Chapter 6

Performative Memorials: Arenas of Political Resentment in Dutch Society

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A Decapitation

It happened a year after the assassination on Monday, 6 May 2002. In their haste to materialise more permanently the spontaneous but temporary memorials set up for the assassinated Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and to establish worthy commemorative monuments, some people lost literally all sense of proportion. Harry Mens, an affluent real estate agent and television host, who had embraced the ideas of Fortuyn and as a special tribute had sponsored a life-size sculpture of Fortuyn performing his characteristic salute, had the bronze statue positioned upright in an open lorry en route to Fortuyn’s Rotterdam residence. He aimed to use the statue to create a semi-public commemorative site in the yard in front of his residence. Unfortunately, a crossover along the way was too low. In the collision, the statue was decapitated, as if by an executioner’s axe. Ordinarily, the media would have capitalised on the irony or might ridicule such a metaphorical event. In this case, however, the outcome was regarded as disconcerting and embarrassing, and the press voluntarily exercised self-restraint. Virtually no newspaper published a photograph of the outcome, out of respect, as well as for fear that agitated Fortuyn supporters might manifest the same resentment that they had toward politicians and authorities a year before.¹ The absence of responses reflects the sensitivity and controversy that surrounded Fortuyn and his political movement.

The widespread idea that the violent death of the ‘right-wing extremist’ newcomer Fortuyn was attributable in part to a smear campaign waged by the political establishment and the media made the response to his death particularly vehement. Anger and resentment were epitomised in various improvised mourning and protest memorials devised as national ‘whipping posts’ in several major cities throughout the country. In addition to ‘Fortuynist zealots’ or sympathisers with his political movement, the driving forces comprised a far broader segment of Dutch society. During the days following the murder, hundreds of thousands made their way to these makeshift commemorative sites.

¹ On 11 April 2003 the Algemeen Dagblad was among the very few papers that ran the photograph. The event was covered on television.
In this contribution I will focus on the actions and practices related to the temporary and subsequently permanent commemorative monuments set up for Fortuyn in the Netherlands and Italy. The thousands of letters and notes deposited at these sites articulate a range of visual, written and performative messages that together help interpret and explain the Fortuyn phenomenon and his political movement. The narratives in these messages shed light on the nature and force of the widespread resentment toward politicians and authorities that suddenly manifested in Dutch society during the weeks that followed 6 May 2002. I have focused not on the material monuments but on their active effect or performative nature. Based on a substantive analysis of these documents and the media coverage at the time, I relate the significance of the memorials to the performance of those who positioned and created these in the public arena. In addition, I explore in what measure the performative effect has influenced public opinion in the Netherlands about Fortuyn and with respect to several subsequent changes in politics and society. To this end, I will review various types of Fortuyn memorials and will discuss theoretical constructs relevant for interpreting the research. In the ‘Arenas of Resentment’ section, I analyse in depth the significance and content of the memorials and texts as a foundation for my concluding observations.

**Commemorative Monuments**

The ideological foundations of the memorials and monuments dedicated to Pim Fortuyn were laid during his lifetime, as becomes clear in retrospect. Virtually out of the blue, Fortuyn, a former sociology professor, was at the forefront of national Dutch politics from 20 August 2001. In editorial columns he wrote over the years for Elsevier, a Dutch news magazine, he had identified the problems that in his eyes had been averted, denied or seemingly resolved via the current Dutch polder policy system of harmony (Fortuyn 2002b). These issues mainly concerned safety problems, healthcare, education, asylum seekers, immigration, integration, Islam and globalisation (Wansink 2004: 62–92). Even back then, his ideas drew a covert ‘community’ of followers. Fortuyn’s harsh condemnation of the policy prevailing at the time and the unorthodox solutions he proposed led to his first massive political victory in the Rotterdam municipal elections on 6 March 2002. Within two months, his political clout acquired national proportions. Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), the national political party he established on 14 March 2002, did so well in the polls that he was tipped as the next prime minister. The media had a field day with his charismatic personality and his unabashed criticism of the political system (which he labelled as ‘archaic and obsolete’). As a consequence, simmering and overt popular resentment of the old political-administrative culture was encouraged or reinforced. Fortuyn’s ideas found fertile ground among both white, underprivileged groups in urban areas and the upper crust of the *nouveau riche*, such as entrepreneurs.
unaffiliated with the cultural and political middle ground. Generally, his supporters were native Dutch people who had either become disenchanted with politics and politicians over the previous decades, or had neither trusted politicians nor been interested in either to begin with. At the elections on 15 May 2002 over 1.6 million Dutch men and women, nearly 20% of the electorate, voted for the LPF and its murdered leader. Many Fortuyn sympathisers expressed their political perceptions of him in the memorials. On 9 May, a woman, Ins, wrote: ‘you helped me regain interest in politics.’ L., a young woman, stated: ‘I never voted, hated politics, but you changed all that.’

Fortuyn’s special target was the incumbent Dutch Cabinet. This social-liberal coalition known as the ‘purple’ Kok Cabinet, which had been in power since 1994, had, according to Fortuyn, continuously contrived ‘back-door compromises’ and engaged in consensus politics (Fortuyn 2002b). He argued that the modus operandi consisted of cooptation, political correctness and a complete inability to self-evaluate and was very remote from daily reality. Whereas until recently the ‘polder’ policy had been celebrated as a promising export product, Fortuyn convinced part of the Dutch population that the political system and the policy of the Cabinet were dated and insufficiently democratic. Fortuynism was presented as a politically eclectic alternative (Pels 2003). In the words of the party: ‘selecting the best administrative tools from all political systems for that point in time and never committing to a single system’ (Oosthoek 2005: 223).

From the moment the critic Fortuyn embarked on his political career, he was stereotyped by politics and the media as a populist, fascist or racist and as a Dutch Le Pen, a Dutch Haider or even Hitler, with a view toward isolating him and subsequently neutralising him as a political force (Oosthoek 2005: 112–114). Even before he was killed, this strategy on the part of politics and the media was consistently labelled as ‘demonising’ the politician Fortuyn, thereby – as some have suggested – virtually instigating his murder. After 6 May, the media capitalised on this presumed scenario. According to Fortuyn’s followers, politics and press joined forces to protect the establishment and to incite society against a ‘normal politician’ who had intended to stand for election.

