# Contours of Naming
The Identity Card Project and the Tower of Faces at the
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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*Do names really "open" us to an intersubjective ground, or are they simply so many ruins*
*which designate a history irrevocably lost? Do these names really signify for us the fullness*
*of the lives that were lost, or are they so many tokens of what we cannot know, enigmas,*
*inscrutable and silent?*
— *Judith Butler*

Questions of mimesis, strategies of empathy, the truth in fiction, the fiction in truth and
the tension between literalness and metaphor are always at work in documentary photo-
graphic representation; these factors are all the more germane and strained in contemporary
photographic re-presentations of Holocaust memory and history. The contemporary liter-
ature addressing problems in the documentary tradition and documentary's attempt to
represent difficult and extreme material is resoundingly absent on the subject of Holocaust
representation. What the literature highlights, however, is that documentary is never a
transparent claim to truth despite its attempt to set up a universalized one-point perspec-
tive.[1] To call photographs depicting events, moments and lives ruined by Nazi crimes
in the Holocaust "documentary" is a misnomer of catastrophic proportions. Indeed,
Holocaust-related photography is capable of revealing the insidious fictions of documen-
tary's supposedly factual representation. For example, the notion that a documentary pho-
tograph involves a transactional exchange between the subject and the photographer
is rendered ludicrous in the shadow of the experiences of the millions who suffered from
unimaginable pain and loss and who had no choice about their "participation" in the pho-
tographic event. It is crucial to remember that the individuals who have become the sub-
jects and objects of Holocaust photographs were not accessible to the purview of just any
errant, socially concerned eye. The ghettos and camps were strictly closed off to the outside

world. As a result, the precious and troubling photographs that remain are double-edged; although they offer rare views inside the ghettos and camps they were, nevertheless, staged by the Nazis. These photographs were orchestrated to veil the mechanisms of the "Final Solution" and were targeted to the (largely unconcerned) free world to project the lie that the Jews, Catholics, Communists, Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally-retarded and other Nazi victims were safe, and even gainfully employed.[2] The other group of institutionally produced photographs contemporaneous with the events were those taken by the Allies at the end of the war, predominately by the United States military photographers during the liberation of the camps. They, too, are burdened with their own propaganda motives.[3]

The multiple inflections of Holocaust-related documentary photographs are orchestrated on less propagandistic stages as well. Their less explicit manoeuvres – those that have nothing to do with intentional distortions and lies – are lodged in photography's oscillating realism: its double-edged capacity holding forth the promise of honoring while marking and fixing its subject. In the very moment of its giving name and face to a previously undocumented or undisclosed reality, photographic nomenclature also works to stigmatize and hold at bay the subject/object of its view. Indeed, if too much horror is shown in the presentation of Holocaust-related photographs, the desired retrospective bond between viewer and pictured can turn into codified positions of the pathetic and the privileged. Often, the debilitating grimness of the scene blinds the viewer entirely or turns him or her retrospectively against the pictured, with troubling ramifications in the present tense. Elie Wiesel has put the dilemma in literal and metaphorical terms: "I would bring the viewer closer to the gate but not inside, because he can't go inside, but that's close enough."[4]

Walter Benjamin's extremely fruitful insight about the uncanny distance and proximity rendered by photography pinpoints the cruel paradox of its inscription process.[5] The uncertain spatio-temporal status of photography parallels the oscillation of names, which do not go far enough yet are always in excess. Benjamin referred to this impenetrable distance between signifier and signified as overnaming [*Überbenennung*][6] and suggested that the processes of naming and mourning are linked: "To be named – even when the namer is Godlike and blissful – perhaps always remains an intimation of mourning."[7] As Roland Barthes construed it, and one of the early functions of photography as the appropriate *memento mori* souvenir would confirm it, the photograph as the frozen trace of life would seem to be the fitting life/death artifact of mourning.[8] Yet conflating photography with death and mourning is rendered ludicrous in the context of the Holocaust, when both the

site of the photograph and the ability to contain a natural death are but shadows of an irretrievable past life.[9]

