Violence and Empathy: National Museums and the Spectacle of Society

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This article compares the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., with the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa. While dealing with different historical contexts, both institutions seek to embody models of tolerant national citizenship in their visitors by immersing them in narratives of collective violence, death and ultimately, national rebirth. I examine these museums in relation to the emergence of similar institutions around the world, and argue that they reinvent pedagogies of citizenship and consumption that can be traced to spaces of public exhibition and display in the nineteenth century. I suggest that the practices of empathetic identification employed by both institutions can be located within contemporary practices of consumer spectacle and prosthetic self-fashioning, and are intertwined with the rise of affective labor and global economies of desire. In crafting idealized models of citizenship based on the simulated experience of national violence, both museums attempt to contain politically charged histories in a museological past, where they can be curated, commemorated and instrumentally separated from the violence of nation-state in the global present.

It is now widely accepted that national institutions such as museums, capitol complexes, government buildings, stadiums, airports, and even highway systems are important spaces for the invention of national histories, identities and traditions. The national museum (whether of science, art or history) has typically been conceived as both a container of important objects and as a didactic object in itself, one that works to inscribe and reproduce national history through its very form. The museums of the nineteenth century were typically organized around a model of progressive history. The agents of history (bourgeois white males) were shown engaging in heroic struggles as the development of the nation-state unfolded through a linear construction of historical time.

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Heroes.” A growing number of similar institutions have opened in other countries, including the Museum of Memory in Argentina, the DMZ Museum between North and South Korea, The Jewish Museum in Berlin, and various proposals for Apartheid museums in South Africa, including a building in Johannesburg that I will discuss in greater detail here.

These experiential environments are aesthetic phantasmagoria: they fuse architecture, film, textual narratives, artifacts, and re-creations of buildings and landscapes into elaborate technologies of citizenship. However, their most distinctive feature is often the intimate linkage they forge between memory and affect by displaying the emotional experiences of others. They construct a sensuous engagement with the past, one that, in its appeals to embodied experience and emotion, attempts to supplement (and in some cases even superecede) forms of rational cognition that have historically structured the national museum. A museological prosthesis solicits the visitor’s identification with a collective subject of history that undergoes escalating experiences of pain and suffering, and is ultimately reborn as a model citizen. These “fatal attractions” are organized around the therapeutic administration of simulated trauma. The museum constitutes diverse visitors as a collective subject of traumatic history, and then provides a way to overcome, confront, or “work through” the conditions of their subjection through ritualized acts of empathy and commemoration.

How can we explain the emergence and proliferation of these emotional theaters of collective memory? Why have they emerged with such force at this point in time, and where do they fit in the history of the national museum? Inasmuch as museums of national trauma involve critical reflection on the historical project of the nation-state, they are consistent with one of the central characteristics of what has been described as “dark tourism”: a tendency to produce anxiety and doubt about the project of modernity by revealing the failure of its inner workings. The national museums I will discuss here unsettle assumptions about the capacity of the nation-state to guarantee progress, only to reinstate such assumptions on different terms.

In this discussion I concentrate on how contemporary models of national citizenship are defined and implemented from the standpoint of curatorial approaches, visual and textual exhibition narratives, and architectural design. I will not deal with ethnographic analysis of how visitors respond to, and even transform the intended meanings of the museums. While the latter analysis is important, it by no means replaces the need to understand how museums conceptualize and institute discourses of national identity. The mapping of “technologies of citizenship” constitutes an important first step in a larger study that would include ethnographic analysis along with other analytical strategies.

MUSEUMS AND CITIZENSHIP

The relationship between museums and citizenship has been studied at length in recent scholarship. One of the most seminal accounts is by the historian and cultural critic Tony Bennett, as presented in his book The Birth of the Museum. This by now well-known account is relevant for
my purposes here because it argues that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century museums played a pivotal role in defining the terms and conditions of an emergent civil society. Overall, the institutions of display Bennett discusses — which range from museums and libraries to department stores, fairs, and world expositions — came to comprise an “exhibitionary complex.”

A key means of creating this new culture of exhibition was to transfer objects once held in enclosed and private domains to public arenas, where they could inscribe and broadcast messages of power. Bennett argues that the exhibitionary complex was not only concerned with transferring knowledge which had previously been the exclusive property of the sovereign into an expanding public domain. The spaces in which these artifacts were shown also displayed the public to itself, making the museum-goer both a subject and an object of the exhibition. The terms of this visibility granted a new importance to the panorama as an optical system that allowed the individual to perceive him- or herself in relation to an orderly crowd. The exhibitionary spaces Bennett describes permitted the spectator to see, and be seen, in relation to others.

The constitution of a citizenry took place in an era of nation-building, and so the process of forming an orderly, self-regulating public was also a process of forming a collective national body. As Bennett noted, detailed studies of nineteenth-century expositions consistently foreground the ideological economy of their organizing principles, transforming displays of materials and industrial processes into art objects and material signifiers of progress, where progress was considered a collective national achievement, with “capital as the great co-ordinator.” In this way, power is “subjected by flattery” and placed on the side of the people by affording them a place within its workings. The exhibitionary complex thus defined what might be termed a pedagogy of consumption. At the world’s fairs, workers were transformed into consumers; products were displayed in ways that mystified how they were manufactured and stressed their intended meanings as commodities and the unique powers attributed to them.

Initially it would seem that experiential exhibitions such as the Holocaust Memorial Museum do not fit easily into the history of the universal museum described by Bennett: their narratives are organized around national failures and tragedies; and they construct a path that leads toward the dystopian terminus of the nation-state, rather than an elevated plane of utopian achievements and success. Nor are they primarily concerned with displaying the collective genius of the nation-state through the progressive development of an enlightened rationality. Instead, they spectacularize the failures of that rationality. Yet the differences between these models are not quite so stark. While taking the nation-state down to a point of near annihilation, the apocalyptic moment creates an opening through which progressive history can begin again. In doing so, these museums ultimately reclaim the nation-state as a vehicle for the realization of collective identity on terms that represent important continuities and differences with the nineteenth-century model.

These buildings form a global network of institutions. As such, they articulate what Frederick Buell has called “nationalist postnationalism” — not only in relation to the idealized identities they seek to constitute, but in the processes they employ to do so. Buell has argued that a new breed of cultural nationalism has emerged, to meet the demands of “postnational circumstances.” Both museums embody this paradox. On the one hand, they seek to teach the lessons of national history through the selective reenactment of often horrifying national events. On the other, they are designed, constructed and operated through a range of processes that exceed the scale of the nation-state: they are bound together by financial and professional networks, flows of visitors, geopolitical events, and — as I will suggest below — a shared system of narrative representation that employs the Holocaust as its structuring metaphor. Both museums draw upon, and help define a global space of national imagining.