Two years later, on 23 May 2004, the chairman of the Dutch parliament stated at the inauguration of the Pim Fortuyn Hall in the parliament: ‘Never before has

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3 All sections quoted in this chapter from texts of the improvised Fortuyn monuments are from the Pim Fortuyn Collection of the Meertens Institute, donated to the institute by the Fortuyn family. The acquisition of this material has in fact realised an historic Fortuyn monument that serves as a repository for and catalogues and discloses to the public the cultural legacy from this period, see http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/meertensnet/wdb.php?sel=138759.

4 Conspiracy theories abounded about Fortuyn’s death. Cinematographer and Fortuyn admirer Theo van Gogh produced a film about the Fortuyn assassination, based on such a theory. Shortly after completing the film 06/05, Van Gogh himself was murdered in 2004.
the Netherlands been so shocked by the worst that can happen to a parliamentary
democracy: murderous violence [that] silences free speech.’\(^5\) Worse still, as the first
political assassination in the Netherlands in centuries, the incident appears to have
mobilised a far larger share of the population than his direct political support might
have suggested. Regardless of political sympathies, virtually all of Dutch society was
shocked by the very occurrence of such violence in the Netherlands. In a memorial
posting, Cees D. from Haarlem described 6 May as: ‘the day that Dutch democracy
lost its innocence.’\(^6\) In a survey, many respondents believed that the cherished idea of
an open, free and peaceful Dutch society had been eliminated in one fell swoop.

The growing social disorientation within the Netherlands and the reversal in
ideas about politics and society after 2002 arose less from the murder itself than
from the responses that the murder instigated. From this perspective, the week
following Fortuyn’s murder may be stereotyped as a social-political revolt, which
can be characterised with words like commotion and pamphleteering; such elements
have surfaced previously in Dutch political history.\(^7\) Never before in modern history,
however, have members of Dutch society expressed such massive-public as well as
personal criticism of the political and administrative elite and of the performance
of society overall. Over the course of those days, the population invented a new
‘democratic’ instrument consisting of a series of politically-oriented, improvised-
temporary memorials.

I have divided these Fortuyn memorials into three main categories: (1) temporary-
improvised memorials, (2) registration memorials and (3) (semi-)permanent,
institutionalised monuments. I will describe these categories.

1. By the evening following the murder, there were various makeshift monuments,
which were elaborated in the week following the murder. The five most important
ones were located (i) in front of Fortuyn’s residence in Rotterdam; (ii) in front of
the Rotterdam city hall, the site that symbolised Fortuyn’s first major electoral
and political victory; (iii) at the foot of the statue of the ‘Father of the Nation’,
freedom fighter Willem de Zwiager (William the Silent; 1533–1584), symbolically
located directly opposite the entrance to the Parliament in The Hague; (iv) at the
national monument commemorating the war victims on the Dam in Amsterdam
and, finally, at the actual locus delicti, (v) the Mediapark parking lot in Hilversum.
These locations were far from random but were selected on historical, political and

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5 See [http://www.twedekamer.nl/over_de_tweede_kamer/voorzitter/Indexpagina_archief_werkboek.jsp#0](http://www.twedekamer.nl/over_de_tweede_kamer/voorzitter/Indexpagina_archief_werkboek.jsp#0)

6 One of the first people to use this metaphor – and trendsetting the use of it – was
author Harry Mulisch in an interview with Die Welt on 8 May 2002; in the German press this
statement became one of the most frequent headings above commentaries about what was
occurring and had taken place in the Netherlands.

7 This is not a reference to the outbursts of violence on the evening of 6 May, which
to most resembled a revolt but was more akin to a riot, cf. De Vries and Van der Lubben
(2005: 22–31); nor were the events a revolt ‘of Fortuyn’, as these authors argue, but of a
population.
emotional grounds and may be described as landscapes of political memory, loaded with connotations reinforcing the performative quality of the memorials (Edkins 2003: 215–217; Mitchell 2003). Each memorial remained in place for about a week, until they were removed by the various municipal cleaning services. Documents and objects were retrieved from them and presented to Fortuyn’s family.

As of Fortuyn’s funeral on 10 May at Driehuis-Westerveld, his grave became the central site for depositing documents and objects, especially until Fortuyn’s remains were definitively interred near his holiday home in Italy on 20 July 2002. Since that point, a phantom grave has remained at Driehuis-Westerveld, which has continued to draw far more visitors than Fortuyn’s final resting place in Italy.

In addition to the usual condolence cards with signatures or bouquets of flowers with a card, these places served as bulletin boards, where various messages, letters and notes were placed or hung describing what had happened, what the author believed was amiss in the Netherlands, and what should change. The thousands of such expressions – aside from the bouquets of flowers, images and various objects placed there – consist mainly of texts. I have divided these documents into four main categories of expressions: sorrow, grief and dismay; affection and love; sanctity; protest and resentment (Margry 2003; 114–125).

2. Various persons, organisations and institutions almost immediately opened semi-permanent registers of condolences and expressions of grief in response to the murder. Some were web-based, while others were not. Although this practice is customary only upon the death of high-ranking individuals or members of the royal house, most communities provided public condolence registers for their residents. Opening such registers for the first time for an individual citizen nationwide indicates the historic significance immediately associated with the events, as confirmed by the massive numbers of people signing these registers. This impression was reinforced when the paper registers were transformed into a platform for everybody to share his or her personal views. The public exceeded the boundaries dictated here: instead of simply signing inside the pre-printed rectangle, people wrote half or even full pages about the course of events. The digital registers were similar but were often still more detailed, as people were free to write their entry from home. Since these registers generally addressed Fortuyn as an individual, the political commentaries tended to be brief. The anonymous nature of the Internet was conducive to curses and racist or fascistic remarks in some cases. Web masters removed most of such postings. 8

8 Most paper registers have been preserved, whereas many of the on-line registers disappeared from the Internet after a while. The Meertens Institute has archived the paper registers and the most important on-line registrations; see http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/meertensnet/file/edwinb/20050421/Coll_Fortuyn_invent.pdf

9 Most web registers are no longer on-line. The offensive and provocative e-mails have often been deleted from the postings printed out and presented to Fortuyn’s family.
Figure 6.1  Political messages applied to the statue of William the Silent († 1584) on Plein square, 8 May 2002

Photo: Peter Jan Margry.
3. Four days after the murder, the first more formal memorial materialised at Fortuyn’s temporary grave in Driehuis-Westerveld. Because a grave monument was lacking, another memorial consisting of flowers, letters and objects was placed there in anticipation of a permanent monument. This is the start of the period that Etkind refers to as ‘the hardening of memory’ and is intended to counterbalance processes of denial and refutation. One day after the murder, Nancy from Rotterdam left the following message at Fortuyn’s residence, considering the unstable memory of surrounding society:

‘Give us a statue of Pim, for us to keep the power that he gave us alive….!!
A bronze statue, radiating his power and his courage to say what he believed will continue to inspire us…!!!’