In its most revelatory sense, the documentary photograph is an artifact that issues a warning: what it appears to represent is only one surface element in a deeper and more complex structure of meaning. (In fact, the earliest usages of the word "document" point to its ability to teach and to warn.) Thus the photographic document should not be restricted to freezing the reality it indexes and numbing us from it. The cruel and poignant paradox of the photograph is situated precisely in history's demand that it also function as an empathic marker; yet if empathy is taken to mean the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being's, this empathic merging becomes merely impossible when the events are so unimaginable that they overwhelm the mind's ability to find a place where their representation can be lodged. Immanuel Kant's theory of the sublime offers a model for the acute difference between the enormity of a concept and the imagination's inability to present the totality of that idea. The incommensurability of the events of the Holocaust suggests the intangible reality of Kant's impossible reciprocities. Indeed, as Saul Friedländer urgently phrased it, we need to envision a new category of the sublime as it relates to representation of the Holocaust "specifically meant to capture inexpressible horror."[10]

Jean-François Lyotard takes up precisely Kant's insistence on negative presentation – in which presentation exists to point to the reality of its unpresentability – in his attempt to phrase out a space for the (im)possible and pressing demand to find appropriate recognition and representation in the context of, as he puts it, "phrasing, after Auschwitz." In spite of the obscenity of linkages of what Lyotard terms "phrase regimes," he acknowledges the vital need for different linkages, different justices. His formulation of these possible justices is performed in the name of heterogenous incommensurabilities. In his book *The Differend*,[11] Lyotard's attack on the rationalist logic that embodies Western philosophy takes on a more specific motive than in previous work: to undercut the revisionist assaults made by so-called historians, most notoriously Robert Faurisson, who claim that the man-made mass murders that are the Holocaust never occurred because the revisionists cannot find a single witness to the gas chambers. The perverse logic that makes those witnesses unavailable is of course that these victims/witnesses are all dead. It is this kind of logic, pushed to its ludicrous and obscene limits, that Lyotard wants to discredit. For Lyotard, the "differend," the key word and underlying concept guiding his book of the same name, goes further than its simple translation into English as a difference, a dispute, or a disagreement – although it encompasses all of these meanings. He uses it strategically to refer to

legal procedures with their game of logical arguments and either/or modes of operation, modes based on the totality of restrictive thinking which Lyotard targets at the heart of his work. As he writes of the revisionists' procedures:

> The "revisionist" historians understand as applicable to this name [Auschwitz] only the cognitive rules for the establishment of historical reality and for the validation of its sense. If justice consisted solely in respecting these rules, and if history gave rise only to historical inquiry, they could not be accused of a denial of justice. *In fact*, they administer a justice in conformity with the rules and exert a positively instituted right.[12]

With the extreme case of Auschwitz and the real spectre of revisionist historians in mind, Lyotard asks that if a wrong cannot be admitted into court because it cannot be phrased, cannot be proved, "should the victim seek to bypass this impossibility and testify anyway to the wrong done to him or to her . . . ."[13] Lyotard seeks to move his case out of the dialectical logic of the courtoom, distinguishing a differend from a litigation on several grounds: among them, the former cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments, and a universal rule of judgement between heterogenous genres is lacking in general. The only non-illusory object for Lyotard is the phrase. And in his own dialectical mode, Lyotard explicitly and implicitly harbors a crucial point: the non-phrase which is silence is a resounding sentence. In the face of the revisionists' self-proclaimed victory based on the materiality of supposedly factual evidence rendered through the most tortuous of means, Lyotard counters not with hard facts but, significantly, with the reality of the referent through its very immateriality, its immeasurability. Hence, his powerful metaphor of the earthquake:

> But the silence imposed on knowledge does not impose the silence of forgetting, it imposes a feeling (No. 22). Suppose that an earthquake destroys not only lives, buildings, and objects but also the instruments used to measure earthquakes directly and indirectly. The impossibility of quantitatively measuring it does not prohibit, but rather inspires in the minds of the survivors the idea of a very great seismic force. The scholar claims to know nothing about it, but the common person has a complex feeling, the one aroused by the negative presentation of the indeterminate. *Mutatis mutandis*, the silence that the crime of Auschwitz imposes upon the historian is a sign for the common person. Signs (Kant Notices 3 and 4) are not referents to which are attached significations validatable under the cognitive regimen, they indicate that something which should be able to be put into phrases cannot be phrased in the accepted idioms (No. 23). . . . This sign affects a linking of phrases. The indetermination of meanings left in abeyance [*en souffrance*], the extermination of what would allow them to be determined, the shadow of negation hollowing out reality to the point of making it dissipate, in a word,

the wrong done to the victims condemns them to silence – it is this, and not a state of mind, which calls upon unknown phrases to link onto the name of Auschwitz.[14]