My discussion begins with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C., which has, by virtue of its size, prominence and wealth, become a global collection point, research center, and tourist destination for everything that is associated with the Holocaust. As its name suggests, USHMM brings the function of the museum and memorial together in a mutually constitutive relationship, one that is necessitated by the precipitous decline in Holocaust survivors. Most estimates suggest that less than a quarter of the original population of 100,000 camp survivors remain alive. The USHMM is distinctive because it seeks to keep memories of the Holocaust active through an array of institutional practices that mimetically re(pro)duce an event in order to transfer the memory of it to visitors, who are then encouraged to memorialize what they have experienced. The USHMM is a particularly apt example for this discussion because of the disjunction between memory and location it defines: it seeks to instill memories of an event that did not take place on U.S. soil, in order to construct an idealized model of U.S. citizenship. The Holocaust is thus employed as an instrumental narrative, a teaching tool and a therapeutic exemplar — something that is outside the direct experience of most visitors, but nevertheless assumed to be of fundamental relevance to the project of constructing appropriate models of national citizenship.

It is important to note that while the vast majority of visitors to the USHMM have not had direct experience of the Holocaust (either as operators, survivors or liberators of the camps), given the ubiquity of Holocaust representations and the varied use of the term itself, it is likely that most will have encountered Holocaust representations prior to visiting the museum. These mediated memories not only help to shape how visitors understand what is presented to them in the museum; they also shape the texture of what is presented
as objective testimony. As has been demonstrated in the
Holocaust literature, testimony by survivors varies over time
as different signifying systems influence how events are
recalled, as the temporal distance between the witness and
the event increases, and as the context of retelling shifts.24
Such changes underscore the status of memories as relation-
al and intrinsically unstable. They are shaped by the situa-
tions in which they are remembered.

The second museum I discuss is the Apartheid Museum
in Johannesburg, South Africa, whose implicit goal is to cele-
brate the death and rebirth of the South African nation-state.
The Holocaust is not mentioned explicitly in the museum
narrative itself, though the design of both the building and
the exhibition was inspired in part by the USHMM.25 The
Apartheid Museum shares with the USHMM an investment
in popular media. In this case, the museum narrative is con-
structed in large measure out of international news
reportage, documentary photography, and film footage, much
of which had previously been banned in South Africa. For
this reason, many visitors from within South Africa may be
far less familiar with the images and testimony presented
than those who visit the USHMM.26

The instability of memory poses one of the principal
challenges faced by both institutions examined here. Each
seeks to stabilize both sides of the exhibitionary transaction,
by surrounding testimony with the aura of authenticity (and
hence objectivity) through the use of film, photographs, and
oral history, and by immersing the viewer in sensory-rich
environments that encourage the process of self-abstraction
to take place. The powerful mechanisms devised to solicit
the visitor’s identification with presented narratives are there-
fore at least partly defined in relation to the diversity of back-
grounds and experiences of their audiences. Both museums
impart knowledge through the simulated experience of the
suffering of others. The idea is that the museum experience
“feels” real enough to be remembered as such; this is how
the museum narrative hopes to align diverse constituencies
of visitors with a singular Jewish or nonwhite subject of his-

tory, whose pain they are intended to feel, and whose suffer-
ing they are meant to share. These intentions transform the
exhibition interior into a continuously modulating sensory
experience that passes through archetypal stages of decline,
death and rebirth.

The attempt to symbolically appropriate, traumatize and
reassemble populations through identification with violent nar-
ratives of death and transcendental rebirth can be understood
in relation to the contradictory position occupied by the national
museum in an increasingly interdependent, if conflict-ridden
world. At a time when diverse, sometimes opposed popula-
tions define the nation-state, the problems of managing differ-
cence from within in order to maintain the coherence of the
national community (and allegiance to national values) have
become paramount. Spectacular representations of the agony
of specific groups become a means to overcome the historical
basis of difference — or at the very least, to reformulate it on
starkly different terms. Once cultural difference is identified
with pain and suffering, it is placed in the past, where it can be
memorialized, remembered, and operated upon as something
separate from the present.

Both of these museums contain a vast number of images
and artifacts, but I will only deal here with the two significant
(and similar) moments in each narrative. The first occurs after
a long downward spiral through history, when state-orchestrat-
ed violence reaches its peak. The second occurs at the end of
the exhibition, when both narratives culminate on a plateau of
memory, framed by the nation-state of the present. These two
moments are significant in the aesthetic program of the muse-

um because they are the points of transition; they reveal the
process of empathetic identification at its point of greatest exert-
ion, and in doing so, show its limits most fully.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIES AND THE SUBJECT OF
HISTORY

The design of the USHMM and its permanent exhibi-
tion has been discussed at length elsewhere, including an
article I co-authored with Abidin Kusno after the building
opened.27 Here, I would like to build upon these earlier argu-
ments, stressing the way the permanent exhibition and its
enframing architecture operate together to define an ideal-
ized model of national citizenship.

The idea of a locating a Holocaust institution adjacent to
the Washington Mall emerged during the Carter administra-
tion, following its controversial decision to sell a fleet of F-15
fighter jets to Saudi Arabia in 1978.28 Strong reaction to the
sale by domestic Jewish groups ultimately led President
Carter to establish a Commission on the Holocaust, with Eli
Weisel as its chair. The commission prepared a report that
called for a permanent museum dedicated to the Holocaust
in Washington. The USHMM was built on one of the last
available pieces of Federal land adjacent to the Mall, and was
constructed with private funds. Like all the other buildings
in the Capitol district, this one was subject to a series of reg-
ulations governing the height, massing and materials of new
buildings. The architect, James Ingo Freed, of Pei Cobb
Freed and Partners, turned these requirements to an advan-
tage by investing the main facade with brooding references
that evoke the stripped-down classicism of Fascist Germany.29

The permanent exhibition is located on the upper floors
of the museum, and is entered through the Hall of Witness,
a large entry area that attempts to evoke Nazi landscapes of
deporation and terror using twisted architectural geometries
and prison-like windows and steel gates. The path of visitors
through the museum is determined in advance; they must
travel by elevator to the fourth floor, then descend sequential-
lly to the third and second floors. Each floor encompasses a
specific historical phase: the fourth floor examines the rise of
Nazism; the third focuses on the Holocaust itself; and the second examines its aftermath.

On the first floor all arriving visitors are given a mock passport of a Holocaust victim. They are then ushered into large, stainless-steel elevators reminiscent of railway boxcars. The passport is intended to foster identification with the narrative and personalize its rendering of history. Once inside, a film made by troops approaching a concentration camp appears on a video monitor. The voice of a soldier recalls the scene, and asks in disbelief how the horror of the camps could have happened. As the video concludes, the doors open at the fourth floor to reveal a large backlit image of an open pit filled with dead bodies, with soldiers standing on the other side if it. A panel to the left of the photograph explains that it was taken by a U.S. soldier (fig. 1).

The entry sequence is designed to allow visitors to occupy the position behind the soldier’s camera. In doing so, the strategy attempts to construct an equivalence between the contemporary visitor, who may have no direct understanding of the Holocaust, and a typical soldier who may have approached the camps at the end of World War II without foreknowledge of their existence. This strategy has also become an important means of gaining access to the public imagination elsewhere in the museum. References to soldiers and the military have recently been extended well beyond the permanent exhibition. For example, banners of the military units that liberated the camps now line the building’s main corridors, and it is possible to purchase the crests of these battalions from a mobile gift cart on the second floor (fig. 2).

The Education Center also features an exhibition called “Witness to History: Documenting the Path of American Liberators” which tells the story of how military photographers and filmmakers represented the liberation of concentration camps (fig. 3).

