspects of the space that uphold the traditions of the cemetery, Mount Pleasant places a greater emphasis on visitor interest, marketing the space as a heritage tourism site. This change in focus not only threatens to compromise the integrity of the site but trivialize the significance of the space. The nature of the ceremonies that occur at the cemetery and the sentiments of grief and sorrow often displaced on the landscape following a loss establish Mount Pleasant as a deeply emotive site. For many, this space and the memorials that reside here serve as the only tangible link with lost loved ones. By promoting memorials for 'practical use' Mount Pleasant is arguably commodifying death, placing a greater emphasis on the usefulness of the memorials instead of the significance of what they represent. It is this commercial and capital-driven ideology that governs not only the architecture but increasingly the landscaped environment further compromising the sanctity of the cemetery and the integrity of Mount Pleasant.

The Landscaped Environment

Mount Pleasant Cemetery bears full witness to the ideas advanced before the mid-nineteenth century on how new cemeteries should be laid out: using a natural and attractive setting to comfort the living, the importance of creating a secure place to protect the dead, the use of monuments to perpetuate the memory of the deceased and to memorialize the great, and, finally, design of a well-groomed landscape intended for public use (Clendaniel, 1995:7-8). From the outset the Mount Pleasant administration insisted on the importance of the transformations it had made to the original terrain: 'What was once a rough and impassable ravine now bears the impress of art' (Coutts,

1986: 8).⁴¹ Remarking on the attention the site was attracting the administration questioned, ‘Whether any other place of burial in Toronto has awakened an interest as wide and deep’ (Coutts, 1986:8-9).

Early Landscape Design

The original landscape design of Mount Pleasant was characterized by winding and irregular roads with rounded or circular islets and small roundabouts. The topography was uneven distinguished by ravines, hills and valleys. Tiny lakes and ponds were scattered throughout the site with water (from a stream flowing from the west) emptying from one lake to another over a series of cascades and rustic bridges were positioned over the streams to enable pedestrian passage. Ultimately, Mount Pleasant exhibited a combination of natural scenery and gardener’s art to create an aesthetically picturesque ‘deathscape’.

Present Landscape

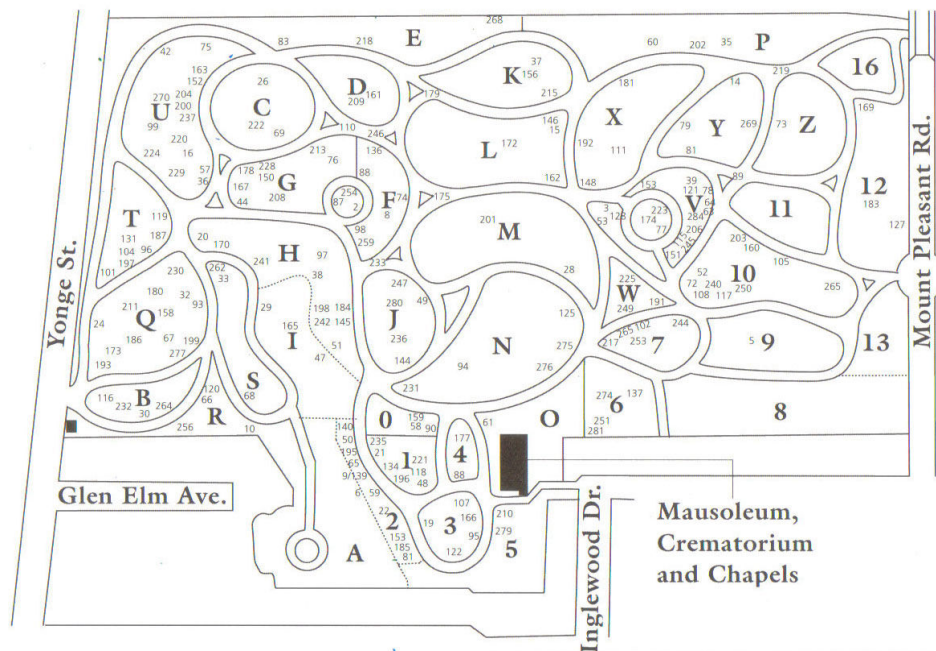
While the current cemetery landscape still remains aesthetically focused several notable changes have occurred within the physical environment. As conversations with Carol Philp illustrated, the roadways, both external and internal to the cemetery have undergone significant transformations. Unquestionably, the most important change was the expropriation by the city of a strip of land to allow for the construction of Mount Pleasant Road in 1919. Prior to 1919 the original cemetery entrance was located further north on Young Street (Filey, 1999). However, as the communities to the north continued to develop it became obvious that a new north-south road through the developing cemetery would make commuting into and out of the city to the south much more