Through his elaboration of Kant's signs of history, Lyotard is not calling for a dispersal of sense nor a denial of language's ability to formulate linguistic communication. In relying on the idea of the differend he is, in fact, formulating a figure that will negotiate the breakdown of linkages between event and non-event. As he explains this new elucidation,

> To give the differend its due is to institute new addressees, new addressors, new significations, and new referents in order for the wrong to find an expression *and for the plaintiff to cease being a victim.* This requires new rules for the formation and linking of phrases. No one doubts that language is capable of admitting these new phrase families or new genres of discourse. Every wrong ought to be able to be put into phrases. A new competence (or "prudence") must be found . . . . What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them.[15]

The differend itself is the idea of a presentation of the sublime and a bearing witness for which it is nearly impossible to find expression. Rather than attempting to find a normative code of representation, Lyotard is attentive to Kant's notion of "feeling." If history renders facts, then the spaces between what cannot be documented or what has been obliterated renders feelings for what cannot be recalled as facts. The silences that are resonant signs of history demand phrasing and representation. Indeed, Lyotard creates a call "to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them." What is at stake is precisely what kinds of idioms can be presented in the name of bearing witness.
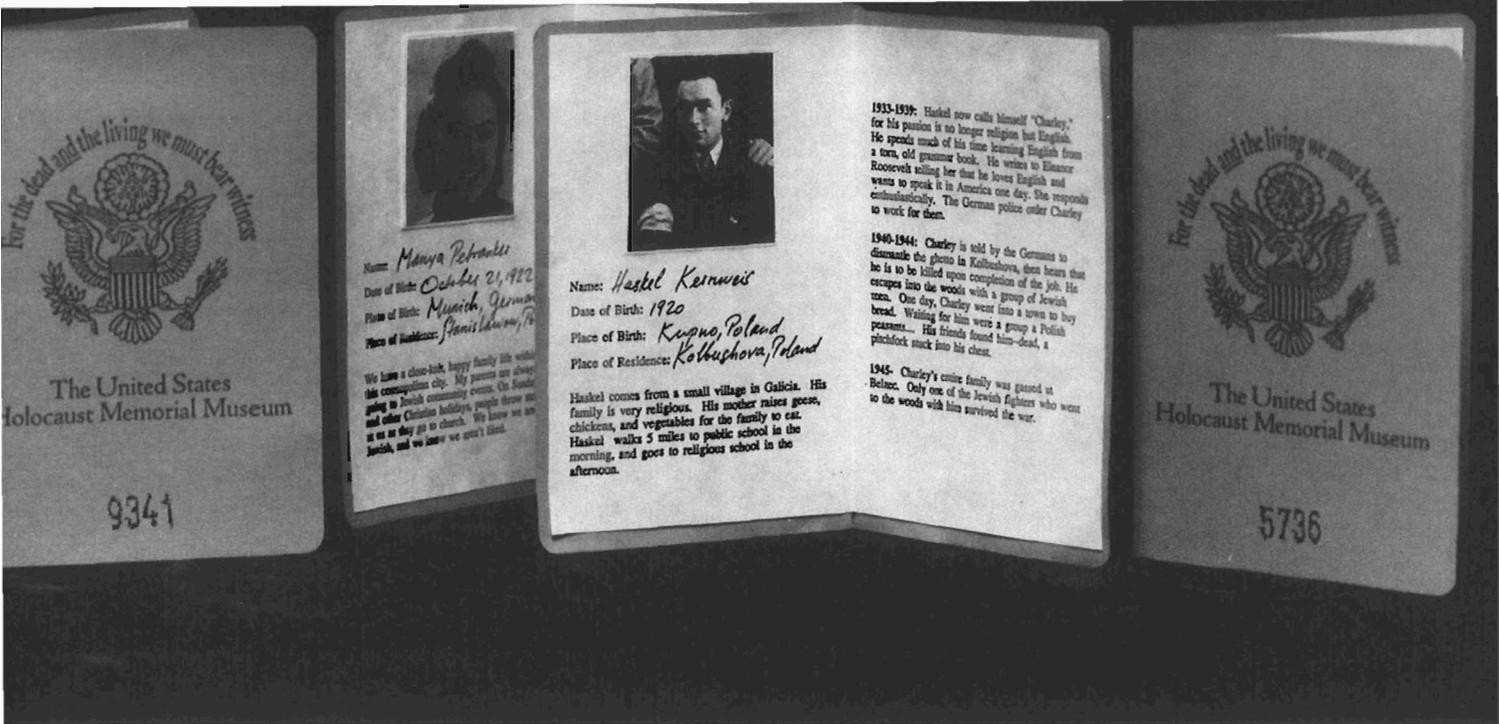
The photograph has been made to assume the uneasy burden of bearing witness to the events. Holocaust-related photographs have been and continue to be employed to foster the precious if not irresolvable mandate "never forget." If the photograph performs the overdetermined role of mirror and window onto the unimaginable reality, if it stands in as part of the incommensurable and impossible entirety, the problems are compounded for the museum attempting to stage remembrance of an historically sublime event. Caught between performing as history lessons and providing sites for mourning, the Holocaust memorial museum's doubled, daunting and riddled mandate parallels the burden assigned to the photograph. The work of the museum condenses life time into historical time and vice versa, as does the still photograph. Bringing the photograph as historical marker and as monument into the museum recalls Adorno's likening the museum to the mausoleum.[16] When the web of issues confronting photography are conflated with those of the museum in bearing witness to the sublime in framing and strategically re-staging mass death and the Holocaust, the crucial problems and sharp poignancies of historicizing