The semi-permanent and permanent monuments arose in the period from about two months to three years following Fortuyn’s death. During that time his family and several ‘fortuynist’ groups and organisations worked to devise more permanent material and immaterial symbolic, ritual and political expressions of Pim Fortuyn and his ideas. Their work includes first of all the commemoration and grave monuments in the Netherlands (Driehuis-Westerveld) and Italy (Provesano) and the traditional statues erected for him in Rotterdam. Next, his social and political constituents attempted to realise a primarily immaterial memorial for society as a whole. The independent Pim Fortuyn Foundation was established and – regardless of Fortuyn’s actual political views – dedicated to innovating society and public administration and promoting freedom of expression. In addition, two of Fortuyn’s brothers tried to sustain the central idea within the theories of their murdered brother – administrative innovation and freedom of expression – through an ideological day of commemoration as well. Together with Fortuyn’s political party the LPF, the family decided to designate 6 May as the new national day of commemoration as of 2003. This transformed the idea from an optional initiative into a socially and politically controversial proposal, as the proposed date immediately followed the national date for commemorating the dead and the national liberation day on May 4 and 5, respectively. The intention was for 6 May to become the new liberation day, a national day of democracy and against violence according to the motto: ‘Let us uphold freedom of speech.’

10 The grave in Driehuis-Westerveld was in use for over two months, until Fortuyn’s remains were definitively transferred to his Italian grave on 19 July 2002. The former grave in the Netherlands subsequently became a commemorative monument.
11 http://www.pimfortuynfoundation.nl
12 Based on the Latin maxim invoked by Pim Fortuyn Loquendi Libertatem Custodiamus, cf. the website www.pim6mei.nl
score with the incumbent political system. Underlining the symbolic connotation, a new commemorative flag was introduced: the national Dutch flag, with a portrait of Fortuyn added in the centre.

Following naturally from this instrumentalised use of nationalist motifs and symbols is the name attributed to a new tulip species by the firm Tomorrow’s Tulips in 2003. Named after Fortuyn, this white tulip refers unambiguously to a form of native Dutchness, an integral element in Fortuyn’s political programme. This political-nationalist background also underlies the refusal by the Keukenhof to feature Fortuyn’s statue with these white tulip bulbs, since this renowned Dutch flower park in Lisse regarded such a suggestive combination as a dangerous violation of its neutrality. This memorial, as well as the group of wax models (together with his two dogs) at Madame Tussaud’s, the founding of Radio Pim Fortuyn and the organisation of annual commemorative marches are but a few of the many initiatives launched as permanent memorials for Fortuyn.

These plans also derived from the idea that a substantial share of society had spoken out in support of fortuynism via the temporary memorials in May 2002. Fortuyn’s direct followers presumed an imagined community many times larger than it actually was months later. Since then, this ‘hardening of the memory’ has been driven primarily by a few small memory communities with their own interpretations of Fortuyn’s ideas; these interpretations had progressively deviated from the broadly supported narratives of the temporary monuments in May 2002. This competitive pluralisation of the Fortuyn in-crowd impeded broad popular support for the new commemorative initiatives.

Memory, Narrative and Performance

Almost immediately after the politician Fortuyn was murdered, a massive commemorative drive had materialised at sites regarded as important in the context of Fortuyn’s political activities and his person and also considered suitable as a public stage. The massive-collective manifestation of grief following the murder would at first appear to relate to established repertoires of public rituals and improvised memorials after accidents, ‘senseless violence’, assaults, natural disasters and the like. Since about the mid 1980s, these cultural practices have become more commonplace in the West. Well-known examples include the temporary memorials for Olof Palme in 1986, for Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997 and following 9/11 in New York in 2001 (Scharfe 1989; Walter 1999; Nelson and Olin 2003; Durbin 2003; Santino 2006). Such massive expressions of mourning and emotion have become characteristic manifestations of a changing, public and personal approach to traumatic death, mourning and sorrow that reflects more general changes within Western societies, such as secularisation, individualisation, globalisation and their

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On the surface, the memorial sites dedicated to Fortuyn appeared to follow directly from these changes. After all, they offered everybody an opportunity to partake in the power of such memorials through a ‘performance of self’. This has been defined as a performance influenced by surroundings and public alike that serves to pass one’s own views on to others (Goffman 1959: 17). From that perspective, such memorials are conducive to individual exhibitions of emotive, social or political identity in public space. The memorials established for Fortuyn arose spontaneously at first. The abundance of texts and messages rapidly revealed different narratives. Because these narratives were featured in the media with increasing emphasis, the construction and elaboration of the monument gradually lost its spontaneous quality. They are therefore more accurately described as ‘improvised’ and ‘temporary’. The memorials constructed were above all ‘initiatives of memory’ that the concerned individuals used to try to disseminate in order to preserve substantive meanings associated with the monument. With respect to traditional religious beliefs, Durkheim has argued that this style of memorialising ‘serve[s] to sustain the vitality of beliefs, to keep them from effaced memory and, in sum, to revivify the most essential elements of the collective consciousness’ (Durkheim 1965: 420). Transposing this view to the Fortuyn case, several social-political convictions and existential experiences needed to be explicitly recorded and disseminated on the part of the population. The temporary memorials were deployed to reconfirm these beliefs about anchoring Dutch government and society. This idea led an anonymous individual to assert: ‘Pim, we believe that your ideas should prevail (politically)!!’ while the B. family from Gouda anticipated a broad movement: ‘The people will continue to support your ideas.’

The temporary and improvised memorial sites for Fortuyn arose without any government involvement. In addition to being based on mourning and sorrow, they were constructed from social and political narratives. This was the first memorial tribute to the political ideals championed by Fortuyn and his broad group of constituents. They materialised in their own, explicit manner and exemplify what the sociologist Alexander Etkind has termed ‘soft memory’, a socially active narrative that may be articulated via memorials and monuments (Etkind 2004). The historian Gillis supports this dynamic position and regards memorials as ideologically controversial memories and identities which, as social representations of reality, are continuously subject to change (Gillis 1994: 3–5). Nelson and Olin, however, argue that such monuments are not really about memory, and that their rhetoric and the impact of their rhetoric are socially defining (Nelson and Olin 2003: 1–7). The Fortuyn case will reveal that the two elements, memory and performance alike, applied to the memorials.