⁴¹ Coultts, Sally, ‘Easeful Death in Toronto. A History of Mount Pleasant Cemetery,’ *Bulletin Societe pour l’etude de l’architecture au Canada*, Vol. 11, Number 3, September 1986, pp. 8-10; Mike Filey, op.cit., pp. 14-25.

convenient (Filey, 1999). This realization prompted the establishment of Mount Pleasant Road whose effect split the cemetery in two allowing access via the new road. This development progressed further following the opening of the Toronto Transportation Commission's (TTC's) extension of the St. Clair streetcar line, north to a new loop at Eglinton Avenue.

Internal cemetery roads have experienced a similar pattern of development. When initially constructed these roads were unfinished, unpaved, one-lane pathways. In the present landscape internal roadways resemble two-lane highways. Maximum speed signs are posted and road lines and directions are painted for inside cemetery traffic. To the **west**, in the older section of the cemetery circular islets are prominent and the roads still maintain their traditional winding curvy character (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: Early Landscape Design (West of Mount Pleasant Road)

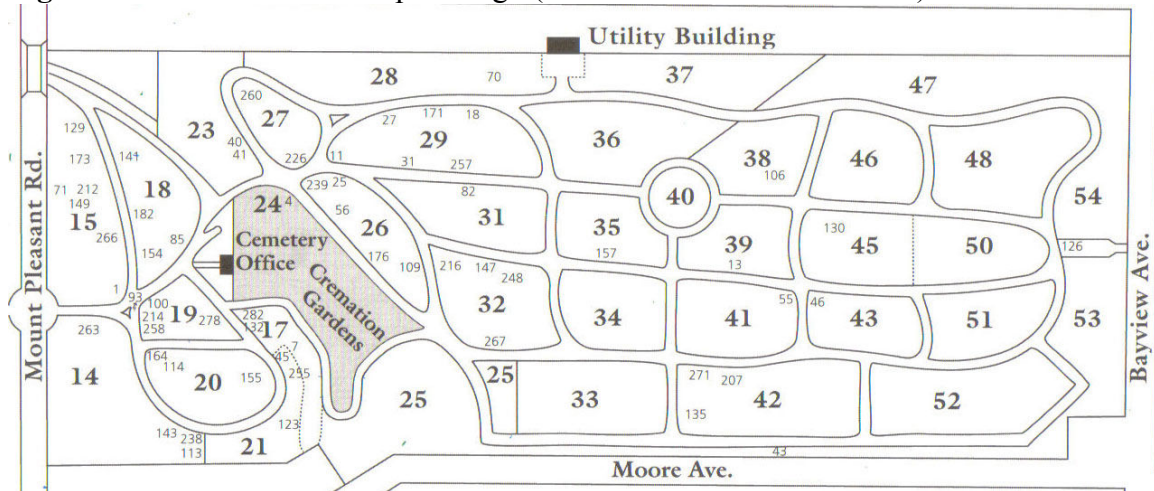


Source: Filey, 1999.

Further **east** in the newer sections of the cemetery however, the original charm of the roadway layout fades (Figure 5.10). Between Mount Pleasant Road and the

administrative offices a simplified form of the landscaping advocated by the original designer Engelhardt is somewhat apparent, but to the east of those offices the roads are straighter and the islets much more regular in form threatening the originality of the landscape. Although it potentially compromises the original design, straighter roads benefit in-cemetery traffic and fewer curves and islets reduce the complexity of the landscape. This new layout is strategic in that it both enables more space to be allocated for burial use while simplifying the maneuvering process for cemetery traffic. Through this design restructuring Mount Pleasant arguably favours the quantity of burial space over the quality of burial landscape thus placing the desire for capital gain and tourism over the preservation of site tradition and integrity.

Figure 5.10: Modern Landscape Design (East of Mount Pleasant Road)



Source: Filey, 1999.

The presence and role of ponds, lakes and rivers has also shifted in the present landscape of Mount Pleasant. When comparing photographic evidence of past design with personal observations it is apparent that these aesthetic features no longer remain significant components of the cemetery landscape. Currently on-site there are two main sources of water, the Pool of Reflection and the River of Memories (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: River of Memories



Source: Photo taken by Author, August 2006.

