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Encounters 1, 2010, pp. 1–13.
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Painful Memories

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Engraved in a stone long ago,
Lost in the shifting sand,
In the midst of a crumbling world,
The vision of one flower.

Hara Tamiki

The pact between history and tourism demands appreciation of the horrific as well as the heroic. Battlefields are made into parks. The Auschwitz Nazi death camp in Poland hosted more than a million visitors last year. I personally traveled across Japan to Hiroshima mainly to stand at Ground Zero and to see the museum there. These are sites of barbaric cruelty, abandonment, and unbearable suffering. The pain of others endlessly fascinate some human beings (using the term “human” in its most generic sense). When the Ku Klux Klan lynched black men in the American South for no reason except the color of their skin, they unfailingly drew enthusiastic audiences of white men, women and children. Gathering around to witness and cheer human agony is a long-standing historical tradition in the West. Judicial tyranny provided our ancestors with spectacles of the torture and killing of women accused of witchcraft, the burning of religious martyrs, and public hangings and beheadings.[1] Famous locations of these events are now marked and figure in the global system of tourist attractions.

I cannot believe the same set of motives underlie prurient enthusiasm for human suffering and contemporary tourist visits to the places where horrific events are memorialized. There may be an element of bad enjoyment for tourists at the Jack-the-Ripper exhibit in Madame Tussauds’ Wax Museum. But the motivation for the great majority of tourists at sites of painful commemoration is different, even opposite. At Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the slave markets in the American South, and other similar attractions, the symbolic framing of horrific past events is designed to produce empathy in the tourists. The identification of the tourists is supposed to be with the victims, not the perpetrators.

This brings us to a theoretical problem. Around 1990, corresponding to what can be called a “postmodern turn” in tourism research, critical studies of the tourist experience gave way to more celebratory accounts. This second wave of tourism research foregrounded what it took to be the defining characteristic of tourism: it is about fun, pleasure, the pursuit of happiness.

In a helpful entry in the *Encyclopedia of Tourism* Eric Cohen remarks, "'post-tourists' ... tend to engage more readily in the playful enjoyment of explicitly contrived attractions."[2]

According to proponents of the second wave, by attempting to dig into its "deeper" meanings, the first tourism researchers (myself included) missed the point. They suggest tourism is not about social structure and the movements of history, positions I refuse to abandon. Instead, they say tourism should be understood as a sub-field of entertainment, a source of relaxation and enjoyment. John Urry pioneered this idea and states it most succinctly: "Places are chosen [by tourists] because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasure."[3] Urry and Cohen cannot possibly have in mind the tourists at a Holocaust Museum or visits to Ground Zero at Hiroshima or Manhattan. "Intense pleasure" does not describe my expectations for Hiroshima, nor my feelings when I was there. Cleary we need theory that goes beyond current explanations of tourist motivation.

Pleasure and Pain in the Dialectics of Attraction

Let me suggest that pleasurable and painful memories converge in every attraction and that every attraction strategically represents an ethical meeting ground of the wonderful and the dreadful. Viewed in this way, the painful memorial is not an attraction of a special type. Every attraction either *reveals* or it *masks* existential sadness. Even Disneyland, aggressively touted as the "happiest place on earth," is also a monument to lost innocence, to a nostalgic ideal that cannot be attained because it is a fictionalized version of childhood that never existed. Disneyland is about trying to overcome the pain of loss; mourning that is covered up by forced enjoyment like the antics of the bereaved at an Irish wake. To say that tourists go in search of pleasure and happiness is also to say that they seek repression and displacement of painful memories.

In his masterful study of *Bali and Beyond*, professor Yamashita Shinji documents the construction of what he calls a "touristic culture" on a national scale.[4] He explains the origins of the "staging of Bali" as a kind of "paradise" with human and natural beauty beyond all expectations, with universally appealing music and dance based on tradition. Everything we think we know about Bali as a desirable tourist destination is supposed to have evolved naturally from its beautiful physical setting and classical culture. But in fact, according to Yamashita, this image was hastily constructed from diverse elements, not all of them local, by Dutch colonizers around 1910. They were trying to shift the Balinese economy from one based on the production of agricultural excess to tourism. During the previous 100 years, the Dutch had systematically massacred rebellious Balinese by the thousands in a partially successful effort to impose colonial control over local production. Thus the contemporary happy-face image of Bali as a tourist paradise is a mask for the pain of their colonial subjugation.