The U.S. military is identified with the soldier as photographer, who in turn becomes the vision and the voice through which significant moments in the exhibition are represented. A parallel chain of associations is constructed in relation to the highly differentiated Jewish communities that were destroyed by the Holocaust. The generalizing force of the narrative turns many Jewish communities into a single, collective Jewish body that is attacked, tortured, murdered, and ultimately reborn as a survivor and witness. Three metonymic figures — the soldier/museum as witness, the Jewish victim, and the Holocaust survivor — thus provide experiential points of reference for the narrative. Each position is a reduction of the many to the one — a pure archetype formed out of the subtractive distillation of diverse parts to create a single whole. The narrative oscillates between these three positions as it unfolds, but it is on the third and second floors, where the story is concerned with the implementation and aftermath of the Holocaust — and hence the positions of the victim and survivor — that I want to examine it in more detail.

The third floor, dealing with the Holocaust, is structured quite differently from the floor above, which describes the rise of Nazism. While the fourth-floor display is dominated by extensive written texts, and requires visitors to move slowly through a linear exposition of history, on the third floor visitors may move freely between displays in the setting of a mock concentration camp. The scene is entered by passing through one of the boxcars used to transport victims to the camps. After this, a passage leads through a “genuine replica” of a concentration camp gate complete with artificially induced rust. Beyond this is a flattened image of the train station at Auschwitz, defined by a black-and-white photo
mural of the station platform. A long gray bench placed in front of the image is turned to face the entrance to a portion of a camp barracks. The doors to the barracks are open, and just beyond, a low circular wall contains a group of video monitors that are angled upwards (fig. 4). The vaporous blue light they cast draws a crowd. The monitors show archival footage of Nazi medical experiments and are difficult (not) to watch. A passage leads from the barracks toward a reconstruction of a crematorium furnace.

The bodies that figure so prominently in earlier stages of the exhibition are now gone; it is a landscape of the absent presence. An empty boxcar, an empty train station, empty bunks, piles of victims’ shoes: these are all powerful icons of loss. Whether standing beside an empty bunk or looking at indistinguishable figures being pushed into a pit, the reduction of historical Jewish subjects to a sentient outline creates an opening for displacement and self-projection.

After passing a crematorium furnace, the exhibition route then leads downward to the second floor and the final part of the display called “Last Chapter.” This retells the past we have just “experienced,” but represents it through the formal and informal testimony of survivors since World War II. When viewed as a whole, this part of the exhibition offers a catalogue of the different ways in which Holocaust survivors have become witnesses — whether through personal recollections given as a part of a massive attempt to document the words of every living survivor (funded by Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation34), or through the televised legal testimony made in courtrooms of international law.

These different forms of testimony are displayed in a chronological order that is socially symbolic. Near the beginning of the display, a bank of televisions offer continuous black-and-white replays of Nazi trials, beginning with Nuremberg and concluding with those initiated by Simon Wiesenthal, the “Nazi hunter” who later became the inspirational force behind the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. These constitute a metaphorical courtroom space, where the visitor is placed in the position of a witness. At the other end of the room, another kind of testimony is given: the full-color, emotional counterpart to the courtroom shown on the little TV screens. Here images of the survivors, many of whom are filmed in their homes, float on a screen that is framed by walls of Jerusalem stone (fig. 5). They tell stories of subterfuge and heroism within the camps, of escape, of being hidden and saved by others. There are many halting moments when words dissolve into unrestrained displays of emotion.

The space between the full-color present and the black-and-white past defines two contrasting moments in the post-war history of Holocaust survivors. The change in the status of the survivor occurs alongside a change in the context of testi-
mony, from the courtroom to the amphitheater at the end of the exhibition. In making the shift, the museum foregrounds what literary critic Shoshana Felman has called the juridical unconscious. For Felman, trauma is the “unconscious” of the trial, the pain and suffering that is there but cannot be translated into legal terms, and cannot be arbitrated through legal processes. Felman suggests that the Nuremberg trials were the first to use the material resources of the law to achieve a symbolic exit from the injuries of traumatic history.

Since then, highly public trials, often broadcast around the world, have attempted to bring closure to collective trauma through the conceptual resources and practical tools of the law, placing trials and trauma in a process of continuous articulation that has transformed both legal structures and the representation of collective trauma. In staging the historical transition of the juridical unconscious the USHMM leads us to a utopian point. By the end of the exhibition, the nation-state has been resurrected, but now is a silent background, a static and timeless frame in which emotional testimony of past injustices take place. In other words, the state becomes a framework for the symbolic ventilation of emotion as an index of citizenship. This interrelationship is fixed in a final transition that takes place just beyond the exit from the permanent exhibition.

The Hall of Remembrance follows the conclusion of the permanent exhibition. It is a hexagonal room clad in the same stone used on the main facade — the limestone of official Washington and its public monuments. The slot windows at the corners of this interior space reconnect it to the other memorial spaces on the Mall, effectively turning it inside out. The names of concentration camps, grouped according to geographical regions, are carved into black granite panels. Rows of votive candles line the space below the inscription. While the amphitheater of testimony contains images of survivors describing their experiences, the Hall of Remembrance is silent by comparison. It is dedicated to interiorized acts of commemoration — private recollections that occur in the allegorical space of the nation-state invoked by the “exterior monumentality” of stone walls and deliberate framing of Mall vistas. Visitors are left alone with their memories, whatever they may be. The nation-state is symbolically reconstructed as a mute frame that enables a multitude of private unarticulated actions in public. The ideal citizen is...
both a victim and witness. The two terms are now placed in a temporal order in which the victim is that part of a past remembered in the safe enclosure of the national present.40

PRODUCTIVE INSCRIPTIONS

In his book *Present Pasts*, the cultural critic Andreas Huyssen has argued that Holocaust discourse has been appropriated and reworked to represent other forms of national trauma.41 He has called these reworkings “productive inscriptions,” because the Holocaust is understood as something that allows new meanings to become part of public memory. I would like next to examine this process of (re)inscription, through the case of the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In its early stages of development, plans for the Apartheid Museum were guided by Solly Krok, a prominent South African for whom the project was part of a larger deal with the government of national liberation in 1994. Krok made his fortune selling toxic skin-lightening cream during the height of influx controls (the cream is now banned in South Africa, but sold legally in the United States).42 Krok had initially sought permission to establish a casino within a theme park operated by his conglomerate in suburban Johannesburg. Permission was only granted with the proviso that this conglomerate would finance the design, construction, and two years of operation of a museum of national significance. Krok initially envisaged a museum that would present the history of South Africa in broad terms, potentially reaching back thousands of years to construct a deep history of pan-African culture.43 However, a visit to Washington in the early stages of the design process convinced him to shift the topic of the museum to address the rise and fall of Apartheid through “something emotional and theatrical” that would “complete the history of South Africa.”44

The museum that resulted from this process has now established a dialogue with the casino and theme park across the street (fig. 7). The casino represents a parallel history of Apartheid, told through nostalgic references that range from tinted photos and reproductions of furniture from the colonial period to relics of a “white-only” restaurant from the now-defunct Carlton Hotel, which have been preserved in a luxury dining room for casino patrons (figs. 8, 9).45 It is an instance of Bennett’s exhibitionary complex writ large, where two themed environments organized around different registers of emotion (nostalgia and suffering) and cultural codes (low and high) are joined together into one contradictory narrative by the passage of visitors between the two sites.