Many of the other pools and lakes have since been covered over enabling more burial sites to be established. The bodies of water that do remain throughout Mount Pleasant now serve a commemorative purpose (Figure 5.12). While still functioning as an aesthetic feature of the landscape, the river and ponds exist primarily as sites of memorialization. Cremated remains can be buried near the river or pond (with a commemorative plaque erected), placed in a niche, or scattered. By doing this Mount Pleasant is able to utilize the remaining water sources as commemorative entities. This process enables capital to be derived without completely compromising the aesthetic quality of the landscape. Ultimately, these changes in both road and pond layout were commercially rooted, driven largely by the potential for economic gain.

Figure 5.12: Commemorative Pond



Source: Photo taken by Author, August 2007.

Although a cemetery, Mount Pleasant houses one of the finest tree collections in North America. Distinguished as an arboretum it attracts nature enthusiasts from far and wide. Nature tours are offered at the site weekly however most trees bear small signs with both their botanical and common names to make identification easier for independent visitors (Radecki, 1999). Private bus tours are frequently scheduled for a diversity of groups – from international visitors to local biology high-school students - however to aid non-group tourists, arboretum guides are sold at the cemetery office. The guide includes an alphabetical index and detailed map showing tree locations, and paths to make it easy to locate all specimens.

The landscaping of the arboretum still follows the basic plan first developed for the property in the late nineteenth century however the present focus has shifted away from site conservation toward public attraction and private interest. Although a cemetery, Mount Pleasant functions as ‘a park for the people’ (Radecki, 1999:26). Marketing their natural environment to the public, Mount Pleasant boasts that, ‘practically every tree that will grow in this climate is found here’ (Radecki, 1999:26). The hundreds of varieties of trees within the landscape form two groups: pioneer or native and introduced trees. These two grounds range from the rare Oriental smooth leaf elm (in Plots G, J, and L, and Section 28) and Babylonian willow from the Middle East (along Young Street) to oak trees in 1873 (Plots H, I, and Q, and Section 2). Jack Radecki, Supervisor of Arbor Services, Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries notes that, as trees are removed due to old age, disease or safety, an effort is made to replant with a species that will complement the arboretum.

Although a functioning cemetery, the arboretum prompts the visitation of tourists interested in natural conservation. Many specimens found within the Mount Pleasant landscape maintain some form of distinction. Several have been named Heritage Trees⁴², while others have been included on the Ontario Forestry Association’s Honour Roll of Trees⁴³. Every aspect of the arboretum is pre-planned to benefit the aesthetics of the cemetery.

⁴² Heritage means trees of particular interest by virtue of such qualities as age, size, shape, special interest and/or history. Trees may include individual trees, avenues, groves, shelterbelts, tree gardens, arboretum and sites of botanical or ecological interest (as cited on: Heritage Tree Foundation of Canada).

⁴³ The Ontario Forestry Association is a non-profit, registered charity. They remain dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of all aspects of Ontario's forests, and to develop commitment to stewardship of forest ecosystems. The OFA has been involved in public education around forestry and environmental issues since the 1940s. Over the years we have been involved in major initiatives involving restoration, commemoration and the management of our forests and natural environment. To this day, OFA continues to increase public education and knowledge of forestry and environmental issues (as cited by: Ontario Forestry Association).

While the arboretum serves as the main point of interest in attracting tourists, several trees have independently provoked visitor appeal. Two such trees are the maples (one red, one sugar) (plot X, Lot 12) where Alexander Muir, who wrote the patriotic song ‘The Maple Leaf Forever,’ is buried (Filey, 1999:106). Other points of interest are what is believed to be the largest Asian elm in Canada and the cucumber tree (Plot V), whose cup-shaped flowers produce cucumber-shaped fruits.

Throughout the years a wide variety of fruit and nut trees have been introduced to the cemetery ultimately attracting birds and small animals. The oak, chestnut, hickory, walnut, pear, plum, apple, and crabapple trees nourish chipmunks, squirrels, cardinals, tanagers, orioles, blue jays, warblers, robins, finches, juncos and many others. The pre-planned introduction of these food-producing trees was done purposefully to attract wildlife. In doing this Mount Pleasant has created a type of wildlife sanctuary in the centre of its landscaped oasis. According to Paul Hutchings (2003), these animals – squirrels especially can be so tame that they ‘come right up to you expecting you to feed them’. This inclusion of wildlife further expands the park-like atmosphere of the cemetery prompting the attraction of pedestrians and tourists.

Complementing the ‘treasure trove of trees’, Mount Pleasant has a vast range of flowering and coloured foliage shrubs as well as herbaceous perennials. Large specimens of forsythia, bridal wreath, spirea, and burning bush are commonplace throughout the grounds while day lilies, hosta lilies, herbaceous and tree peonies serve as ground cover throughout the cemetery. These flower arrangements are strategically positioned throughout the cemetery to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the site.