The case of Bali is far from unique. I do not have statistics to support this, but I suspect

the most common mechanism we use collectively to deal with painful memories is precisely their repression and displacement. That which has been repressed or displaced lurks behind the mask at 'happy' tourist destinations like Disneyland or Bali where the traumas that organize their very existence are systematically disavowed or denied.

The Denial of Trauma Occurs Also at Sites of Painful Commemoration

The denial of trauma is also a marked feature of sites that claim to commemorate murderous hatred, horrific disaster, and tragic error. Acknowledgement of painful events does not guarantee that the most crucial or telling facts will be included in official narratives. Until very recently, Holocaust memorials in both East Germany and Poland neglected to mention that Jews were victims of Nazi terror. In East Germany, the victims were characterized only as "heroes in the fight against fascism." In 1990, the labels at the Auschwitz camp and museum were changed to indicate most victims were Jewish, erroneously stating that four million Jews had been murdered there. The number was actually 1.5 million. This gave rise to a complaint that the museum exaggerated the suffering of the Jews. In response, the museum took down the signs. The signage was never corrected and replaced. Today there is a plan to make new signs with some words from the Book of Job in the Western Bible. Still no mention of numbers of victims.[5]

The memorial to this singularly painful moment in history put not just the number of victims under erasure, it has also erased the name of the place where the crimes occurred. The name "Auschwitz," given to the town and the camp by the Germans in WW II, justly became so notorious that the town has replaced all signs in the district bearing the name. The Poles do not even want the name Auschwitz, with all its horrific connotations, to apply to the camp. In 2007 they successfully petitioned the World Heritage Center to change the name Auschwitz to "Former Nazi German Concentration Camp (1940–1945)." Every sign bearing the camp's and the city's new names now stand as a memorial to a desire to forget the past. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has given us an excellent explanation of this resistance to the truth of history at painful sites. At the intersection of tourism and history the "conscience industry" (BK-G's term) cleans up historical narratives for both local and wider distribution.[6]

One finds a similar need to forget crucial details at the display in Washington D.C. of the Enola Gay, the B-29 Superfortress aircraft that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.[7] In 1995 the fuselage of the aircraft was put into the aerospace section of the national Smithsonian Museum in downtown Washington. The signage on the new display provided an account of the Hiroshima bombing and its aftermath including reference to the start of the Cold War and the Nuclear Age and to the suffering of the Japanese civilian population caused by nuclear weapons.

The response from United States military veterans groups was immediate and intense.

The signs should contain no mention of the Japanese except their surrender. They said the emphasis of the exhibit should be the role of the Enola Gay in ending World War II. No compromise could be found between the veterans and the historians at the Smithsonian, so after a year of very public and sometimes violent dispute, the fuselage and all its signage was removed from the museum and placed in storage. Does this mean one can not travel to the United States and view this terrible object today? No. In 2003, the entire Enola Gay was put on display, not in downtown Washington, D.C. but at Dulles International Airport in the suburbs.

And the signage at the exhibition? There is no mention of its mission over Japan, or that it occupies a special place in World War II history. The only information provided are its technical characteristics: Its wingspan is 43 meters; it weighs 31 thousand kilograms empty and can carry a payload of 25 thousand kilograms; it is powered by four piston engines rated at 2,200 horsepower each; it can reach a maximum speed of 576 kilometers per hour and fly to a maximum height of 9,700 meters. The Enola Gay is on display for tourists, but as far as the signs are concerned it could be any B-29. It is allegedly there merely as an example of its class of technological object. The only thing that distinguishes it from the other aircraft on display is the ultra-sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment guarding it from vandalism, and the mystique of the silence surrounding it.