The exterior of the Apartheid Museum employs the same strategies of ironic mimesis as the USHMM, but in different terms. Where the USHMM transforms Washington’s official Classicism into something that evokes Nazi Germany, the Apartheid Museum adopts a form that is redolent of an urban prison, containing terrible secrets that are now on public display (fig. 10).46 The building is a windowless, walled enclosure made of industrial brickwork, stone, and poured concrete, complete with its own simulation of the precolonial landscape. Ironically, this inward turn also replicates the post-Apartheid “gating” of Johannesburg as a whole.47

Once inside the museum, views are framed that randomly cast visitors as prisoners (fig. 11). However, rather
than entering a faux box car/elevator to travel to the main exhibition, here the visitor passes through a large gate, purchases a ticket, and is arbitrarily classified as “white” or “nonwhite.” Two entry doors corresponding to the classifications then lead into the exhibition area. Once inside, the visitor passes along a corridor lined with rows of pass books that frame the view toward a life-size image of a racial classification committee, photographed behind an imposing table (figs. 12, 13).

Like the USHMM, the Apartheid Museum presents a story of oppression “from above.” The administration of Apartheid policies is represented as an intensifying system of regulations and controls, and as in the USHMM, the narrative structure is conveyed in the three parts: decline, death and

**Figure 8.** (left) A photograph of the lobby of the first Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg (built in 1906), on permanent display in the Gold Reef City Casino, in Johannesburg. The interior of the casino displays pictures chronicling the history of South Africa.

**Figure 9.** (right) The Three Ships Restaurant inside the Gold Reef City Casino. The restaurant is a reconstruction of a restaurant by the same name previously located in the second Carlton Hotel, built in 1973 in central Johannesburg after the first was demolished in 1963. The reconstructed space uses plates and flatware from the original hotel. The second Carlton Hotel closed in December 1997, after the migration of leading businesses from the center to the suburbs.

**Figure 10.** Entrance court at the Apartheid Museum. Visitors obtain tickets here and pass though a prison-like gate. In the distance, a concrete cube contains the final stage of the exhibition narrative, a memorial to the ideals of democracy after the formal end of Apartheid.

**Figure 11.** Imprisoned visitors at the Apartheid Museum. The museum is designed to evoke a prison. Views within the exhibition make visitors part of the display, enframing them as both captors and prisoners.
rebirth. In this case the “Rise of Apartheid” starts in the colonial period of the nineteenth century, when the practices of spatial segregation and the discourse of white supremacy were institutionalized. After the ascent of the National Party in 1948 and its subsequent consolidation of power, the story is told primarily through the actions of the state, and the embodied targets of those actions become an index of its brutality. Although the breadth of racial classifications is ambiguously captured by the use of the term “nonwhite,” the aesthetic systems of the museum work to position the narrative as an opposition between black and white, reducing the complexity of racial difference within the larger “nonwhite” category in the same way that difference between Jewish cultures are blurred at the USHMM. The extensive use of black-and-white documentary photography reinforces a dichotomous rendering of history — one that focuses to a great extent on the African National Congress and its leadership as metonyms for the entire “nonwhite” population. White is identified with the Afrikaner state and its instruments of oppression, and the collective image of whiteness becomes interchangeable with the policies and covert tactics with which it gained and held state power.

Black, as a monolithic category for everything that is “not white,” is increasingly identified with the embodied experience of oppression, and is represented in stark terms through enlarged representations of humiliation, deprivation, and later torture and death. Although there is mention of the role that colored, Indian, and mixed-race populations played in the history of Apartheid, these groups gradually disappear from the narrative, and an undifferentiated black population becomes the subject of history. The construction of a unitary collective body out of a diversity of political histories and identities is made possible by gradually stripping away the social and historical specificity of blackness until it dissolves into a transparent symbol of universal humanity. The most powerful moments of semiotic conversion are also the most solitary; thus, the growing abstraction of blackness is mirrored by the increasing spatial and acoustic isolation of the visitor.

Processes of self-abstraction converge in three climatic scenes that follow one after the other mid-way through the exhibition. These comprise the conceptual turning point in the story line, where the collective victim achieves a unitary status, is murdered, and is then reborn as a subject of mass resistance. The first scene in this sequence is of diamond mine workers stripped for a body search. The photograph is from Ernest Cole’s 1968 book *House of Bondage*. When first encountered, the image is perceived separately from both its textual (and wider historical) context. It is enlarged to life size, and viewed at a distance, from within a darkened passageway. The visitor is thus placed in a space of double indemnity, where one looks through the museum’s keyhole (the passageway) in order to look through the photographer’s keyhole (the viewfinder). The control of the searched by the searcher represented in the photograph is repeated in the space of the museum, magnifying the tension in the original scene. The anonymous figures in the image are arranged in a repetitive sequence with their faces turned to the wall.

The process of stripping down continues in a subsequent tableau, an execution chamber where one noose hangs for every political prisoner executed under Apartheid (fig.14). A narrow entry gate to this section of the exhibit requires each visitor to enter alone, symbolically passing through the hanging bodies of the (transparent) dead before leaving the room. Inside, the ropes are clean and white, and the lighting is carefully adjusted to cast shadows through the nooses. There are no accounts nearby to help distinguish the people signified by
the nooses; rather, they merge together into a single, tangled pattern. The long shadows of visitors fill the shadows of the nooses as they move, one by one, through the space. The scene is reminiscent of a number of moments at the USHMM, but most closely recalls a point where visitors pass underneath a three-story chimney-like void. That space is also covered with human shadows — nameless photographs of all the residents of a single village exterminated by the Nazis (fig. 15).

The execution chamber at the Apartheid Museum is followed (not preceded) by the third important scene. This is a display of three solitary confinement cells, whose doors are left ajar — as if to underscore the reversal from death to life.

Following these three central images, the remaining portions of the exhibit embody the stark opposition of black and white populations in increasingly violent encounters of mass mobilization (fig. 16). The exhibition route passes through representations of mass uprisings that followed the Afrikaner-only language policies of 1970, the imposition of an extended state of emergency, and the growing international isolation of South Africa in the 1980s. In this sense, the Apartheid Museum’s stress on resistance throughout the narrative helps to differentiate it from the USHMM. The seeds of an alternative idea of the nation-state are present in the story from the very beginning. Central figures in the armed struggle are shown sabotaging government installations, organizing marches and walkouts, and moving between secret locations. At the end of the exhibition the characters are reversed, and the visible figures of resistance become the leaders of the reformed nation-state — ones who are, it should be added, almost exclusively male.