In their material form, and based especially on the related meanings, improvised memorials have an intrinsic performative impact or agency (Santino 2006b). Not only is this impact highly dynamic, because monuments are appropriated by different persons or groups based on distinctive argumentations, but over time the official
connotations or appreciations prove subject to change as well. In this context, Patten Henry signalled, based on the tens of thousands of *monuments aux morts* from World War I, ‘monumental accusations’ targeting the politics responsible and levied by the dead and their survivors. These official war monuments in her view also represented an implicit ‘personal narrative’ intended to call attention to ‘the true stories’ of this ‘dirty war’ (Patten Henry 1996: 9). More recently, the temporary memorial established at the Atocha Station in Madrid following the train attacks on 11 March 2004 was transformed from a monument of mourning into a political statement within a few days. This transformation occurred specially after it had become clear that the Aznar administration, faced with the imminent elections, had deliberately distorted the truth about the attacks, giving rise to a political narrative about the disaster (Sánchez-Carrero 2006: 338). Neither temporary nor permanent monuments have meanings that are etched in stone: societies change continuously, and collective memory is unstable. The same holds true when temporary memorials precede permanent monuments, as the Fortuyn case will demonstrate.

The creators of the temporary Fortuyn memorials have become active producers of meaning and symbolism thanks to the input of a substantive, narrative dimension. In analysing oral and textual performances, two interrelated events need to be distinguished in the narratives: ‘the event that is narrated in the work and the event of narration itself’ (Bakhtin 1981: 255). The texts are therefore not to be regarded as autonomous elements but are an active, integrated ingredient in the production of meaning. This is all the more true, since the mourning was hardly restrained, nor did the participants explicitly observe silence: emotions were often heated (cf. De Hart 2005). The texts, images and symbols and attributes contributed were evocative and instigated compelling conversations and heated debates between the visitors. Because additions changed the situation and effect – or enactment – of the memorials, this process continuously generated new conversations and discussions on site. This effect was especially pronounced, because the authors, in placing a message, could be held accountable immediately. These interactions helped integrate the monument with its surroundings. The performative nature of this memorial landscape brought about a style of communication, in which both the act of expression and the performer mattered, and which proved difficult for the visitors to circumvent. New meanings were generated in the process. Gradually, it became clear that the performing memorial sites conditioned the way the public came to terms with this traumatic event.

Bauman argues that narratives generally have a ‘constitutive role of discourse in social and political life’ (Bauman 1986: 5). In stating that the ‘structures of signification in narrative (…) give coherence to events in our understanding’, he opens the door to analysing these ‘structures of signification’ in the Fortuyn documents as well. When Bauman goes on to argue that ‘narratives are the sign, the events their external referents’, he is advocating a performance-centred analysis that ties in with other performance approaches (Bauman 1986: 114). Cultural categories underlying actions and the ways that form and substance have been added to the
memorials are established, are based on such an integrative vision of text, language and culture, considered in the ethnographic context of the Fortuyn memorials.

In determining the significance of the memorials, in addition to considering the performative nature of the individuals concerned, the importance of the involvement and active role of modern media such as television and Internet needs to be assessed in the creation and perception of the monuments (Vasterman 2004; Kleinnijenhuis 2003; Wansink 2004: 220–230). Extensive media exposure of the events gave rise to ongoing interference between the media and the people who created the memorials. The huge numbers of active visitors turned the locations into effective hearths of criticism. Both the persons and the media are the central mediators in what I have termed ‘performative memorials’ to reflect the broad performative power of the memorials, realised both by the actual memorial sites and by the individuals and mediators involved.

Erika Fischer-Lichte introduced the ‘culture as performance’ concept. She argues that culture should definitely not be perceived as text alone but needs to be understood also – or especially – as performance. According to this line of reasoning, culture becomes a dynamic, expressive process that helps people define who they are as individuals and as collectivities. Everyday life and especially symbolic events and rituals, such as those concerning Fortuyn, figure as sites of enactment of the human cultural drama. Fischer-Lichte’s concept is based on recent theatrical productions but also applies to rituals and political manifestations and the like. Four elements come into play: mediality (as well as the physical co-presence of actors and spectators); ephemeral materiality; semioticity; aestheticity (the performance as an event and not as work). Her concept fosters insight into the functions and meanings of the monuments dedicated to Fortuyn. In the context of this contribution, however, to digress from her principles of strict co-presence of ‘actors’ and ‘public’ at the same location, I perceive no absolute delineation of performative effects on-site (Fischer-Lichte 2005: 22–23). In this case of active involvement and interaction with the public, such a co-presence is abundantly clear, but there was more. The extensive media exposure of the construction and effect of the memorials realised an added performative effect of the monument enactment as a whole. This was visualised by the media outside the physically circumscribed area and is perfectly compatible with the view that performance is ‘everywhere linked to the interdependence of power and knowledge’ (Schechner 2002: 114). The mediator role of the memorial sites appears to have been decisive in the interaction between messengers, public and media for the dynamics and the process of memorialising and subsequent political revolt.

Finally, conceptualisations of the temporary memorials merit a brief review. Years ago, Jack Santino proposed the term ‘spontaneous shrines’ (Santino 1992,

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14 The important role of the media was also highlighted retrospectively by the main political operators at the time: Piet de Rooy and Henk te Velde (2005), *Met Kok, over veranderend Nederland*. Amsterdam Wereldbibliotheek, 90; Paul Rosenmöller (2003), *Een mooie hondenbaan*, Amsterdam: Balans, 247–248, 255–259.
The concept has since become widely accepted. Stengs has criticised the term ‘spontaneous’ within this concept, arguing that spontaneity was rarely the case (Stengs 2004: 38). Although some degree of spontaneity and immediacy is discernible with the initial Fortuyn memorialisation, I do not regard ‘the spontaneous’ as a permanent fixture there either. Within the Fortuyn context, and also more broadly, I regard the term ‘shrine’ according to Santino’s concept as even more problematic. The term is all too suggestive of a compatible, favourably-disposed idea of adoration at a religious, holy site. This is not the case in general. I therefore prefer to opt for adjectives that are temporary and improvised together with the terms memorial or memorial site.