and memorializing are brought to the surface. At stake is the delicate question of simulating history through photography and the formation of participants and spectators in this process. A complex of questions thus arises: Can the photographs reside in the archive as objective historical documents and simultaneously work as empathic markers in exhibition spaces? Must not the stringent requirements of historical objectivity and photographic categorization be partially waived to reshape these documents into other, less defined discourses? Does not the extreme, urgent, complex, vivid and obscure subject of Holocaust memory itself demand such loosenings of bureaucratized divisions?

In the grey zones between elaborate, meticulous historical reconstruction that is the domain of the museum and the perhaps not so antithetical positions of fictional re-creation usually staked out by artistic, literary and filmic representations, the trauma of the experiences and the trauma that is the photograph both signal warnings. The photograph is only a trace of the trauma of the Holocaust; it is precisely in its critical trace that it should not be vainly employed to reconstruct an impossible totality. Neither, however, should the photographic artifact be revoked. If the image cannot tell the "full" story, it can be retrieved to work as a trace of both lived and projected post-memory. That is, remembrance as a form of retrospective and contemporary alterity, an otherness that bespeaks respectful distance yet partial palpability. The fragile possibilities and the poignant risks facing the transformation of Holocaust-related photographs – both as dramatized artifacts and in mediation with other artifacts through exhibition techniques – reside in the museum's ability to restage history not as a comprehensible totality, but as a process, as a pathway toward keeping the memory and the trauma at once approachable and unassailable.[17]

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Upon entrance to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the visitor is "invited to register" for an identity card.[18] The visitor enters her or his age and gender into a computer placed in the foyer of the paradoxically vast and claustrophobic space of the Hall of Witness. The computer will then process the museum visitor's data in order to issue him or her an identity card representing a Holocaust victim whose bare traces of identity are approximately matched to the visitor's statistics. The cover of the identity card bears the logo and the organizing authoritative logic of the museum's symbolic imprint. In this guise, the name of the museum appears in full below the eagle crowned with the logos: "For the dead *and* the living we must bear witness."[19] Each identity card is also marked with a four-digit number, computer printed as if it were freshly

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Name: Manya Petranker
Date of Birth: October 21, 1922
Place of Birth: Munich, Germany
Place of Residence: Stanislawow, Po

We have a close-knit, happy family life with
this cosmopolitan city. My parents are always
going to Jewish community events. On Sunday
and other Christian holidays, people throw stones
at us as they go to church. We know we are
Jewish, and we know we aren't liked.

Name: Haskel Kernweis
Date of Birth: 1920
Place of Birth: Kupno, Poland
Place of Residence: Kolbuchova, Poland

Haskel comes from a small village in Galicia. His
family is very religious. His mother raises geese,
chickens, and vegetables for the family to eat.
Haskel walks 5 miles to public school in the
morning, and goes to religious school in the
afternoon.