The narrative draws to a close with a final transition, one which, as at the USHMM, defines the passage from a black-and-white past into a full-color present. Amidst smiling pictures of a national family sit clusters of voting booths that equate democracy with the act of casting a vote. The final stop on the journey magnifies this solitary moment, as the exhibition terminates in a concrete cube pulled away from the main building and surrounded by water. Inside resides a second cube made of glass, whose permanently sealed walls contain unopened copies of the new constitution (fig. 17). A bridge bisects the glass cube and permits only single-file movement, each visitor separated from the next on a short march to the present. It is an image of nation in which collective agency is confined in the past, where it can be remembered, curated, and reflected upon — but not
mobilized in the present. Like the memorial chamber at the USHMM, it represents the nation as a mute container that is simply there, outside culture and history.

The museum constructs a model of citizenship not only through what it chooses to display, but also through the social process it sets in motion in order to do so. The current curator has come to the Apartheid Museum after working for the City of Johannesburg for 21 years. The museum is as much an allegory for the presumed benefits of privatized and “unbundled” public services in the present, as it is a story of past wrongs made right. There is inevitable competition between the museum and the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs. Both seek, in different ways, to be the point of entry for an overarching space of national representation, in which all other museums will, it is imagined, eventually fit. In this respect the Apartheid Museum also recalls the USHMM, which has made its mark in part by becoming a global headquarters for Holocaust remembrance. The Apartheid Museum is currently being marketed to international tour operators as a “gateway” to South Africa’s emerging heritage industry. And efforts are underway to make it a headquarters for training primary- and secondary-school teachers in a new curriculum in national history. Though the museum is metaphorically buried in the ground, it seeks to control the air space of national memory.

The model of political rationality the museum constructs converges with the national policy toward the past. Recently, controversy has surrounded attempts by a group of Apartheid survivors to seek reparations from multinationals that benefited from the system. The Mbeki government initially opposed the plan, arguing that it conflicted with the larger “national purpose” of placing Apartheid in the past — viewed as a necessary first step toward attracting global investment. Though a process was later put in place that allowed the claims to proceed on a limited basis, the struggle illustrated the instrumental value of memorials to state terror in the global present. A stable collective personality is a necessary attribute of the global self-fashioning of nation, and therefore it is not just Apartheid, but the fractured political agency that dismantled it that must be collected together, symbolically compartmentalized and deactivated. It is a project to which the Apartheid Museum contributes through a narrative of universal history, in which mass agency is converted into silent, individual voluntarism, and contained in a timeless volume.

**SPACES OF EMOTIONAL CONSUMPTION**

The two museums examined here constitute subject-forming mechanisms: each is comprised of narrative structures, a set of aesthetic practices, an architecture. Though they deal with very different historical conditions, the fate of the idealized model of citizenship they represent is similar. In both cases, the stories of decline, death, and rebirth of the subject of history and the nation-state terminate in a present where identity is defined through (simulated) experiences of (past) national traumas. Historical experience reaches its climax as emotional experience, which is rendered as a symptom of larger spiritual themes (evil and good, loss and redemption, pain and joy). Both museums suggest that if the layers of historical trauma are peeled away, one will be left with the shimmering, but ghostly essence that is common to all. It is precisely the idea of immanent universality that enables the Holocaust narrative to be treated as a portable metaphor for the human condition, and that allows it to be used to represent historical trauma in other national contexts.
Both the museums operate through representations of the absent presence, where the collective subject of history ultimately becomes a transparent outline defined by differing intensities of human emotion. In doing so, the museums try to replicate historical experience on terms that will make it accessible to as diverse an audience as possible. The subject of history is gradually revealed as a generalized image of “humanity,” while the viewer’s sense of self is simultaneously diminished through immersion in darkened interiors and bombardment with sounds and images. In this way, both institutions attempt bring the subject and object of history into alignment by attempting to dissolve both into sublime emptiness.

In both cases, the representational process negates the social and historical condition of the bodies it seeks to describe, a paradox that is central to the operation of empathy. As Saidiya Hartman has noted, empathy seeks to counteract callousness to the suffering of others by positioning the body of the spectator in place of the body of the victim.54 The goal is to make suffering visible and intelligible; yet in making the other’s suffering one’s own, that suffering is occluded by the other’s erasure. The ambivalent character of empathy can thus be located in the displacement of otherness that occurs as we feel ourselves into those we imagine as ourselves. We project ourselves into the position of the victim on our terms, and in doing so we convert the other to the same.55

The pathological rhetoric that surrounds both museums underscores the link each forges between consumption and citizenship. These museums are not only spectacular theaters of prosthetic memory; they are also spaces in which emotional experience becomes the immaterial object to be consumed. As with the manufactured goods displayed in the nineteenth-century exhibitions, the pain and suffering on display is a product of machinery whose inner workings are hidden from view and mystified. Just as nineteenth-century expositions sought to initiate and maintain the ideological separation of production and consumption, so too do museums of the violent national past separate the consumption of historical suffering and pain from the specific bodies in which it was experienced.56 They disappear through the process of empathy, a mode of acquisition that structures the reception of affect. The traumatic commodity is relocated in a mythic narrative of national progress that culminates in the eternal present of the nation-state. Emotional experience thus becomes the object(ive) of identity, something to be remembered and memorialized.

However, the act of emotional consumption cannot be understood outside the moralizing narrative that makes it desirable, even necessary. It is the promise that the consumption of affect will lead to a more tolerant self that sustains the entire process, makes the simulated violence endurable, vicariousness seem noble, and the negation of others an urgent necessity. Indeed, both museums ultimately insist on the simple claim that the consumption of the museum experience will lead, in and of itself, to the production of a more tolerant citizen. Yet the meaning of tolerance in both cases is vague and ambiguous at best, and expressed in the most general of terms. This is because tolerance is presumed to be the consequence of consumption; it is not something produced through social struggle or institutional change, but rather is the outcome of witnessing its simulated reverse.

If the nineteenth-century exhibitions worked to transform industrial workers into consumers by surrounding commodities with fantastic meanings, then the two museums examined here take this process to another, more ethereal level, by displacing attention from the commodity to the economies of desire that precede its existence.57 The pedagogy of national citizenship reaches an immaterial stage: the physical commodity vanishes and emotion become the object of production and consumption.

As various critics of contemporary consumption practices have noted, in contexts where those who can consume already have what they need, the only way forward is through the production of desire. Commodities — from shoes to buildings — are now surrounded with elaborate emotional landscapes that become the primary object of consumption.58 The product is a tertiary support for the culture of the brand, which does not simply reflect desire, but interactively produces it. In this respect, the museum of emotional consumption may be understood as the symbolic flagship of economies that are being restructured around services and the rise of “immaterial labor,” or work in which caring and the transmission of emotion are the main products.59

Both the USHMM and the Apartheid Museum participate in this broader pedagogy of citizenship, while defining and promoting heritage industries related to their core themes. The USHMM is widely acknowledged as a global center for Holocaust studies, which like all areas of academic research, is embedded in, and productive of, larger economic processes. It is also an economic force in itself, not only through the busy gift shop where Holocaust and USHMM memorabilia can be purchased, but through the substantial impact of the museum on tourism to Washington, D.C. The Apartheid Museum, with its privatized administrative structure and its conceptual interconnection with national economic policy, also reflects the constraints and possibilities of post-Apartheid economic development. This is underscored by its location within a theme park where the gold mine, once the primary (but now depleted) site of production in Johannesburg’s urban economy, is transformed into a spectacular site of consumption. In both cases, apocalyptic narratives of national history represent both the endgame of consumption and its precarious possibilities as a strategy for national growth in a global context.