**Arenas of Resentment**

As stated, collective emotions surrounding Pim Fortuyn appeared compatible with the public rituals and ephemeral memorials that often materialise as massive mourning after the death of a celebrity. This proved only partially true with respect to Fortuyn. In addition to being repositories for flowers, cards, drawings, toys, stuffed animals, Pim paraphernalia, garments etc., the memorials served as vehicles for disclosing political criticism, resentment and hatred. The prevailing discontent generated a wave of protest and criticism, which, especially because of the media focus on them, drowned out aspects of mourning and grief. The issue was not only anger at the murderer or the presumed failure of the government to protect Fortuyn, but especially the opportunity to criticise politicians and government about immigration and integration, lack of safety and bureaucracy.

About one third of all notes and documents deposited were explicit protest messages. To convey messages more emphatically and enhance their readability, they were made materially distinctive. First, they were visually explicit. To this end, they appeared in large, visible type in a clear layout that was usually done on a computer. These clear public statements were easy for visitors to read from a distance. They were also explicit and often contained crude formulations addressing political parties, politicians and social injustices. This characterisation does not suggest that the other messages cannot be interpreted as such. The many, often pathetic declarations of love and attributions referring to Messianic, holy or divine qualities of Fortuyn are also indirect reproaches to a deficient government (Margry 2003: 116-122). In addition, many texts and objects expressed a form of ‘popular nationalism’, which – government views of it aside – focussed on an idealised image from the period prior to globalised, multicultural society.

The day after the murder, the memorials became less spontaneous. Extensive media coverage made the public aware of the existence and function of the memorial sites. As a result, people drafted their letters and messages increasingly from their home, and the content progressively became an interactive produce of the new discourse that arose about Fortuyn. To make the critical message the focus of public attention and to keep it from disappearing in the mass of flowers and letters, some
people placed several – identical or distinctive – copies of their texts in different places of the monument or presented them at several monuments. Because paper exposed to the elements does not last indefinitely, the messages were often sealed in plastic. Applying reinforcements, such as framing or positioning them on cardboard, made the texts easier to read amid the mass of papers, flowers and objects. As such, they became more visible to the media in their quest for compelling shots for the news sections.

Note that the authors sometimes stood near their messages. This way, they de-anonymised the message and were able to advance their personal point of view more explicitly or more elaborately in the ensuing discussions with other bystanders. Those placing letters were thus also able to latch onto any interest on the part of the media and thus disseminate their view far more broadly. Other people present, who might or might not have placed a document there as well, often lingered around the site and would share their opinion whether asked or not or would engage others in a discussion. To this end, texts were retrieved, read, transmitted and discussed. Often the written messages were confirmed, reinforced or elaborated, although positions were also challenged, modified or qualified. Through this approach and because of its vehemently critical and highly emotional tenor, the sites manifested as active arenas of resentment, where opinions were expressed in writing as well as orally.

All this made for a mediagenic setting that received live television coverage and extended the substantive discussions way beyond the physical sites. This process and the mobilising power of the media further reinforced the suggestion of broad social discontent.

The memorials were medleys of thousands of letters, cards, notes, posters, drawings and photographs conveying public sentiment and emotions such as mourning, grief, affection, friendship, love and holiness. The most powerful in both text and external manifestation were the expressions of protest, criticism, rage and resentment. These outbursts of criticism targeted presumed injustices in politics, administration and society, especially the smear campaign that politicians and the media had allegedly waged against Fortuyn. Protest messages in the form of letters to Fortuyn, messages to the Dutch government and unaddressed leaflets were deposited by the thousands. The tone was already set on the evening of the murder, when Fortuyn’s followers gathered on the Plein square across from the Dutch parliament and aggressively called for the heads of the politicians responsible, as if in a kangaroo court; on the one hand for being representatives of the ‘wrong policy’ that the Dutch politicians had in their view pursued in recent years, and on the other hand because of their smear campaign and demonisation of Fortuyn and their use of the ‘right-wing extremist’ and ‘racist’ labels. This presumed ‘demonisation’ is a recurring theme in the protest messages. Accusations were expressed both directly and indirectly: ‘who are your true murderers????’ read a rhetorical question. As if on a political billboard, another anonymous scribe responded promptly by listing cause and consequence:
Reframing Dutch Culture

Kok
Melkert
Rosenmöller
De Graaf
have set the stage
the cowardly murder of our hero!
Words such as ‘hatemongering’, ‘discord’ and
‘bad for society’
have incited the perpetrator to murder!
Settle the score with these people on 15 May.....

The author means that the terms used by these four leftist political leaders to describe Fortuyn’s actions and their ultimate consequences should be expressed in the elections on 15 May 2002. Others were more direct: ‘Please vote for Pim on 15 May, or his death will have been in vain.’ On 9 May a Rotterdam tram driver using the onomatopoetic pseudonym Tingeling wrote a poem with the following lines: ‘From the left we hear the shots; all of the Netherlands is doomed; a land replete with idiots.’

Both the ‘leftist’ and the ‘fascist’ press were under fire. One pamphleteer asserted: ‘The media bastards have instigated a sentiment that cost Pim Fortuyn his life’, while another, referring to the 16th-century father of the nation, wrote: ‘Alas, the

Figure 6.2 A sea of flowers, objects and documents in front of Fortuyn’s residence, May 2002

Photo Collection Fortuyn.
2nd Prince of the Netherlands has been murdered: thank you, television media and political leaders.’ Others wanted to restore the power to the people and wrote: ‘Have more ordinary people debate each other in the media; the true experts are among the masses.’ The politicians were presumed ignorant: ‘How come you understood the people and the people you, while the media and the politicians in office remained without a clue?’, someone wrote.