1933-1939: Haskel now calls himself "Charley,"
for his passion is no longer religion but English.
He spends much of his time learning English from
a torn, old grammar book. He writes to Eleanor
Roosevelt telling her that he loves English and
wants to speak it in America one day. She responds
enthusiastically. The German police order Charley
to work for them.

1940-1944: Charley is told by the Germans to
dismantle the ghetto in Kolbuchova, then hears that
he is to be killed upon completion of the job. He
escapes into the woods with a group of Jewish
men. One day, Charley went into a town to buy
bread. Waiting for him were a group a Polish
peasants... His friends found him--dead, a
pitchfork stuck into his chest.

1945- Charley's entire family was gassed at
Belzec. Only one of the Jewish fighters who went
to the woods with him survived the war.

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stamped. Opening the identity card and reading the inside front page reveals the vital
statistics of the person who experienced the Holocaust: name, date of birth, place of birth
and place of residence. Printed directly above this data looms a close-up black-and-white
pre-Holocaust photograph of the person/subject in question. The visitor journeys through
the permanent exhibition with this eerie conflation of passport and life sentence in hand.
At the end of each floor of the permanent exhibition, the visitor is again invited to enter the
identity card into a computer in order to obtain further information about their extended
double. The documentation added at each computer station correlates with the years chron-
icled by the exhibition. The permanent exhibition is divided into chronological sections:
making up the fourth floor, where the exhibition begins, is The Assault 1933–1939; on
the third floor is The Holocaust 1940–1944; and the second floor lays claim to Bearing
Witness 1945–. The identity card's unfolding biographical narrative both parallels and
intervenes in the larger historical narrative being produced in the massive 40,000 square-
foot permanent exhibition. By the time the visitor has descended the exhibition's floors,
his or her card will be filled with a condensed text revealing whether or not their ghost-
guide survived the atrocities.

It is more than coincident that this punctuated facsimile marking the bare minimum of a Holocaust victim's pre-Holocaust life and the unfolding ruin of his or her existence afterward echoes the horror of the actual marking process. The metaphors to the brutal labelling are hardly masked. Indeed, the philosophy driving the strategies of the museum's permanent exhibition program is based on bringing the horrors close to the surface, refusing to "sanitize" them. The museum's guiding approach was largely formulated by Martin Smith, former director of the museum's permanent exhibition program. Significant to the profile of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Smith is not a museum professional. He was chosen to formulate the museum's theoretical underpinnings and their exposition in the permanent exhibition precisely because of his experience as an independent documentary filmmaker.[20] Given museum director Jeshajahu Weinberg's hopes for the museum, to "introduce a three-dimensional multi-media approach" that he wants to differentiate from the more traditional ways of telling Holocaust history, Smith's past work with photographs and film footage as documents and storytelling devices harmonized well with the museum's goals.[21] Smith reflected on his working philosophy as it guided the difficult and daunting task toward formulating the permanent exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

> That any individual who wasn't part of the event can comprehend the event seems to me beyond the realm of reason. Even the survivors themselves cannot comprehend the event. They can perhaps occasionally comprehend the part and parcel of it.... I think we cannot avoid looking at some of the worst of the material. But what is the worst anyway? I find just looking at people's heads and feet when they are deceased as distasteful as anything else, like pubic hair and everything else that has caused me any number of worries. My belief is that if you do not put them on display then you are diminishing the extent of the horror and what the experience actually meant.... The irony is that I don't trust the medium of documentary photography at all and I don't even trust historical records. They are all coming through the filter system of human memory and all memory is written to advance a particular point of view. I do, however, think that the only way to handle the event is via a documentary approach. But I don't believe either documentary films or photographs alone can do it. The exhibit will be a mixture of photographs, films, documents and artifacts. I think increasingly with time people will be more and more skeptical about visual imagery and about film and rightly so.... The difference between our museum and most museums is that the photograph as object is of very little interest to us as far as the permanent exhibit is concerned. We are using photographs as evidentiary and storytelling vehicles....[22]

The museum's unflinching approach is made literally tangible from the first steps the

visitor takes into this mammoth edifice of simulated memory. The visitor enters the museum's permanent exhibition via one of three thin grey elevators. Once the elevator door shuts the viewer focuses on film footage enacting the liberation of the camps which is screened above them.[23] After the approximately twenty second journey ends, the elevator opens onto a view that confronts a black and white photographic blow-up depicting American soldiers at the Ohrdarf extermination camp at the time of liberation. A smaller colour photograph of a man who survived Buchenwald also immediately introduces the viewer to the exhibition.