Inasmuch as both institutions work to separate the past from the present, both constitute models of collective self-identity that are ahistorical. The temporal boundaries they erect mean that, for example, it is possible to represent Israel as a homeland for survivors of the Holocaust without examin-
ing the wider context of Middle East politics and the struggles over Palestine. Likewise, the scenes of a great, multicultural family embraced by Nelson Mandela at the conclusion of the Apartheid Museum displace understanding of how the dynamics of structural racism continue in the so-called post-Apartheid present. In both cases, experiential history is offered as a way through to a timeless, universal humanity, a precondition for a model of national citizenship that seeks to transcend even the global.

POSTSCRIPT: MOURNING OF THE ETERNAL PRESENT

It’s “mourning in America,” to play on the famous slogan that helped secure Ronald Reagan’s second presidential election victory in 1984. I am standing at the edge of where the World Trade Center complex once stood. It is now a vast construction site, visible through a wire mesh fence. The enclosure acts as a support for a series of illustrated panels that tell the story of New York’s history from the nineteenth century to the present. The narrative describes the city’s history as involving an irrepressible rise from setbacks and disasters, one that now includes 9/11 (fig. 18). The crowd move slowly from panel to panel, while some stop to photograph the crucifix made of rusting steel sections from the fallen towers that stands on the site. The panels describe a narrative of progressive history, in which each disaster is followed by struggle and collective triumph.

Descending into the temporary PATH urban rail terminal at one end of the site (a simple shed-like building that will be removed as the structures that surround it are completed), commuters are brought down into the original Word Trade Center excavation, almost to its base. From here it is possible to see the crucifix again — and on the other side, the “slurry wall.” But this is only seen by looking through a mesh screen.
that contains uplifting quotations by famous Americans. At one end of the station, new tracks curve toward the temporary platform and stop abruptly, awaiting completion of a new transit terminal designed by Santiago Calatrava.

A large mechanical plant building for the Calatrava structure is slated for construction at the northeastern corner of the memorial park. According to the master plan designed by Daniel Libeskind, building to house two of the much-disputed cultural amenities for the site was also to be located here.64 After a call for proposals, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) selected the tenants: the Drawing Center (a Soho art gallery), and the International Freedom Center (IFC), a new institution that proposed to "explore freedom as a constantly evolving world movement in which America has played a leading role."65 The Norwegian architectural firm Snohetta designed the building to wrap around 40,000 sq. ft. of mechanical equipment with a sequence ramps and voids, while also straddling the platform area of the transit terminal below.

The programming proposed by the IFC can be criticized for its teleological — even imperial — view of history, its abstracted celebration of freedom, and its apparent conflation of free societies with free-market societies.66 The contradictions at the heart of the project were exemplified by the uncertainty over how to end the "Freedom Walk," a linear route describing the progress of freedom through history. When the design was made public, an image of an Iraqi voter was removed from a prominent illustration depicting the conclusion, and replaced with one of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Lyndon Johnson, a fact which did not go unnoticed by the IFC's critics.67

Of greater significance for this discussion, however, was the way in which questions about the IFC became a means to exclude any attempt at historical interpretation from the site, by reasserting the primacy of memorializing "fallen heroes." A small but vocal group of families and friends of 9/11 victims launched a campaign to "take back the memorial." This quickly grew in scale following an article in the Wall Street Journal by Debra Burlingame, the sister of Charles F. "Chic" Burlingame III, pilot of American Airlines flight 77, which was crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11.68 She referred to the plans for the IFC as the "great Ground Zero heist," and criticized it as an inappropriate intrusion of world history and politics onto "sacred ground." Her most stinging criticisms were reserved for the IFC's organizers and advisory board members, whom she described as follows:

The Lower Manhattan Development Corp. is handing over millions of federal dollars and the keys to that building to some of the very same people who consider the post-9/11 provisions of the Patriot Act more dangerous than the terrorists that they were enacted to apprehend — people whose inflammatory claims of a deliberate torture policy at Guantanamo Bay are undermining this country's efforts to foster freedom... 69

Burlingame's position toward "activists and academics" who she claimed were "salivating at holding forth" was amplified in subsequent protests organized by the Take Back the Memorial group. In polarizing rhetoric reminiscent of the Cold War, the programming of the IFC was described "anti-American" and unpatriotic.68 The presence of the Drawing Center was also challenged after it was revealed that it had held an exhibition containing work that was critical of recent U.S. foreign policy.69 The campaign against the memorial continues today with demands to remove it from the underground location established for it through an international design competition, and house it in a redesigned above-ground facility.70

As has been noted elsewhere, the transformation of the site into a battleground of immense, even sacred national importance occurred almost immediately after the attacks. President Bush led the way by referring to 9/11 as an attack on "freedom" and the "American Way of Life," rather than, as was largely the case in the international media, an attack on symbols of U.S. global financial and military power.70 Governor George Pataki of New York (who ultimately retains control over the direction of development on the former World Trade Center site) reiterated this viewpoint, publicly equating the 9/11 memorial project with Pearl Harbor and the beaches of Normandy.71 He entered the fray over the cultural facilities and sided with those who opposed the two institutions. Pataki barred the IFC from the site in July 2005; around the same time, the Drawing Center announced plans to relocate to a building in the renovated Fulton Street Fish Market.72 The World Trade Center Memorial will now extend above ground and occupy a smaller version of the building that was originally intended for the IFC and the Drawing Center.73

The net effect has been not only to eliminate the IFC and the Drawing Center from the site, but also to severely limit the breadth of public discourse. Initial plans called for the IFC and the World Trade Center Memorial to be connected, with the two institutions, respectively acting as the "brain and heart" of the rebuilt World Trade Center.74 The departure of the IFC has turned the memorial (now referred to as a memorial museum) into an ahistorical sequence of "object-survivors" culled from the rubble of the collapsed towers. Massive steel columns, rusting and scarred, a fire truck with its crushed cab and mangled body, and the broadcast antennae from the roof are among the rescued artifacts to be installed as permanent witnesses to the destruction of the towers.75 Indeed, the entire crypt-like building (which includes the slurry wall as a major part of its cavernous interior space) has been cast as an iconic survivor. As Steven M. Davis, one of the architects for the scheme, has stated: "Normally the icon contains the exhibit... . Here the icon is the exhibit."76

These evocations of the dead will be connected by a route that passes by two large voids, each representing the footprint of one of the twin towers. The stripped-down architecture of the memorial museum — a composition of concrete, black granite, natural light from above, and flowing water — is designed to both mirror and help produce a state
of contemplative self-abstraction. The exhibition route spirals downward to bedrock, past images of “everyday life” at the World Trade Center between 1993 and 2001 and displays that document the attacks on 9/11, to culminate with a massive subterranean chamber focused on the slurry wall. Some 9,100 unidentified remains will be kept in an adjacent repository, with a contemplation room nearby, complete with a symbolic vessel open to the sky. As the Senior Vice President for Memorial and Cultural Development at the LMDC has said, “It’s going to be sensual, graphic and very honest.”