Painful Memories and their Historical Refraction

At least one philosophical school suggests, as I am also suggesting here, that *painful memories* are not memories of a special type. Friedrich Nietzsche aphoristically claimed that all memories are painful by definition. Nietzsche wrote, “Only that which does not cease to hurt remains in memory.”[8] Similarly, Walter Benjamin reminds us of Flaubert’s line, “Few will be able to guess how sad one had to be to resuscitate Carthage.”[9] Commenting on this line from Flaubert, Benjamin utters one of his own most famous pronouncements:

> The nature of this sadness stands out more clearly if one asks with whom the adherents of historicism actually empathize. The answer is inevitable: with the victor.... [A]ll rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers.... Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin that he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a

> document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.[10]

In my opinion, it is an unfortunate lapse of scholarship that this passage has been almost universally summarized as "history is written by the victors." If we read it carefully, Benjamin does not actually say "history is written by the victors." What he says is more damning. He says history is written by scholars and intellectuals who *empathize* with the victors and not *with the people*, the ones who make history. He is suspicious of those who identify with and empathize with the powerful. He suggests that too much history has been written by small-minded sycophants who callously ignore the contributions of the anonymous multitude in order to curry favor with the powerful. He cautions that we should never forget history is made by the *people.* To summarize Benjamin's passage as "history is written by the victors" is to commit the precise error he tries to caution us against.

This is the reason every one of our "cultural treasures," even the allegedly happy ones, can be seen as the embodiment of pain as I suggested at the beginning. In addition to whatever official historical high-point they are supposed to represent, they also mask the toil and suffering of the common people who sacrificed to create our "cultural treasures," our important "historical events," and they also represent the devious act of denying the people their rightful place in history.

In the light of Benjamin's insight it is perhaps not a bad thing that the Enola Gay has lost its historical markers. The aura of silence that surrounds the object may be more fitting than any didactic attempt to memorialize the suffering it caused. The silence is certainly superior to any history written by the victors, by the veterans groups, for example. Of course, this assumes tourists arrive with knowledge of August 6, 1945, knowledge they must confront in the depths of their own souls, rather than having their response pre-packaged for them. At painful memorials there will always be a trade-off between what is at the site and what the tourist brings to it.

Contested Sites

Every painful event that is memorialized involved conflict when it occurred and even if the issues shift it can continue to engender conflicting passions down to the present day. This is abundantly clear in every example given so far. It is crucially important that the memorial not be constructed in such a way as to suppress the role of any of the parties to the conflict. I am aware that this statement is in opposition to some established memorializing practices that seek "closure" and "reconciliation." Closure and reconciliation can only occur outside of time. History is the history of tension, hostility and conflict. Tension, conflict and opposition are not necessarily bad if we can learn to live with them, handle them non-violently, and align them with

life and creativity rather than with death and destruction. Jochen Gerz, the artist who created the vanishing monument against fascism for Hamburg in Germany remarks: "when a population seeks harmony, they actually seek death and the end of time."[11]

The American Civil War and Racism: The bitter divisiveness of the American Civil War fought over the right to own slaves has not been completely eradicated from American life. This produces great tension surrounding such acts as flying the Confederate flag over state buildings in the American South, the restoration of slave quarters at Southern plantations that are now being converted to National Parks, etc. There are still individuals and groups in the United States that claim whites are superior to blacks. The secret society of the Ku Klux Klan is the most infamous. It is responsible for terrorist bombings of black churches, killing black children, torture and murder of white civil rights workers, and lynching black men well into the 20th century.

The contemporary Ku Klux Klan, responsible for this violence, is not an unbroken continuation of the original Klan that was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee on Christmas Eve in 1865. The people of Pulaski are careful in the way they tell the story of the first Klan. They (erroneously) claim the original Klan did not use violence to accomplish its goals, and in fact provided wise council to both blacks and whites guiding them through the difficulties of Reconstruction of the American South at the end of the Civil War. Pulaskians paint a prettier picture of the original Klan than deserved. It did in fact wear iconic white masks and conical hoods, burn crosses, and use violence and intimidation to advance the cause of white supremacy. They are, however, correct that the new Klan is historically connected to the old only by name and not by any continuous institutional articulation. This can be viewed as a positive, if naïve, rewriting of history in that the people of Pulaski clearly desire to deny the racism of the original Klan as they identify with it. They say they are proud to live in the birthplace of the first Klan, which preserved Confederate values (except racism, or so they claim) after the Civil War.

Here is where tourism enters the picture. In 1917 Pulaski erected a commemorative plaque celebrating the birth of the Klan. The thematics should be familiar by now. With a small touristic gesture, they tried to put a happy face mask on a very painful moment in their history, a mask that would eventually be ripped off by actions of the new Klan.