At the public mourning or commemoration sites, but also in municipal condolence registers or on the anonymous Internet, critics lashed out against the exclusion of Fortuyn, who was believed to have been barred from entering the established, secluded political bulwark because of his innovative ideas. Politicians had indeed done their best to avoid direct debate with outsider Fortuyn. This was not the first time in recent Dutch parliamentary history, however, that incumbent politicians and the media had exercised almost paradigmatic political correctness and had tried to neutralise a political movement termed as ultra right-wing and undesirable through a *cordon sanitaire*. Fortuyn’s political positions were controversial and certainly not widely shared among the population. Nonetheless, his death and the ensuing social response changed general perceptions of Fortuyn as an individual and his ideas. The events led to a collective about-face that continues to baffle the key political operators concerned years afterwards. The consternation at his death and the widespread reproaches expressed via the memorial sites caused a general change of attitude. This occurred first during the tumultuous days following the murder, but also long afterwards in the ‘political’ memory. The ‘exaggerated’ and ‘demonising’ treatment of Fortuyn by politicians and the media alike seemed to inspire regrets and even the appearance of shame or guilt. This sentiment persisted for a while. Six days after the murder, an anonymous letter to one of the memorials read:

‘Odd that I am now placing flowers for the man I always called a “prick”.
What a pity that I believed the crude media depictions of you.
Strange, because I should really know better.
What a pity that I am listening to your interviews only now and am discovering that I think you’re really smashing.’

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15 In the 1980s the Centrum Democraten, under the aegis of Hans Janmaat, were *de facto* excluded from parliament. This helped instigate an assault on Janmaat by leftist radicals in 1986. In addition to providing a basis for comparison, Fortuyn’s murder gave rise to a new, negative evaluation of the way Janmaat had been treated at the time, see Joop van Holsteyn and Cas Mudde (eds) (1998), *Extreem-rechts in Nederland*. The Hague: SDU, 47–60; cf. the evaluating article by Ellis Ellenbroek, Frénk van der Linden & Leon Verdonschot, ‘Was de leider van de Centrumpartij een ziener?’ in the 2004 Christmas issue of *Nieuwe Revu*.

16 Incumbent Prime Minister Kok stated in an in-depth interview three years after the incident, that ‘the Netherlands was seized by irrationality overnight,’ see De Rooy and Te Velde 2005: 90.
The above text is characteristic of coming to terms with the many changes in views during those days. Again, the media and the criticism directed against the media were important forces for these changes. Many letter writers believed that their views had been manipulated. L., a young woman, admitted that she had accepted her teacher’s opinion far too easily that Fortuyn would not be a good leader for the country and expressed public remorse for not having been more discerning: ‘This really did influence me, Pim, I’m sorry.’ This and other texts placed at the memorials reflect the reversal that occurred within personal and public narratives alike.17

Whereas the improvised memorials were primarily centrepieces of protest and resentment, the sites temporarily fostered also cohesion, expressed in part in the emphatically shared shame and a collective sense of guilt. The note from Peter and Petra read: ‘Over the past few days we Dutch people have shown the feelings that we can express. We stand together.’ Known as ‘sober’, the Dutch had never in modern history exhibited a comparable collective emotionality. Research conducted four years after the event has revealed how intensely society experienced that week. During the days following the murder Dutch people felt a stronger common bond than they had in years.18 Increasingly, the memorials reflected the narrative of the national idea, the unity of Dutch society and the possibility that it might disintegrate. These were symbolised, for example, by a great many Dutch flags, often featuring texts with political connotations, and widespread use of the ‘national’ colour orange, many texts referring to Dutch history and culture, as well as to the threats (i.e. immigrants or Islam) and the new saviour of the nation (cf. Fortuyn 2001).19 Given that patriotism and nationalism were considered politically incorrect in the Netherlands, one person wondered: ‘When did loving one’s country become a cardinal sin????’ The quest for solidarity arose in part from fear of deprivation or the decline of solidarity or alienation from society. A woman named Bianca wrote: ‘One thing is certain, the Netherlands is no longer the Netherlands!!!’ She felt estranged and excluded in her own country.20 An anonymous contributor was more elaborate: ‘The Dutch democracy will never be the same. Gone is innocence, gone is the way things were.’ The S. family from Puttershoek was more dramatic: ‘This has left us without hope of salvation; we no longer have a future.’

17 Fortuyns then webpage – http://www.kro.nl/helden/held.php?heldid=11&held=fortuyn,%20pim – isn’t on line anymore.
18 Over 15% reported that this had been the most important incident of solidarity in recent years; part of the ‘Nationale trots’ [national pride] study conducted among 656 respondents by De Vos & Jansen Marktonderzoek in 2005 and commissioned by Reader’s Digest publishing company. Cf. also the report from the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau De Sociale staat van Nederland (2003), which identified immense popular concern about the murder of Fortuyn.
20 An analysis of inclusion and exclusion rituals appears in this collection in the contribution by Irene Stengs.
The heaviest blow to Fortuyn’s supporters may have been the loss of Fortuyn as a political representative and mouthpiece of the sentiment and views of socially and culturally vulnerable urban population groups, who did not feel that the ruling politicians properly supported their interests. For years, ‘populist’ issues concerning immigration, integration, crime, schools with high immigrant enrolments and neighbourhoods with large immigrant populations had been low on the political agenda. Fortuyn thus became a potential representative of about one fifth of society, often Dutch people who had voted for social-democratic parties in the past but had become disenchanted with these parties and their politics. Many statements on the memorials stipulated that Fortuyn had revived the interest of their author in administration and politics and in solving the serious social problems for the first time in years. Fortuyn had, in a manner of speaking, convinced the Netherlands ‘to wake up and smell the coffee.’ But because ‘his voice had been silenced,’ the newly mobilised electorate was now left orphaned and forlorn. The members wrote phrases such as: ‘We have been silenced,’ ‘Democracy has been murdered’ or ‘No freedom of expression.’ The most common text, which appeared in several versions, was the role attributed to the speaker: ‘You said what we thought.’

This brief statement provides one of the clues for explaining the collective and public emotionality that captured much of the Dutch population at the time. It refers to the transposition of the individual social responsibility of his followers to Fortuyn as a person – ‘You said what we thought’ – and to his function as a personal extension of them. His significance as a spokesperson has made his death especially drastic and compelling. Those who had identified closely with Fortuyn felt as if they had suffered an amputation. Previously, because of their social position, voting practices or minimal social involvement or low social status, they had felt politically ignored and virtually without representation. All at once, they had lost their political voice, shepherd and leader: ‘With your charisma and personality, you were a mouthpiece for many people,’ wrote a Nijmegen resident on 10 May. A woman named Gineke said: ‘What will become of the Netherlands without you? All of the Netherlands is in tears.’ Three men from Scheveningen looked ahead and called for a new spokesperson: ‘We hope that your ideas about a changing society will live on.’