In February 2006, the LMDC announced that Alice M. Greenwald, an associate director for museum programs at the USHMM, would become the Director of the World Trade Center Memorial Museum.77 Greenwald began working at the USHMM as a consultant in 1986, and was part of the original design team for its permanent exhibition.78 The influence of the USHMM on the development of the project was apparent even before her appointment, both in the changing conception of the facility as a “memorial museum” and in its presentation of a sequential narrative that climaxes in ghostly encounters with damaged object-survivors.

The World Trade Center Memorial Museum, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Apartheid Museum all represent history as a way through to a discourse of a universal humanity. Yet if these institutions and others like them share strategies of empathy and geopolitical transcendence, the WTC Memorial Museum moves this technology of citizenship to another level. Here the climactic moment of death and rebirth radiates outward from a sentient core to overtake the entire exhibition. Any references to the broader social and historical conditions that may have led to the attacks on 9/11 have been barred from the site as profane violations of the rights of the dead.

Although its advocates argue that this version of collective mourning occupies a sanctified space outside politics, it does so through the political act of placing national history in an eternal present, where it can operate as the unconscious supplement to the very real and terrifying violence of U.S. imperialism.79 As Warwick Tie has noted, in this configuration of sovereign power, “brutality embraces affection.”80 The contested realm of collective, public memory is replaced by an accumulation of private emotions and individual commemorations, with the heroic nation-state constituted as their mute guarantor.81 The memorial museum now under construction at Ground Zero formalizes this psychic economy. Albums and stories of the dead will be gathered together in a library of individual memories, with scarred remnants of the twin towers recast as their somatic backdrop. The dead and their object-survivors are destined to become the guardians of the silence that now engulfs the site.

REFERENCE NOTES

I would like to thank Katerina Ruedi Ray, Lesley Lokko, and Anna Williams for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.


2. See the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience 2003 Conference Report, p.2. At present, the coalition includes thirteen sites: The District Six Museum (South Africa); Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (U.S.A.); National Civil Rights Museum (U.S.A.); Gulag Museum at Perm-36 (Russia); Japanese American National Museum (U.S.A.); Liberation War Museum (Bangladesh); Lower East Side Tenement Museum (U.S.A.); Terezin Museum (Czech Republic); Women’s Rights National Historic Park (U.S.A.); Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site (U.S.A.); Maison Des Esclaves (Senegal); Memoria Abierta (Argentina); and the Workhouse (U.K.). The coalition maintain informal connections with a wide range of human-rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, the Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights, and the International Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution, which advise on how to link the histories told at the sites to contemporary human-rights issues.


4. See, for example, B. Weber, “Shock Therapy for Police Recruits: At Holocaust Museum, Learning to be Good Cops from the Very Bad Cops,” New York Times, Saturday, May 10, 2003, pp.A19,A21. In the article, Chief Charles Ramsey of the Metropolitan Police Department in New York City states: “I’d like to see [the police training program] go across the country. But that’s problematic, because you’ve got to see it, feel it, in order to feel the full impact. When you come out of the exhibit, you’re different.”

The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles has developed an extensive set of courses held at the museum and online for use by law-enforcement officers and those employed in the criminal justice system.
Entitled “Tools for Tolerance,” the courses provide California-state-certified training to "assist staff supervisors to gain expertise in certain leadership skills and infuse those skills in a paramilitary organizational structure." See the “Tools for Tolerance” section of the Museum of Tolerance website at www.museumoftolerance.com.

5. E. Rothstein, “Slavery’s Harsh History Is Portrayed in Promised Land,” New York Times, Wednesday, August 18, 2004, p.B1. Rothstein writes: “At the exhibit’s end, in a room called Dialogue Zone, a social worker greets visitors, who may feel overwhelmed by the trauma — or perhaps upset that the original subject, so powerfully touched upon, has been so lost in a cloud of righteous feeling. One posted ground rule reads: ‘Avoid terms and phrases which define, demean, or devalue others, and use words that are affirmative and reflect a positive value.’”

6. The most recent, and perhaps the most controversial entry to the field is the current proposal for a branch of the Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem, to be designed by Frank Gehry — a $200 million campus devoted to exhibitions and lectures that will examine the history of anti-Semitism as a chronicle of “man’s inhumanity to man.” S.G. Freedman, “Frank Gehry’s "Peace Plan," S.G. Freedman, “Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Memory in the Age of Mass Culture” (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p.134. 8. Ibid, p.129.


8. Ibid, p.81.

9. I have borrowed this term from Chris Rojek. See his “Fatal Attractions,” in D. Boswell and J. Evans, eds., Representing the Nation: Histories, Heritage and Museums (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.185–227. 10. J. Lennon and M. Foley, Dark Tourism: The Attractions of Death and Disaster (New York and London: Continuum, 2000), p.12. The authors suggest that it is the commodification of anxiety and doubt, and the design of sites as both products and experiences that qualify them as dark tourism. 11. Technologies of citizenship can also be described as mentalities of governing, or as practices that are concerned to “conduct the conduct of others.” M. Dean, Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Societies (London: Sage, 1999). Dean notes that to “analyze government is to analyze the practices that shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through choices, desires, aspirations, needs wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups” (p.2).


15. Bennett notes: “The peculiarity of the exhibitionary complex is not to be found in its reversal of the principles of the panopticon. Rather, it consists in its incorporation of aspects of those principles together with those of the panorama, forming a technology of vision which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd, but to regulate it, and to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd the ultimate spectacle.” Ibid., pp.68–69.

16. Ibid., p.81.

17. Ibid., p.65–66.

18. Ibid., p.81.


20. A. Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Huyssen argues that “memory projects may construct or revise national narratives . . . but these narratives are now invariably in a space somewhere between the global and the local” (p.96).

The historical development of the exhibitionary complex can be traced to colonial contexts. See T. Mitchell, Colonizing Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). When describing travelers to Cairo in the nineteenth century, Mitchell notes: “Reality was that which presented itself as exhibit, so nothing else would have been thinkable. Living within a world of signs, they took semiosis to be a universal condition, and set about describing the Orient as if it were an exhibition” (p.14).


22. After initial controversy, the USHMM was developed with the goal of “Americanizing” the Holocaust. The definition of who the institution was intended to memorialize was expanded to be as inclusive as possible, with
the Executive Order establishing federal support for the museum stating that the new institution should honor the memory of “all the victims of the Holocaust — 6 million Jews and 5 million other people.” The effort to move beyond “ethnic” Jewish memory was deemed essential to making the museum relevant to non-Jewish Americans. See E.T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp.41–45.


23. Recent attendance figures for the USHMM posted on its website in March 2006 state that since it opened in 1994, there have been 23 million visitors, of which 17.3 million have been “non-Jews,” or more than 50 percent of the total. Some 7.8 million of the total were schoolchildren, 3 million were minorities, and 2.8 million were international visitors.