It need be noted that the original Klan disbanded after only four years of operation in 1869 at the request of President Ulysses S. Grant. It broke up quasi-voluntarily, saying its "work" was done. There was no Klan for the next fifty years. Then, in 1915, D. W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation*, Hollywood's first "blockbuster movie," appeared with its dramatic depictions of rampaging Klan violence against African Americans. Enthusiasm for the film gave impetus for the Klan's nostalgic rebirth as a virulently racist secret society openly committed to the use of murderous violence against black Americans and Jews. *Birth of a Nation* glorified the work of

the first Klan and embraced its values as essential to the founding of our modern day United States. According to the thesis of the film and the new Klan, North and South fought over the issue of slavery, but the wounds can be healed and the Nation can come together in agreement that whites continue to be superior to blacks even in a post-slavery world. Obviously not all US citizens, not even all white citizens, agree with this stupid formulation.

Pulaskians, with their sweetly fictionalized history, are among those who want most to distance themselves from the new Klan and its racism and violence. This distancing is complicated by their commemorative plaque. Beginning in 1985 the new Klan made annual "homecoming marches" to Pulaski gathering in front of the plaque to make speeches proclaiming their hatred for Negroes and Jews. They do this every year on Martin Luther King's birthday to insult the Nobel Prize winning black civil rights leader and incite Americans who love and honor King.

The townspeople were dismayed by the national publicity they got from these Klan marches and news coverage which implied Pulaski is a hotbed of new Klan activity. They complain that there are no Klan members or activities in Pulaski except for this annual event that attracts outsiders. They also tried to point out that the premise for the march is in error; that the birthplace of the new Klan is Atlanta, Georgia, not Pulaski, Tennessee.

But the Klan kept coming. The people of Pulaski organized anti-Klan demonstrations to take place at the same time as the march. Eventually, the town's merchants refused to open their doors or sell food and drink to the Klan on the day of the march. But the Klan kept coming.

There are a number of reasons to tell the story of this corrupting "festival" that attracts malevolent tourists who seek to establish a positive inflection for this painful memory. Here is my favorite reason. Recall that the focal point for all this contestation is the commemorative plaque and its inscription, a commonplace element of every tourist destination, painful and otherwise. The owner of the old courthouse where the plaque hangs devised an economical and eloquent resolution that suppresses nothing. He re-mounted the plaque with its inscription facing the wall. He stated: "I turned [the plaque] around as a symbol that this community turns its back on other signs of prejudice."[12] By this simple reversal the plaque simultaneously commemorates the founding of the Klan and the shame of the people of Pulaski that their history is being used by others in ways they do not agree with or approve.

Asians in the United States: Painful memories are not merely poorly marked. Often they are unintentionally marked. When this occurs there is no standardization of the messages tourists carry away from their visits. Sometimes the meaning of the attraction is confusing or no meaning is received. Such sites place all or almost all of the responsibility for their interpretation on the tourist.

Very near the houses of government in Sacramento, California there is an interesting

bank building, Western in all aspects of its appearance, except for its roof-line and one or two other superficial styling elements which seem to have been borrowed from Asia. It happens that in order to build this bank in the 1960s it was necessary to raze a neighborhood, one of California's many Asian-American communities. The homes and stores that were removed were practical and ordinary, early 20th century wood frame construction. They were inhabited by Americans of Asian descent, but they were not built in an Asian style. The immigrant people had adapted themselves with imagination and dignity to what must have been for them a foreign arrangement of space. The roof-line of the bank is the kind of styling affectation found in many other ethnic districts in America, including telephone booths shaped like pagodas and the like. Usually it is done to create a visual cue for tourists that they have entered a distinctive neighborhood. Only in this case the first symbols of "Asian-ness" appeared exactly when the Asian-Americans were driven from their homes. The Japanese roof of the bank refers to Asian-culture-in-general, and it marks the enforced removal of Asian culture from this re-developed neighborhood. It does not mark a presence, it marks an absence. It is an unintended memorial with the precise qualities that I have outlined above. It also exhibits a certain arrogant inflection, a prayer, perhaps, that it will not be subject to this kind of analysis. Finally it marks the victory and the shame of the developers.