Mount Pleasant has recently created a ‘Heritage Seed Garden’ featuring rare, endangered plants cultivated by organic methods (Figure 5.13). The cemetery boasts that

‘the Garden is a living gene bank, in that the heritage seeds are saved for future seasons, thus helping to preserve the horticultural diversity for future generations.’⁴⁴ Mount Pleasant has an invested interest in the establishment of this garden, inviting individuals to commemorate the lives of lost loved ones through a financial donation. In doing this Mount Pleasant is preserving the heritage of ‘significant’ plants, contributing to the aesthetics of the site, while still deriving capital.

Figure 5.13: The Heritage Seed Garden



Source: Photo taken by Author, August, 2007.

The variety of flowers, trees and shrubs in Mount Pleasant is extensive, ranging from minute and inconspicuous to expansive and vibrant. Flowering generally begins in late March (red and silver maples, Cornelian cherry) and runs right through until November, when the witch hazel is still in bloom. Throughout the warmer periods Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries runs several guided garden tours for both private groups and the general population. These ‘nature walks’ are lead by Jack Radecki, the

⁴⁴ This proclamation was posted by Mount Pleasant Cemetery on a stone erected at the Garden.

Supervisor of Arbor Services at Mount Pleasant Cemetery. While being educated about the Mount Pleasant landscape, visitors are provided with ‘guides to pre-planning with Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries’. These guide packages include a pre-planning decision tree, an overview of commemorative options and a list of associated products and services offered by Mount Pleasant. These guided tours thus play a dual role at Mount Pleasant; they educate visitors about the arboretum and natural landscape, while simultaneously marketing products and services to potential clients.

Characterized less and less by the windy roads and islets of its original design the present site of Mount Pleasant remains in flux, struggling against commercial pressures and new developments to maintain the aesthetic appeal of the landscape.

New Developments

Mount Pleasant Cemetery is a landscape in transition. While changes in architecture design and landscape aesthetics have altered the identity of the space to a degree, present developments threaten to completely reinvent Canada’s first public trust cemetery. In 2006 Mount Pleasant Cemetery Group of Cemeteries unveiled a plan to build a two and a half storey, 24,000-square-foot commercial centre, complete with parking for 82 cars. These new ambitions have prompted the concern of neighbours, competitors and federal heritage officials. Residents are arguing that this powerful corporate entity is running the property for profit, tax-free, without concern for its historical zoning or city bylaws (Peterson, 2006). Initially Toronto’s building permits department rejected the cemetery’s request, stating that the commercial structure could not be built on what is considered parkland. However in February of 2006 this decision

was overturned by Toronto's legal department. The approval of this development plan has since prompted several smaller renovation projects within the landscape.

To enable proper space for the establishment of the new commercial centre, a tree removal campaign has been undertaken. This project has prompted major concern from development opposition who have argued that 'protected trees are being cut down without permits' (Peterson, 2006). According to Toronto bylaws, a permit is required to cut down a tree larger than thirty centimeters in diameter. Records indicate that between March and May of 2006 more than 8 mature trees double that size were removed (Peterson, 2006). According to the Toronto Forestry department, no permits have been filed by Mount Pleasant. However, Richard Ubbens, Toronto's chief forester argues that 'MPGC is exempted from the tree bylaw and do not have to notify the city of any tree cutting. As long as they are using good agricultural practices, we don't get involved' (Peterson, 2006). These recent modifications to the landscape in the form of tree removal have raised concern by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Michel Audy, the executive secretary of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has noted that, 'the tree-cutting jeopardizes Mount Pleasant's status as a National Historic Site' (Peterson, 2006). The protection of the naturalistic setting was the reason for Mount Pleasant's historic designation. Accompanying this distinction was a 'statement of significance' that is intended to serve as a protection order in the preservation of not only the monuments, but the trees. Recent actions are in clear violation of this order thereby threatening its status as a National Historic Site.

In preparing for the commercial development centre a road-widening campaign has been enacted within the Mount Pleasant landscape. While the traditional design of the cemetery maintains narrow winding roads and circular islets, increased patronage and

traffic has prompted a cemetery-implemented structural transformation in landscape layout. While newer sections of the cemetery had already shifted in design to include straighter roads and less islets, new developments include the establishment of wider roads. With such an influx in traffic expected throughout the cemetery following the establishment of the new commercial centre wider roads are seen as a necessity in accommodating cemetery patrons. Also, an increased focus on tourism through guided walks, hikes and garden tours offered by the cemetery has, according to Carol Philp, increased the amount of tour bus traffic. Although significantly impacting the aesthetics of the landscape, wider roads will enable these vehicles better maneuvering capabilities throughout the site.