The vital question thus brings its own pressure to bear on what remains to be told, toward what can be told. What forms of photographic nomenclature can be presented in the name of bearing witness? The Lyotardian echo reverberates "to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them." The most troubling issues for Smith at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum were precisely those bearing on the near-impossibility of confronting Holocaust memory and history on its palimpsest of levels, accepting the responsibility of "telling the story" and the difficult indispensability of employing documentary photographs. What then are the museum's divided and perhaps converging strategies for telling history and the modes of address it constructs between the visitor and the material?

Held carefully between the visitor's fingers or nestled nonchalantly in a coat pocket, the identity card might hold out the possibility of working across the relentlessly graphic and chronologically linear view of history projected throughout the elaborately-storied exhibition. Indeed, the exhibition team devised the identity card project as a way to break down the history of the Holocaust into what they refer to as human terms. Speaking about the majority of photographic images picturing people as ghost façades of their former selves, such as those that arrest the visitor upon his or her entrance into the museum, Smith rhetorically asks, "Why would a robust, McDonalds-fed, 18-year-old American boy have any connection to these emaciated figures? The identity card project came out of our desire to establish an immediate bonding with a person and a place."[24]

The notion of bonding is indeed key to the tantalizing concept underlying the identity card project. At stake is precisely how the texture of this bonding between the contemporary museum viewer and his or her extended double from the grave past will be staged. Also crucially at issue are how the photographic and textual markers that represent the Holocaust victim will formulate the proximities and the distances between that absent person and the variable identities of the museum visitor(s). In other words, how will the normative positions of objectivity (the museum visitor's) and subjectivity (that of the

"object" viewed) be maintained, refracted or abridged? If it is the museum's goal that the visitor arrive at some form of empathy toward the human spectre that has guided them through and across the permanent exhibition, it relies heavily on the possibility of imaginative projection. First, to write the shadow of a Holocaust victim's experiences through the inscription of a single photograph and an attentuated text calls forth its very (im)possibility. Further, to write and to re-envision across the chasm of unimaginable realities and incommensurable events and to bring in another's ability to imagine, to be open to the Holocaust other, is a necessary presumption. The identity card project tantalizes precisely because it acknowledges the presence of a viewer who receives information on cognitive and emotional registers. Through its functional and participatory processes, the identity card project provokes the possibility of intervening in documentary presentations which presume that looking is based on purely objective dynamics.

Despite the museum's self-congratulatory rhetoric that it will "tell the full story,"[25] the actual thinking toward the identity card is more closely aligned with Elie Wiesel's notion, mentioned earlier, of a metaphorical and literal gate or a barrier to full knowledge. Irving Howe has also written against the possibility of full disclosure and has called for representations that work in "tentative and modest solidarity with those who fell."[26] The refusal or the inability to grant full disclosure to historical events correlates with the disclosed and proper inability to create perfect mergings between the museum spectator and images of Holocaust victims. In fact, it is the identity card project's very reliance on the museum visitor's subjectivity and self-investment – the skeletal allowance of his or her own biographical data that drives the issuance of the card – that mimics the notion of a perfect mirror staging. An extreme and yet probable case of a shattering of, rather than a conflation with, one's doubled persona could occur if the visitor refuses affinity with their issued ghost. Smith has given thought to these built-in confrontations:

> Somebody may be offended by having their personal identity card represent a homosexual, to which my response is, if a Fundamentalist Christian comes in, would he be satisfied being coupled with a Jew? So if you don't issue a Jew, where do you go? Are we going to allow a Jew to say, "No, I don't want to hear about some dissenting Christian"?[27]

Although such surface disjunctures are built into the manoeuvring of the identity card, it is more conceptually driven by attempts to formulate imaginative projection tending toward empathy. What then are its safeguards, its soft barriers that warn against facile bonds of sameness between the museum visitor and the persons pictured and described on the cards? This crucial question might itself assume too much, might retrospectively be in vain because a marking of differences is always already in place in the strange and unpre-

dictable co-mingling of identities attenuated by the identity card. No matter what is announced about the project's ability to pair and to compare, the workings of the identity card could never occur through seamless identifications. Everywhere in the museum – from the vague memory of the disembodied city outside, which the museum's architecture tries to efface, to the intricate workings of the simulated environments it houses – we are reminded that we are in a vast space of articulated re-creation. To thus create a fusion of identities without gaps between the museum visitor and the remembered Holocaust victims would verge on the dangerous as well as the inconceivable.