25. The Apartheid Museum was initially conceived by Solly Krok, a co-owner with his brother of the holding company Akami Egoli, which controls the Gold Reef City theme park and casino. Krok visited the USHMM twice when the initial plans for the museum were being developed, and as a result insisted that the Apartheid Museum be organized around similar narrative structures. For details of Krok’s Holocaust epiphany, see J. Gordin, “Looking Back in Horror and Wonder at Apartheid: Tycoon Solly Krok finds Inspiration for Johannesburg’s New Apartheid Museum while Visiting a Memorial to the Holocaust in Washington,” *The Sunday Independent* (South Africa), November 18, 2001, p.4.

26. Almost half the total visitors to the Apartheid Museum are from South Africa; the rest are from other national contexts. Attendance at the Apartheid Museum is evenly split between domestic and international visitors, with adults as 70 percent of the total number of visitors, and 30 percent children. In the first year of operation (2001–2002), total attendance was 300,000, evenly split between domestic and international visitors. These figures were provided by the Apartheid Museum in 2002 and updated in November, 2004.

27. This discussion draws upon aspects of earlier research presented in Crysler and Kusno, “Angels in the Temple.” I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of my co-author, Abidin Kusno, to that article, many of which have played a formative role in developing this text. The research for that article was completed in 1995–96. I visited the USHMM again in 2004 to assess how the museum, and in particular, the permanent exhibition had changed. See also J. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); and J. Young, ed., *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (New York: Prestel, 1994).

28. As both candidate and president, Carter supported the Palestinian right to an independent homeland. He further inflamed controversy when, in 1978 he linked the sale of aircraft previously promised to Israel to the sale of aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The plans for the USHMM were initiated as these debates continued in Congress in the same year. The President’s Commission on the Holocaust was established in 1978 to make recommendations for a memorial dedicated to those who died in the Holocaust. See Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, pp.1–3.


30. Magnetized identity cards are also issued to arriving visitors. These provide access to interactive stations at various points in the permanent exhibition that relay the fate of the person depicted.

31. For further elaboration on the role of metonymy in the exhibition narrative, see Crysler and Kusno, “Angels in the Temple,” p.61.

32. Part of the pleasure associated with the vicarious experience of pain on the third floor results from the sense of relief visitors feel from the crowded and demanding cognitive regime of the fourth floor. Crysler and Kusno, “Angels in the Temple,” p.59. See also Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, p.32.

33. More than ten thousand items relating to the Holocaust, from art and articles of clothing to objects created in the camps, were donated to the USHMM. These are called “object survivors” by the curatorial staff. See Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, p.145.

34. The Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation was founded by Steven Spielberg following his encounter with Holocaust survivors while filming *Schindler’s List*. Between 1994 and 1999, the foundation collected 57,000 testimonies by survivors, rescuers, liberators and war-crimes trial participants. See the Shoah Foundation website at www.shoahfoundation.org.


36. Ibid., p.1

37. Ibid. Felman writes of the Eichman trial: “The trial was a conscious legal effort not just to give the victims a voice and a stage, to break the silence of the trauma, to divulge and to uncover secrets and taboos, but to transform these discoveries into one national collective story, to assemble, consciously, meticulously, diligently, an unprecedented public and collective legal record of mass trauma that formerly existed only in the repressed form of a series of untold, fragmented stories and traumatic memories” (p.7).


39. The walls of the Hall of Remembrance have vertical slit window that frame partial views of significant Washington monuments. “Why’ asked Freed, ‘do you consciously make openings when you can see the various American icons on the Mall? Because these are the things that save you.” Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, p.102.


41. In *Present Pasts*, Huyssen argues that the inscription of tropes and images, ethical and
political evaluations function “like a prism that helps focus the local discourse in both its legal and commemorative aspects” (p.98).

42. The Kroks owned Twin Pharmaceuticals, the company that produced the skin-lightening cream. C. Bauer, “Speaking for Itself, and for All of Us,” Sunday Times (South Africa), December 2, 2001, p.24.


44. Ibid., p.4.

45. The casino contains a mock reconstruction of parts of the 1973 Carlton Hotel and historic photos of the original 1906 building. The historic hotel was replaced by a modern tower of the same name in downtown Johannesburg. The plates, cutlery, and interior fittings from its famous “whites-only” dining room, The Three Ships, are used in a mock re-creation of the same space at the casino. The modern version of the hotel was finally closed in 1997 following the flight of capital from the center of Johannesburg after 1994. See “Something Old, Something New” Describes the Revival of The Three Ships Restaurant at Gold Reef City,” at HotelandRestaurant.co.za.

46. The building was designed by a consortium of architects led by Sidney Abramowitz, and including the Johannesburg architectural firms Mashabane and Rose and GAPP Architects.


48. The Apartheid Museum plans to revise the permanent exhibition to include more historical material about women. Conversation with Wade Davey, Apartheid Museum, November 20, 2004.


51. Telephone interview with Christopher Till, November 18, 2002. South African Minister of Education Kader Asmal mandated the creation of a new history curriculum and a new set of history textbooks soon after the ANC assumed power in the post-Apartheid government. The Apartheid Museum has been used as a site for teacher-training programs sponsored by Wits University. T. Mtshali, “South Africa is Losing its Memory,” Sunday Times (South Africa), October 3, 2002, p.17.

52. R. Carroll, “Did You See the One about the Racist TV Ads?” The Guardian (London), June 19, 2004. The Apartheid Museum embarked on a national advertising campaign that showcased the telling of racist jokes and then asked viewers to visit if they weren’t able to understand why the jokes were racist.


55. Ibid.

56. Both museums help to sustain Holocaust and Apartheid industries that extend beyond the museums, to include negotiations for reparations, various forms of research, education and cultural production (for both popular and scholarly audiences), international investment, and tourism.


59. The corollary to this is a workforce organized around “immaterial labor” and whose primary object of production is caring. See, for example, M. Hardt and A. Negri, “The Sociology of Immaterial Labor,” in Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp.285-94.

60. The Port Authority added the large space for mechanical equipment to the brief for the building halfway through the design process. The size of the plant was later cut in half. See N. Ourousoff, “A Temple of Contemplation and Conflict,” New York Times, May 20, 2005, p.A1.


62. The IFC’s Content and Governance Report explained that visitors would visit an orientation film entitled “To be Free,” which would “show how the World Trade Center attracted people from all over the globe to a place in which national and cultural differences were subsumed in trade and commerce — how Lower Manhattan has, in essence, always been an international freedom center, drawing people to a dream of free and better lives” p.8.

63. See Ourousoff, “A Temple of Contemplation and Conflict.”

64. The campaign circulated a petition that began with the following statement: “We the undersigned, believe that the World Trade Center Memorial should stand as a solemn remembrance of those who died on September 11, 2001, and not as a journey of history’s failures or as a debate about domestic or foreign policy in the post 9/11 world. Political discussions have no place at the World Trade Center Memorial September 11th memorial. . . .” From the extensive documentation of the campaign to stop the IFC on the Take Back the Memorial website at takebackthememorial.org.


66. See the blog and news reports posted at www.takebackthememorial.org.


join with us to support the call for a postponement of the groundbreaking of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation’s flawed memorial. Take Back demands that legitimate talks with Governor Pataki and John Cahill ensue immediately with an aim towards resolving the outstanding issues plaguing the memorial before construction commences. America deserves nothing less.”

73. As quoted in Burlingame, “The Great Ground Zero Heist.”
76. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
All photographs are by the author.