Although still in a development stage, the proposed commercial centre has already had significant impacts on the Mount Pleasant landscape. In addition to propelling sub-projects in landscape restructuring – namely, tree-removal and road widening – the commercial centre, as an independent enterprise, epitomizes the very essence of commercialism. For example, this new building is scheduled to include a reception centre, complete with restaurant and catering facilities. The purpose behind the inclusion of these amenities is to provide clients of Mount Pleasant with reception services for funerals or private gatherings on-site as well as to provide tourists with a dining facility to enjoy while at the cemetery grounds. Presently consumers are directed elsewhere for these services resulting in a loss in revenue for Mount Pleasant. However, a new commercial centre equipped with these facilities will enable the cemetery to retain both its cliental and their capital. This same economic focus underpins the inclusion of a cemetery gift-shop.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery increasingly operates as a retail establishment offering an extensive range of associated products and services. A gift-shop within the new commercial centre further endorses this method of economic gain. By promoting the consumption of services such as the ‘dove release’ Mount Pleasant is further commodifying the act of death.⁴⁵ They sell vaults, which provide an added layer of protection against exterior elements for the casket or urn. They also sell Bronze, Silver and Gold Funeral Packages enabling the client to add items to the gravesite which will supposedly ‘enhance the comfort of the guests at the service and the aesthetic appearance of the site’.⁴⁶ The recent introduction of commemorative keepsake jewelry – jewelry fashioned from cremated remains – illustrates the degree to which Mount Pleasant operates as a commercial venture. For the tourist population Mount Pleasant sells guidebooks of the cemetery, landmarked maps of the burial plots, postcards, glasses and other souvenirs. A gift-shop will enable Mount Pleasant to further expand their product line which will eventually include a more expansive collection of caskets and urns as well as a greenery and flower shop.

Going, Going, Gone – Selling Mount Pleasant Cemetery

At present Mount Pleasant Cemetery exists as a cultural institution radically affected by commercial movements. Situated on a prime piece of downtown Toronto real-estate, in the midst of over forty other active and at times aggressive burial sites, Mount Pleasant works hard both to produce a profit and to remain competitive. This

⁴⁵ As quoted in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery Pre-Planning Guide: ‘The release of doves at a graveside service is the perfect tribute to the life of a loved one. While doves have been recognized throughout history as a symbol of love and good luck. On the day of service, we can arranged for a flock of doves to be brought to the gravesite. After a passage is read, one dove will be release first, followed by the rest of the flock. A dove release provides a touching commemoration while leaving everyone in attendance with a message of peace and goodwill.’

pressure to produce sales has pushed Mount Pleasant Cemetery executives to broaden their concepts of advertising and sales techniques. Precluded by public ambivalence toward the cemetery and competition from simply offering itself as a community resource as the rural cemetery did 150 years ago, the cemetery, as Mitford (1999) argued has to sell plots if it is to survive financially. If a cemetery is to sell plots, it must either have a large part of the community closely identified with it or reach out to those without affiliation and persuade them to purchase lots. Given that Mount Pleasant is a non-secular cemetery without a specific religious association the cliental base is attracted largely through advertising. As a result Mount Pleasant has become more advanced in their public-relations, advertising and sales programs with cemetery revenue derived exclusively from the sale and purchase of plot sites.

Through the use of newspaper, magazine and television, Mount Pleasant markets the cemetery landscape using promotional techniques utilized by other profit-oriented cemeteries.⁴⁶ According to Carol Philp, Mount Pleasant advertises on local Toronto radio stations while using television promotion to profile the aesthetics of the site. Newspapers are used to run ads however flyers serve as the dominant form of marketing, distributed randomly through the mail with comforting captions that read, 'We know death is a heavy subject. But with bunnies, butterflies and sunsets we've made it easier to deal with' (Appendix A). Included on the bottom of the advertisements are returnable sections urging potential clients to obtain more information about estate planning and funeral packages. This advertising campaign put forth by Mount Pleasant markets cemetery

⁴⁶ As quoted in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery Pre-Planning Guide: 'Depending on the package chosen, these additions may include chairs, a tent covering the gravesite, matting from road to grave and removal of earth from the gravesite. These are available for both casket and urn burial.'