It is the photographed face of the Holocaust victim that paradoxically promises to ward off slipping into false realisms and facile mimetic mergings endemic to the estranged documentary tradition. The photograph of the face on the identity card functions as an arbiter or a boundary zone between the interchangeable subjective and objective identities of the viewer and the memorialized other. It also negotiates the disputed terrain between the remembered and recountable historicized past of the individual to be thus commemorated and the private space of his or her unknowable and unrecountable life. In its profound visibility and simultaneous elusiveness, the hovering small-scale photographic face is a trace indexing parts of a map to a larger history. The oscillations of the face and the photograph as both presence and absence mirror the tensions in the photographic representation of intractable events. The employment of the face on the identity cards suggests a point of arrest bridging the utter horror depicted through the mass of Holocaust-related documentary photographs and the sheer refusal to depict. It serves as a vital buffer across the unpresentable and a tentative temptation to represent. It is fitting that the image of the face returns in an orchestrated manoeuvre meant to bracket the Nazi's mass-scale elimination and extermination of bodies, faces and identities. The photographic act of giving back faces and names and the textual performance of re-identifying appropriately take place here through dialectic means. The identity card conflates and restages the Nazi's perverse criminalizing of innocent persons while it seeks to enact recuperative acts of commemoration. Yet the restoration of the identity and the personhood of the individuals who perished or who suffered immeasurably is only provisionally accomplished by the degree to which the unknown museum visitor can or will internalize these memorized histories.

The uneasy point of intersection between the past and the present in the identity card's construction of historical memory is further played out through the confusion of tenses written into its condensed biographical sketches. The identity card documenting the unfolding of Haskel Kernweis' fatal entanglement with the Nazis moves between

the present and past tenses. The text that introduces Haskel with his photograph and bare data of existence reads:

> Haskel comes from a small village in Galicia. His family is very religious. His mother raises geese, chickens, and vegetables for the family to eat. Haskel walks 5 miles to public school in the morning, and goes to religious school in the afternoon.

Having established a trace of Haskel's pre-Holocaust existence, the text is brought consecutively into focus as the visitor moves through the floors of the exhibition space:

> 1933–1939: Haskel now calls himself "Charley," for his passion is no longer religion but English. He spends much of his time learning English from a torn, old grammar book. He writes to Eleanor Roosevelt telling her that he loves English and wants to speak it in America one day. She responds enthusiastically. The German police order Charley to work for them.
> 1940–1944: Charley is told by the Germans to dismantle the ghetto in Kolbushova, then hears that he is to be killed upon completion of the job. He escapes into the woods with a group of Jewish men.

The present tense is unfortunate here for it works too hard and in vain to force the reality of Haskel into *our* present. The entire machinery of memory being so carefully constructed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is supposedly being performed so that the memory of the past will be reformulated in the present. To pretend that the brutal and complete past can be written in the form of an innocent, innocuous and intimate present verges on the absurd, without pushing it far enough for us to pause on the incongruity of the task. It is hardly fitting to the memory of the person Haskel, whom we will never know.

The past tense enters this historico-diaristic narrative indicator at the terse point where the text intimates Haskel's death, in the middle of the 1940–1944 section: "One day, Charley went into a town to buy bread. Waiting for him were a group of Polish peasants . . . . " And it then continues, more aligned to the narrative and more in justice to Haskel's memory, in the simple past: "His friends found him – dead, a pitchfork stuck into his chest. 1945: Charley's entire family was gassed at Belzec. Only one of the Jewish fighters who went to the woods with him survived the war."

The identity card project intrigues precisely because it brings photographically and textually into view realities that will always be out of reach. The presumptuous contention at work is that the identity card's strategy of bonding can, indeed, write across chasms of the unknowable to arrive at some point of provisional fusion. The identity card experiment suggests one way to approach the inevitable dilemma of representing the unrepresentable, but in its move toward intimacy it more deeply reinforces the abyss of

distance it so emphatically seeks to shore up. This reaching across to the unknowable represents a desire to render present that which is not presentable but which can never be completely absent. This poignant and haunting desire to seek idioms for the horrible sublime which gives life to the identity card project bears in it the oscillating drives animating the dialectic dynamics of mourning itself.