The Ethical Position of the Tourist in the Presence of Painful Memories

The examples I have given mainly alert us to the great strength of our collective desire to deny and forget not merely the painful details of the past but entire painful epochs. Yet these are precisely the details, events, and epochs that mark historical caesura, the breaks in history that bring fundamental changes and entirely new ways of life to individuals, communities and entire nations. Only a strong tourist ethic demands we face the impossible realities of our traumatic past. Only an absence of concern for ethics leads theorists of tourism, and most tourists, to imagine it is about enjoyment, pleasure and fun. No amount of theorizing or denial can make the Holocaust museums, ground zero, the sites of assassination and other heinous crimes disappear, nor can it disperse the millions of visitors who make their way to these places. When guided by this ethic we diverge from the happy tourist itinerary and what we most often see before us are fragments and empty spaces, often not well-marked, or not marked at all, that can only be filled in with pathos. This is as it should be. There is no building large enough to contain human suffering and sadness.

Throughout most of the world, the ethical burden of symbolically connecting a place to its painful past falls to the tourist. Tyburn Tree near (now in) London was a triangular gallows designed to accommodate mass hangings. It was used from the 14th to the 18th century for criminals but most notoriously for religious martyrs and enemies of the state. It is well-marked in popular language usage by a number of phrases such as "going to Tyburn" which

is a euphemism for death. Today, at the place itself, there are no such references to its former function. There is a circular, half-meter plaque flush with the pavement in the middle of the street that reads "The Site of Tyburn Tree." That is all. Similarly, the furnaces in the steel mills of Manchester where small children were worked to death in the first decades of the Industrial Revolution are not marked as such. In many Scottish towns the number of names of the local dead on the War Memorial exceeds the number of current inhabitants. I have seen a village with four houses and 27 dead listed. War memorials throughout the United Kingdom occasionally consist of nothing but a plinth for a statue of a soldier that was never there.

The American photographer, Joel Sternfeld, makes the same point with his collection of photographs of places in the United States where well-known violent and criminal events occurred.[13] The images include the sidewalk in New York where a woman was raped while the famously cosmopolitan New Yorkers passed by politely averting their gaze; the homes of poor people who were exposed to nuclear poison by the mishandling of waste from a power plant; etc. Reviewers comment that the "unsettling thing about the book is that most of the sites bear no trace of the terrible events that occurred there."[14]

From this perspective every square meter of the landscape can potentially be seen as sites of painful memories. We are insulated from them only by their universality, their anonymity, and by our ignorance. We can engage them only via our studies. It is worthwhile to persist in an interrogation of the landscape as saturated with a superabundance of unintentionally marked memorials. There are mounds of earth covering mass graves in fields and forests of Eastern Europe that are unmarked except by the periodic presence of descendants who visit to remember their dead. When the last Jews were deported to the camps some German and Polish townspeople celebrated by burning Jewish places of worship and destroying Jewish cemeteries. Perhaps they hoped for the impossible—that the disappearance of the Jews and destruction of their synagogues and cemeteries would eradicate memory itself. This stratagem could not work because nothing attracts memory more powerfully than a gap, a lapse, silence, or suppression. After the war, the sites of former synagogues were left vacant and undisturbed as places of remembrance. As the post-War economies of Germany and Poland improved and their cities were rebuilt, a trace of guilt effectively barred construction on most of these sites. But they occupied valuable real estate and a compromise was reached between leaving them vacant and using them to generate revenue. So they were turned into surface-level parking lots. These lots lie beneath the ghosts of priceless cultural treasures. They exist as a bathetic reminder of Nazi-inspired violence and to the more generalized barbarism of urban re-development. I have also learned that when the Jewish cemeteries were wrecked, the headstones were broken into rubble and used to underlay the roadbed of the German autobahn built during Hitler's rule. Not knowing which sections were made in this way, I cannot bring myself to drive on any German superhighway. The entire autobahn is a memorial and a

reminder of horrendous cruelty.

Representing the Impossible

We should be especially grateful to the artists, scholars, and curators who have struggled with our painful memories and given us the precious few effective symbolic representations we have of them, who have tried to make places for us to pause to remember the suffering of the victims and contemplate human and natural violence. We must recognize that every such effort tries for the impossible. The meaning of these painful events cannot be contained in their symbolic representation. That said, some of these efforts are quite a bit stronger and more effective than others. At one of those parking lots on the site of a former synagogue in Poland someone installed a replica of the United States Liberty Bell. This was well-intended, no doubt. Even so, it is an incoherent and mainly empty gesture that marks the neuroses of those who made it more surely than the historic crimes perpetrated at the site and the suffering produced.