⁴⁷ Pinelawn Memorial Park, Washington Memorial Park and Forest Lawn Memorial Park are examples of cemeteries that presently use similar advertising techniques when attracting clients (Mitford, 1998).

products with the intention of increasing capital gain. In doing this Mount Pleasant is further commercializing the cemetery as a private enterprise focused principally on economic gain with little concern for profit-driven practices traditionally considered distasteful or ‘taboo’. The appropriateness of bold advertising in respect to the cemetery is still debated. As discussions with Carol Philp highlighted, those in the cemetery business cannot agree on how aggressively a cemetery should confront the taboo of death and display its ‘goods’ to the public. However, in using all types of media outlets to solicit the cemetery products Mount Pleasant appears to have little concern for what is arguably deemed by society as socially and culturally acceptable. Their need to attract cliental, business and capital overrides their desire to maintain the integrity and tradition of the site and relationship with the surrounding community. In this respect Mount Pleasant has undoubtedly become a commercial enterprise.

In the present society, cemeteries have faced increased competition and mounting pressures to expand in order to maintain their market position. While some cemeteries remain independently operated organizations, Mount Pleasant has entered a period of consolidation. The Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries Corporation operates nine financially strong and commercially aggressive cemeteries within Toronto, sustaining a monopoly over the city’s burial landscape. Consolidation has accelerated changes in the managerial hierarchy of Mount Pleasant. While it continues the strong tradition of employing a local board of directors, the process by which these members are chosen remains unknown, prompting criticism from individuals like Cindy Thorburn of the Moore Park Residents Association. While superintendents, arborists and designers are still present, their capacity as managers has been largely lost in light of increased corporate control.

New developments, coupled by transformations in architecture and the landscaped environment have made Mount Pleasant what Fainstein and Judd (1999) call a 'place to play' in the contemporary society, transforming the once sacred lands of the departed into commercial lands for the living. The grandeur, expression and uniqueness that once characterized the architecture of Mount Pleasant has become manufactured and uniform. The primary consideration when erecting a monument is no longer its accurate representation of the departed individual but instead that its design and size meets the cemetery's severe stipulations. These same issues are evident in the landscaped environment. While trees and flowers still remain a dominant component of the burial landscape they no longer serve simply an aesthetic purpose. Often, the well-manicured grounds of Mount Pleasant are promoted as sites of attraction through historical and nature-based tours. While these guided tours are in some ways educational in supplying important stories of Toronto's past populations, their focus - as my personal experiences suggest - quite obviously remains on site marketing. They in large part disguise what are profit-oriented techniques under the cloak of heritage tourism. New developments and increased advertising techniques have in a similar fashion proliferated the restructuring, redefining and in some ways destruction of the cemetery tradition. While a certain degree of development and advertising is needed in order to remain competitive in the cemetery market, Mount Pleasant's extensive reform and 'in your face' marketing techniques have turned the once private and personal act of death and commemoration into a bidding war for potential consumers. Aggressive publicizing techniques and site redevelopment threaten the sanctity and integrity of the burial landscape. In Mount Pleasant specifically, these commercial practices are eroding the very essence of the cemetery institution.

-Chapter Six- The Future of Mount Pleasant – A Cemetery in Crisis

Since their conception burial grounds have remained dynamic and shifting spaces within the cultural landscape of North America. Over the past two centuries, the original unplanned, un-maintained gravestones positioned at the site of death have evolved into the cemetery, a picturesque manicured site of extravagant memorials. In recent decades however, change has altered the cemetery landscape at an unparalleled rate. As Jessica Mitford (1998:81) argues,

In the interment industry there have been a great many revolutionary changes taking place in the last twenty years. More progress has been made during this period than had been made in the previous two thousand years... Today we face an era of unprecedented development in our industry through the use of progressive methods, materials and educational techniques.

What has emerged in light of this recent period of development is a new wave of commercial cemetery management. In this new ‘business of death’ cemeterians considered themselves manufacturers, ‘Instead of coke, slag, pig-iron, etc., we take ground, fertilizer, seed, shrubs, trees, flowers, water, stones, top dressing, etc. and with equipment and men we manufacture a ‘product’ known as a cemetery. Then we divide this product into individual lots – ‘packages’- and there you have it’ (Rankin, 1944:65). This commercial approach to burial management that underpinned the modern cemetery continues to actively govern the present cemetery landscape of Mount Pleasant in Toronto Ontario.