The rage and helplessness resulting from the political loss were loud and clear and largely distinct from the sorrow. Messages written from this perspective tended to be without a heading and to address ‘Pim’ and, implicitly, the ‘people and nation.’ The temporary commemoration sites were thus instrumentalised as national public whipping posts, as part of a charivari against government and public authorities. They followed an extended tradition of ‘post-it’ monuments, which people have used to ridicule and criticise incumbent rulers, as exemplified by Pasquino, one of the ‘talking’ statues of Rome.21

The symbolic effects of the political resentment later erupted within the parliament. Pressure from Fortuyn’s political movement to have him as a person and his movement acknowledged symbolically as a purifying, democratic force was highly effective in the beginning. For the first time in history, a politician who had never served in parliament had a room named after him, as well as a bust produced of his likeness. The achievement should be credited not only to the LPF lobby. In retrospect, the Dutch government did this as a conciliatory overture toward his followers and as symbolic compensation for the way that political leaders had treated Fortuyn during the previous months. This political memorial also marked a formal political conclusion and paved the way for broad acceptance of his ideas. At both the left and the right extremes of the political spectrum, politicians started to acknowledge Fortuyn’s issues publicly and to play electorates against each other.

The massive inroads that resentment of the national political system had made among the population are also borne out by the ongoing fragmentation among the government and losses of votes among the conventional parties. In addition to the LPF, many local parties gained ground during those years on issues such as the ones that Fortuyn had raised. Fortuyn had been the first to place the problems with multicultural society as a new central issue on the political agenda. The debate that ensued brought the role of Islam in the Netherlands into the spotlight as well. Fortuyn had labelled this religion as ‘backward’ because of the cultural and political practices associated with it. From that point onward, in conjunction with the increased prominence of Al Qaeda in the world arena, many regarded the expanding influence of Islam as a ‘problem’ for Dutch ‘Christian’ society. The election results on 15 May 2002 thus clearly reflected the social and political disorientation: massive numbers voted for an assassinated political leader, who, in keeping with Dutch electoral law, still figured at the top of his party’s electoral list. In 2004 a similar subject of confusion received even greater emphasis, when the polemic cinematographer Theo van Gogh was murdered by a radical Islamist in Amsterdam. A large temporary memorial site was established at the murder scene and also became an arena of resentment. Many of the letters placed there addressed the role and significance of Islam and Islamism in Dutch society.

Although the idea of the Fortuyn Day on 6 May subsided after the low turnout at the 2003 commemoration, Fortuyn was materially immortalised that same year, when the Stichting Beeld van Pim built a rather large commemorative monument in the centre of Rotterdam. The visual artist used the cracked marble from the pedestal and the twisted obelisk positioned on the pedestal to symbolise how Fortuyn transcended the established structures and the subsequent social turnaround he achieved. The obelisk bears Fortuyn’s bronze bust ‘in debate’ to represent his active proclamation of free speech. The foundation sold small replicas to disseminate Pim’s legacy among individuals and to preserve it for future generations. This monument was

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22 Jaap Roepius is the foundation chairman. The initiator of the statue is Rinus van de Heerik; the sculptor is Corry Ammerlaan-van Niekerk.
23 www.beeldvanpim.nl/replica.html
realised thanks in part to the preponderance of Fortuyn’s party on the Rotterdam city council. Afterwards, the large Dutch socialist party (PvdA) reported the following about the placement of the statue through former State Secretary and Alderman Hans Kombrink: ‘I see no objective cause. These gestures are appropriate for people who have demonstrated their merits. He had no such opportunity’ (Oosthoek 2005: 231). The PvdA politician intended to belittle Fortuyn’s achievements, without becoming personally involved. This statue, however, is also the embodiment of atonement efforts among other politicians. Whether or not Fortuyn had achievements on record: after breaking apart the polder policy and because of the strength of Fortuyn’s local party Leefbaar Rotterdam, the old parties could no longer overlook a hardening of the memory of Pim Fortuyn.

The efforts by the estate agent Mens to place the aforementioned statue of Fortuyn performing his salute in The Hague met with perpetual objections from the community, as Fortuyn was not regarded as having any special significance for that city. At first, neighbourhood residents of Rotterdam successfully resisted placement of this statue on the square in front of his residence for fear that it would attract pilgrimages by right-wing extremists (Oosthoek 2005: 208). Eventually, the statue was placed in the front yard.

Each year on the anniversary of the murder, both this last statue and the large bust on the square along the Korte Hoogstraat in Rotterdam draw a silent march of commemoration and reflection organised by various small groups of Fortuyn supporters. It is the end of a kind of pilgrimage across the Netherlands that also passes by the murder site in Hilversum and the grave monument at Driehuis (Columbijn 2006). The large statue is the annual gathering point for loyal Fortuyn supporters. Rather than a silent commemoration, people perform music and deliver speeches. The texts and objects placed at the sculpture comprise only a few individual expressions from the remaining diehard Fortuyn supporters. This represents an effort, in keeping with the memorials from 2002, to revive old narratives as an ultimate political resort to save their cause.24 In the years after 2002, when a general Fortuyn fatigue set in, and other politicians embraced his ideas, this commemoration was reduced virtually to a small in-crowd affair of fewer than 200 souls. Especially since 2004, the remaining Fortuyn groups are no longer even civil to one another and publicly challenge each other’s competence and legitimacy. The absence of a receptive audience and lack of media coverage minimised the significance of the ‘only true monument’.

Not only classical statues were introduced in public space. The property baron Chris Thunessen in The Hague, a Fortuyn adherent who had always provided the

24 ‘In mijn hart leeft hij voort’, in NRC-Handelsblad, 6 May, 2003; Gretha Pama, ‘Lieve Pim, we moeten verder zonder jou’, in: NRC-Handelsblad, 7 May, 2003. Field studies I conducted on the anniversaries of Fortuyn’s birthday and the date of his death in 2004 and 2005 revealed how much his following had already diminished by 2003. It continued to dwindle in subsequent years. By 19 February 2005, only about 20 people rode the coach that travelled the memorial trail; on 6 May, 2005, the number was less than forty. The turnout was somewhat higher at the stops along the route. The number was highest in Rotterdam, where 175 people joined the march, with another 50 waiting at the monument.
party with ample financial support, purchased Fortuyn’s residence in 2002. He subsequently had the interior ‘immortalised’, exactly as it was when Fortuyn still lived there.\(^\text{25}\) His main purpose was to preserve Fortuyn’s ideas for the future. As access to the house was restricted to those believed to concur with Fortuyn’s political objectives, the house served as a monumental political platform. A similar process occurred in Italy, where Fortuyn owned a cottage in the village of Provesano, and where he was ultimately buried. One of Fortuyn’s friends purchased this house in the hope of preserving it in its original state. To highlight the commemorative nature of this house, he had a sculpture of Fortuyn’s head affixed to the exterior wall. Near the residence is the cemetery where Fortuyn lies buried. Both memorials, however, in part because they are so far away from the Netherlands, attract only occasional

\(^{25}\) A virtual tour of the house became available online in May 2006: http://www. palazzodipietro.nl.
visits from Dutch people vacationing in Italy. As a result, they have had virtually no opportunity to exert a performative influence.