Other memorials can rightly be regarded as masterpieces. I have already reported on the exemplary effectiveness of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.[15] Another place that comes closer than most to representing the impossible is the Peace Park and Museum at Hiroshima. Professor Saika Tadayoshi's words inscribed there cannot be improved upon: "Let all souls here rest in peace; for we shall not repeat the evil." As always, there was controversy, mostly unnecessary. The interpretation that the "we" can suggest the Japanese blame themselves for the bombing is quite simply stupid. It is clearly a demand that *all of humanity* dedicate itself to never again repeating the evil. Predictably, the United States objected to the incorporation of this sentiment into the designation of the Peace Memorial as a World Heritage Site. To my government, let me say, respectfully, once again, you were wrong.

It was not the larger scale symbolic interventions at Hiroshima that moved me the most. It was the small individual cenotaphs marking the places where grade school children, office workers, people waiting for the bus had died. I do not know if it was a failure of landscape maintenance, or if it was intended, that many of these stones were overgrown and I had to push aside the planting to find them. I hope it was intended. Secreted in the shrubbery these small memorials were powerful in proportion to their innocent reticence, their shy decorum reflecting the truth of their ultimate sacrifice. I asked my guide, a Japanese professor of English, to translate the inscriptions for me. She hesitated, explaining the texts were so profoundly poetic and philosophical that she could not properly convey their meaning, even in Japanese, much less in English. Whether she was being truthful or modest made no difference to me. Her answer reminded me yet again that some things are impossible to know. Especially these small things at Hiroshima.

Conclusion

James E. Young, one of the most sensitive writers on the European Holocaust is not comfortable even with historically accurate memorials. He writes, “The displacement in memory of one thousand years of European Jewish civilization with twelve catastrophic years is not a happy development, to my mind.”[16] Pierre Nora warns us that memorials may not focus memory so much as they displace it, relieving us from the burden of remembering by articulating the pretense that we have done our collective memory work.[17] Andreas Huyssen similarly cautions, “the promise of permanence a monument in stone will suggest is always built on quicksand. Some monuments are joyously toppled at times of social upheaval; others preserve memory in its most ossified form, either as myth or cliche. Yet others stand simply as figures of forgetting ....”[18] As I have been trying to point out, very often there is little actual memory at memorials except what the visitors might bring with them.

One thing is clear. Painful memories are a kind of ultimate challenge to our capacity for symbolic representation and especially our narrative abilities. What James E. Young calls the “dialogic, interactive nature of all memorials” is highly variable. It is a powerfully evident feature of naturally occurring social arrangements that have grown up around the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. The people bring offerings to the dead on a daily basis—shoes, other items of clothing, dog-tags, photographs, letters are placed below the name of the dead soldier who left these everyday things behind. An archiving project meticulously gathers these offerings at the end of each day and catalogues them by name and date. Veteran volunteers have created an alphabetical correspondence to assist visitors to find a name in the chronological ordering of deaths on the memorial. Many visitors share their memories with others and are moved to tears.

Every memorial I have mentioned depends for its effectiveness on some kind of narration both on and off site.[19] It is almost a miracle that memorials are effective despite their often casual handling and their dialectical tendency to erase the very memories they were designed to preserve. At the risk of sounding anachronistic, I suggest that old-style museum display is perhaps the best method so far devised to capture and reflect memories, painful and otherwise, in ways that can be appreciated by people in the living present.[20] Memory is defined by the gaps which exist between its almost, but not quite, random vivid images. According to Andreas Huyssen, memory depends on distance and forgetting. “The very things which undermine its desired stability and reliability ... are essential for the vitality of memory itself.”[21] Thus, the museum display of objects, both privileged and abject, which makes no pretense at completeness or totalization of the past, may be one of the best analogues we have for memory itself. Whatever problems this kind of display may have, it is open to contestation from the gaps in the collection. It always offers itself as a potential site for dialogue that can lead to changing definitions of the past and the present. Memory’s singular strength is that it is always

correctable.