My interest in Mount Pleasant Cemetery seemed straightforward enough. In early 2006 as Canada’s first public trust burial ground, Mount Pleasant unveiled development plans for a new commercial centre to be built in the core of the existing cemetery

landscape. Since that time, the long-established lands of the departed in the core of Toronto's downtown have been under redevelopment.

My research focused on the site-restructuring of Mount Pleasant, through an in-depth analysis of the present cemetery landscape. Concepts of commercialization, commodification and heritage tourism guided my examination of the architecture, landscaped environment and new developments characteristic of the current Mount Pleasant landscape.

What has emerged is a cemetery in conflict, unsure how to preserve the integrity and traditions of its heritage, while remaining competitive in the 'business of death'. The present Mount Pleasant landscape depicts an obvious focus on the latter. Architecture once personal and unique has become monotonous and uniform. While most memorials have been redesigned to minimize impact and maximize space, some, as was exemplified by the monument of Steve Stavro, exist as iconic statues, designed to attract attention within the landscape. To allow for more burial plots, much of the picturesque landscape characteristic of the traditional rural cemetery has been eroded in recent decades. Ponds have disappeared and the smaller pathways have been replaced by vehicle-occupied paved roadways. The aesthetic grandeur that once characterized the Mount Pleasant landscape is slowly fading.

Although it remains a site of historic distinction within the Toronto cityscape, Mount Pleasant is learning to do business in the twenty-first century. As a private enterprise compelled by competition and the desire to turn a profit, the cemetery has begun exploiting new advertising and sales techniques. Through newspaper, television

and radio promotion Mount Pleasant, ‘provides the opportunity to pay tribute to a life lived’ by selling individual legacy and capitalizing on the desire to be remembered.⁴⁸

Over the past decade, Mount Pleasant has expanded into a multi-service cemetery – operating a crematory, offering monuments, planting flowers, selling concrete vaults, fashioning and marketing keep-sake jewelry, building mausoleums and running tours – all while continuing to bury the dead. The newly planned commercial centre complete with restaurant, catering facilities, reception room and gift shop illustrates the extent to which Mount Pleasant Cemetery has become a site of consumption. The intention of this facility and the expansive services it offers remains to both attract business and increase revenue. According to the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries Corporation, ‘these new developments will increase the versatility of the cemetery site, enabling not only funerals, but weddings, graduations, church picnics, or other ceremonial events to transpire’.⁴⁹

While my research has focused on Mount Pleasant specifically, many cemeteries across North America are currently experiencing similar periods of transformation. Forest Lawn Memorial Park of Southern California and Washington Memorial Park of New York stand as prime examples to the extraordinary stability and vigor of the cemetery business.⁵⁰ In Toronto, other cemeteries owned and operated by the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries Corporation have undergone similar periods of commercially-driven site restructuring, although not to the same extent as Mount Pleasant.⁵¹ These movements

⁴⁸ As cited on the Mount Pleasant Cemetery Website: www.mountpleasantgroupofcemeteries.ca.

⁴⁹ As cited on the Mount Pleasant Cemetery Website: www.mountpleasantgroupofcemeteries.ca.

⁵⁰ For a detailed examination of these two cemeteries please consult, Jessica Mitford’s (1998) *An American Way of Death*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

⁵¹ Other cemeteries owned and operated by the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries Corporation include: Duffin Meadows Cemetery, Pickering, ON, Meadowvale Cemetery, Brampton, ON, Thornton Cemetery, Oshawa, ON, Elgin Mills Cemetery, Richmond Hill, ON, Beechwood Cemetery, Concord, ON, York Cemetery, Toronto, ON, Pine Hills Cemetery, Scarborough, ON, Prospect Cemetery, Toronto, ON and Toronto Necropolis, Toronto, ON. To my knowledge, no literature detailing the present landscape of these cemeteries exists.

and their impacts on the present burial landscape point to a new age for the North American cemetery, one that remains largely under-researched.

As Mitford (1998) argues, the cemetery has often been considered a static institution, one that has existed, and will exist, forever. But, like other facets of society, the cemetery is dynamic, continuing to evolve and change over time. The transitioning cemetery landscape as it exists in the modern period has to a certain degree been examined in the work of Mitford (1963:1998), Harmer (1963) and Sloane (1991). Although their research focuses predominantly on the larger funeral industry, they do highlight important changes in American burial customs from the eighteenth, to late-twentieth century. These changes are significant in understanding the evolution of the cemetery institution and provide a solid base for further, more up-to-date research. The transitioning and seemingly critical state of the present cemetery landscape – in light of impending commercial developments – signals a definite need for more research. Issues of commodification and tourism have turned public-trust cemeteries into private corporations that threaten to compromise the identity and integrity of the institution. Despite these pressures however, current cemetery research remains largely ignored within not only geography, but all social science disciplines.