The transnational dimensions of the cult surrounding his person did not end here. International concern about the murder and the emotional responses labelled as un-Dutch extended international interest in the Dutch politician to Italy, due in part to Fortuyn’s ties with that country. This attention outlived the temporal quality of the daily news, because ‘fortuynist’ themes were current in Italy, as they were elsewhere in Europe. Political contacts with the LPF quickly followed the report by the Italian media about Fortuyn. Franco Grillini, a member of parliament and chairman of the largest Italian association of homosexuals, attended to emphasise and convey Fortuyn’s significance as an outspoken homosexual political leader and a champion of personal freedom. Elio de Anna, president of the Pordenone province and a member of Berlusconi’s party Forza Italia, attended Fortuyn’s funeral primarily to tell the media that Fortuyn deeply admired Berlusconi and had therefore contacted his party.26 At the same time, contacts were established between members of the LPF and the Italian Islamophobic party Lega Nord, led by Umberto Bossi, a member of Prime Minister Berlusconi’s Cabinet at the time. This also gave rise to an Italian translation of the book Fortuyn had written against the Islamisation of European culture.27 Although the members of the Lega Nord greatly admired Fortuyn, the party progressively came to embrace the outspoken critical views of Islam expressed by the emerging Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

All local, national and international efforts to enshrine Fortuyn and his Fortuynists in ‘hard memory’ have failed. This manner of memorialising Fortuyn appears to have been relatively insignificant. The strong influence that Fortuyn exerted temporarily on politics and society was almost entirely attributable to popular support for his ideas. The climax was the commemoration and representation of these ideas via the improvised memorial sites. The dynamic power of the ‘soft memory’ and the performative impact of the sites enabled him to leave a deep post mortem imprint on Dutch politics and administration. Despite this significance and the many initiatives to establish permanent memorials, in the four years that have elapsed since then, the fortuynist movement has disintegrated.28 The appropriation of several highlights from his political programme by the larger political parties at the centre-left and right may be the most important factor for not preserving the momentum of fortuynism since

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28 First, there was the reversal of the electoral victories that the LPF had achieved during the parliamentary elections on 15 May 2002, by participating in the new coalition of the first Balkenende administration, together with the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the liberals (VVD); within three months, the government fell, and the LPF disappeared from the government and became divided and decimated (dwindling from 26 to 8 seats).
the death of its leader.\textsuperscript{29} This was ultimately reflected in the elections for parliament of November 2006 when the LPF was completely wiped out. The new policy and conduct of the Dutch government had become so imbued with Fortuyn’s points of view that the ‘familiar’ image of the open and tolerant Netherlands, such as in the case of aliens’ policy and social security, are no longer recognised abroad (Carle 2006).

Conclusion

While the temporary-improvised memorial sites dedicated to Fortuyn as monuments of mourning on the surface appear perfectly compatible with a broader phenomenon of temporary memorials, I have tried in this contribution to explain that especially the Fortuyn memorials were instrumentalised to articulate broad social discontent. They therefore had a hybrid quality: as monuments of mourning but especially as hearths of resentment and protest. The relatively large number of memorial sites established at politically strategic locations, the broad participation in the memorials and the abundant and harsh criticism set the tone during the days after the murder. These days therefore qualify as a non-violent uprising against the political policy and system, which, over the course of a week, was articulated in an individual and public performative manner.

The protest and resentment have in the first place become powerfully public expressions through the medley of texts and objects that composed the memorials. Analysing these memorials from a performance perspective and regarding the apparently static enactment of the improvised memorials as a performative event in public space, makes clear that the memorials could have generated a far greater effect across a broader range. The interaction of the compilers of the messages with the memorials, with the public and a massive media disclosure enhanced the semiotic nature of these memorials. This helped them evolve into ‘democratic’ instruments, which, as arenas of political resentment, defied and eroded the established power structures. Their impact was manifested a week later during the parliamentary elections, when massive numbers voted for a dead party leader. As opinionated narratives, the protest messages were expressions from the ‘orphaned’ citizens aiming to broadcast and record the memory of or, more correctly, the political perspectives of Fortuyn. One woman wrote: ‘you are the saviour of the Netherlands, because you rebelled.’ Not only did he rebel, but the performative impact of his death mobilised an additional 1.6 million citizens to protest.

The establishment and performative impact of these memorials demonstrated that support for the protest was far broader within Dutch society than Fortuyn’s direct following might have suggested. The memorials came to resemble informal but broadly-based petitions, which, thanks in part to intense media exposure, ultimately exerted an influence on politicians and government policy that was impossible to

\textsuperscript{29} See e.g. an initial mention in ‘Fortuynism without Fortuyn,’ in: The Economist, 28 November 2002.
ignore. The anger targeted government and administration but was based on both deeply rooted and newly mobilised discontent with a personal perception that the Dutch administrative entities lacked the structure and power to deal with problems concerning immigration, integration, safety etc.

Both the temporary-improvised and the permanent monuments served mainly to continue embodying the political weight of Fortuyn’s movement as a cohesive element, with the underlying hope of eliminating existential problems or threats in the lives of his followers or, in other words, to continue supporting a fortuynist policy. In this respect the temporary memorials – Etkind’s dynamic-performative ‘soft memory’ – ultimately proved far more important and influential than did the permanent monuments. The mediating role of the memorial sites in the interaction between messengers, public and media has been decisive for the dynamics and course of the political revolt realised by the performative memorials. The ‘hard’ monuments established since 2002 to commemorate the politician Pim Fortuyn, however, represent a diversity of social, cultural and political discourses and conflicts that have materialised in Dutch politics and society since then. The competitive diversity within which these commemorations and memorials were introduced heralded the beginning of the end of the fortuynism that effectively drove itself out of the political order in 2006, five years after it appeared. In the meantime, its role has been appropriated by the ‘traditional’ political system.

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