In the end we should ask 'What does a tourist get from visiting sites of pain and sorrow?' Let us assume that the site is presented with all the love and tactful subtlety that it requires and also that the tourist is open to trying to understand and to cope with the impossible. What is the most we can demand of this moment?

First, is *acknowledgement* of what happened. As unbearable as it may be, the event memorialized at the site actually occurred.[22]

Second, is accepting that the event is in the past. Something like it may be happening now or may happen in the future, but this discrete even is definitively in the past.

Third, the event memorialized is utterly unique and not repeatable.

Failure to recognize and accept these points is failure on the part of the living to recognize their responsibilities for its memory. There is only *one place* where the painful memory can be maintained, thought about, and preserved. That is in the minds and hearts and the expressions of the visitors. The suffering and the joys of past lives are no longer. Only the living, the tourists, can hold within their souls thoughts of life's joys and suffering of the dead. We cannot speak to them, nor they to us. The almost universal figure of the ghost of an ancestor speaks eloquently to the strength of our collective desire that this not be true. We are alone in bearing the memory and the meaning of their fate within ourselves. The philosopher Jacques Derrida said it is "only through this experience of the other who can die, leaving in me or in us this memory of the other" that we can find our own "subjectivity" and "intersubjectivity."[23] Again, what is the most we can get from visits to these places? According to Derrida it is nothing less than our own humanity. We weep when everything about the other is completely entrusted to us. But through our tears we must also glimpse the joys and pleasures that were stopped cold by horrendous events, the thousand years of brilliant contributions to civilization wiped out in a decade, the positive historical contribution of the anonymous multitude.

Notes

1. Until modern times, city mayors in England and Protestant ministers in Scotland could and did condemn a person to death without trial or review. Paid attendance at public hangings of unfortunates who displeased the powerful was the norm in early modern Europe and England.
2. Eric Cohen, "Sociology" p. 545 in Jafar Jafari, ed., *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 544–547.
3. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 1990), p. 10. Similarly, in their advice on urban design for tourism, Judd and Fainstein state: "The undeniable purpose of leisure is to escape from life's unpleasantness.… [T]he main spatial effect of urban tourism is to produce spaces that are prettified, … and that give people opportunities for entertainment and officially sanctioned fun." Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd, "Cities as Places to Play" p. 269 in D. Judd and S. Fainstein, *The Tourist City* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 261–72.

4. Shinji Yamashita, *Bali and Beyond: Explorations in the Anthropology of Tourism*, translation by J.S. Eades (New York: Berghahn, 2003).
5. Jochen Spielmann, "Auschwitz is Debated in Oswiecim: The Topography of Remembrance" in James Young, ed., *The Art of memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (Munich Prestel-Verlag, 1994).
6. See her *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: California, 1998) p. 144.
7. I attempted to provide an account of the faulty logic that leads to the decision to use nuclear weapons on civilian populations in my article "Baltimore in the Morning … After: On the Forms of Post-Nuclear Leadership," *Diacritics*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (Summer) 1984, pp. 33–46.
8. Quoted without further attribution by Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, (New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 9
9. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (New York: Shocken, 1969) p. 256.
10. Ibid., pp 256–257.
11. Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen "The Monument Vanishes: A Conversation with Esther and Jochen Gerz" in Young, ed. *Art of Memory,* 1994, op.cit.
12. Michael Lewis and Jacqueline Serbu, "Kommemorating the Ku Klux Klan," *The Sociological Quarterly* (40:1, 1999) 139–57, p. 151.
13. See his *On this Site: Landscape in Memoriam* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1997)
14. Kenneth Baker, "Scenes of the Crimes: Photos show the land remembers long after memory fades," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 1996
15. Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers* (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 280 ff.
16. James E. Young, ed., op cit. pp. 19–38, 260
17. Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration" in Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University,1998) pp. 609–707.
18. Andreas Huyssen in Young, ed. *Art of Memory*, 1994 op. cit., p. 9
19. Edward Bruner makes the point that all of tourism is more dependent on tourist narratives than has been acknowledged in the literature. See his *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005).
20. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's study (op cit.) of the agency and confusion of display is still the best work on the subject.
21. ibid.
22. This is not trivial and must not be assumed as the legions of "Holocaust Deniers" incessantly remind us.
23. Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man* (New York: Columbia, 1986) p. 32–33.

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