The North American cemetery is far from extinct but it remains in crisis. Increased competition and mounting pressures to expand in order to maintain market position have prompted many cemeteries, like Mount Pleasant to devise new, commercially-driven approaches to cemetery management. These changes threaten the tradition and integrity of many long-established cemetery landscapes. Society organizations like Moore Park in Toronto have responded by lobbying against any further

expansion and destruction, steadfast in their pursuit to preserve these historically significant sites from further commercial exploitation – but will this be enough?

The cemetery is an invaluable facet of the North American landscape, as Sloane (1991:244) argues; it remains the ‘last great necessity.’ Recent decades have provided periods of significant change for cemeteries like Mount Pleasant with increased tourism and commercial restructuring threatening the integrity and sanctity of the traditional cemetery landscape. In the present society individuals have become largely indifferent to the cemetery as a sacred space or cultural institution. Increasingly other community and cultural institutions like museums, historical societies and conservatories have assumed the earlier functions of the cemetery. The institutionalization of the cemetery has resulted in a greater distance between individuals and the graves of their ancestors. As society continues into the twenty-first century, the cemetery’s role as a repository of the history, heritage and memories of the local community is fading.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

MOUNT PLEASANT GROUP OF CEMETERIES

WE KNOW DEATH IS A HEAVY SUBJECT.

**BUT WITH BUNNIES, BUTTERFLIES AND SUNSETS
WE'VE MADE IT EASIER TO DEAL WITH.**

IT'S NOT A CONVERSATION STARTER. For some people the word itself carries a weight too troublesome to even use at all. Euphemisms like 'passed on', 'gone to a better place', or for those particularly unemotional types, 'kicked the bucket' are thrown out to the wind instead.

At Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries we know death isn't something people like to talk about. It's for that very reason many leave the responsibility of their final arrangements to loved ones left behind. At that point the task can seem daunting given all the planning and preparation that needs to be made in less than a week.

Which, as it happens, is the same time it takes a baby rabbit to open its eyes after birth. Famous for their reproductive abilities, most rabbits breed from February to September. During which time a mother rabbit will have 4 litters of four or five 'kittens' each. That's twenty new children each and every year.

Now if you had that many sons and daughters you wouldn't have to worry about pre-planning. However in most cases, the endless number of decisions falls on the shoulders of only one or two people. Who should come? Where will the reception be? And what few precious words could possibly do justice to an entire life? All along wondering if the choices they're making are what you would've wanted.

By pre-planning you benefit from being remembered exactly how you'd like, because every decision is made ahead of time by you. Do you want a private family affair or an open invitation to every life you've ever touched? Do you envision a ground burial, entombment, or cremation? A celebration in your honour should feel like it has your thumbprint. And no one knows your personal taste better than you.

Speaking of taste did you know butterflies actually taste food with their feet? It's true. They'll stand on a leaf to decide whether or not it's nutritious enough for their offspring. Once found, eggs are laid and the incredible metamorphosis begins. From egg to larva to pupa, this amazing cycle






culminates to a butterfly. At that point it will have up to four weeks to spread its wings and see everything the world has to offer.

Fortunately your time on this planet is much longer than that. So you have the opportunity to sit back and really think about what you want. Time to get advice and perspective. When you are ready to take that next step Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries has Pre-Planning Co-ordinators to help make the entire decision-making process feel more comfortable and relaxing.

But really there's nothing more relaxing in life than watching a beautiful sunset. Whether you love the sky's vibrant colours or just the calming peacefulness of it all, it's a special moment that you reminisce about long after it's gone.

Your final rite of passage should feel the same. A rich and colourful experience that keeps the memories of your life

alive forever. When the time comes to say goodbye, it's something your family and friends will look back on and remember as the perfect ending to the perfect day.

— 56 —

YES, I'M INTERESTED IN MAKING A HEAVY SUBJECT SEEM A WHOLE LOT LIGHTER.

— I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING —

☐ L.I.F.E. Estate Planner ☐ York Cemetery Pre-Planning Info Package
☐ Funeral Info Package ☐ Phone call to arrange an appointment

NAME _____


STREET _____ APT _____

CITY _____

POSTAL CODE _____ PHONE _____

**Mail: 65 Overlea Blvd., Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario M4H 1P1**

☐ I do not wish to receive any additional information or notifications in the future.



Source: Provided by Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries Corporation, August, 2006.