Mourning may be thought to occur in less clearly defined and more overlapping terms than those put forward by Sigmund Freud, who figures it as an act which *can* be successfully accomplished through the "economic" incorporation of the lost other into the self. In Jacques Derrida's crucial text on mourning, friendship and unreadability, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, he weaves a discussion of a transfigured narcissism in which the self comes to understand its imprecise proximities with the grieved other through the simultaneous processes of possible and impossible mourning:

> Memory and interiorization: since Freud, this is how the "normal" work of mourning is often described. It entails a movement in which an interiorizing idealization takes in itself or upon itself the body and voice of the other, the other's visage and person, ideally and quasi-literally devouring them. This mimetic interiorization is not fictive; it is the origin of fiction, of apocryphal figuration. It takes place in a body. Or rather, it makes a place for a body, a voice, and a soul which, although "ours," did not exist and had no meaning *before* this possibility that one *must* always begin by remembering, and whose trace must be followed. *Il faut*, one *must*: it is the law, that law of the (necessary) relation of Being to law. We can only live this experience in the form of an aporia: the aporia of mourning and of prosopopeia, where the possible remains impossible. Where *success fails*. And where faithful interiorization bears the other and constitutes him in me (in us), at once living and dead. It makes the other a *part* of us, between us – and then the other no longer quite seems to be the other, because we grieve for him and bear him *in us*, like an unborn child, like a future. And inversely, the *failure succeeds*: an aborted interiorization is at the same time a respect for the other as other, a sort of tender rejection, a movement of renunciation which leaves the other alone, outside, over there, in his death, outside of us.[28]

This eloquent articulation figures possible mourning as Freud's clinical description of incorporation; impossible mourning would be the refusal to take the grieved other within onself so completely, so definitively. Derrida's idea of tender rejection acknowledges the self's almost obscene capacity to overwhelm the other, over there in his or her death. However, the incorporation of the other and its tender rejection are far from being mutually exclusive. Derrida reinvestigates their processes as being intricately intertwined. He discusses possible and impossible mourning in a co-mingling of more clinically derived

psychoanalytic and poetic terms in his earlier text, *"Fors,"* the foreword to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's study: "Introjection/incorporation: Everything is played out on the borderline that divides and opposes the two terms. From one safe, the other; from one inside, the other; one within the other; and the same outside the other."[29] Introjection is that move that tries (in vain) to suppress the interiorizing act of incorporation. Another quote is important here to establish the interconnecting modes of mourning:

> The question could of course be raised as to whether or not "normal" mourning preserves the object *as other* (a living person dead) inside me. This question – of the general appropriation and safekeeping of the other *as other* – can always be raised as the deciding factor, but does it not at the same time blur the very line it draws between introjection and incorporation, through an essential and irreducible ambiguity? Let us give this question a chance to be reposed. For Maria Torok, "incorporation, properly speaking," in its "rightful semantic specificity," intervenes at the limits of introjection itself, when introjection, for some reason, fails. Faced with the impotence of the process of introjection (gradual, slow, laborious, mediated, effective), incorporation is the only choice: fantasmatic, unmediated, instantaneous, magical, sometimes hallucinatory.[30]

The instantaneous and fantasmatic longing that enacts the mourning of incorporation takes us back to the United States Memorial Museum and Martin Smith's desires for the identity card project: "to establish an immediate bonding with a person and a place." That the museum has opted for the abbreviated version of mourning, the one that Derrida ironically yet gravely notes, from Maria Torok's description, as "the only choice," may well be because the museum has no other choice in hoping that casual visitors – tourists that is – would quickly come to some point of empathy with and historical recognition of the myriad experiences of Holocaust victims. The notion of mourning as a process of incorporation is closely enmeshed with the longing toward figurative bonding that the identity card project hopes to attain. Incorporation and the identity card project conjoin specifically in the dilemma of the place of the other. Where is the place of the departed other and where is he or she simultaneously displaced through the processes of incorporation set into motion through the identity card? The identity card pleads for instantaneous, immediate and yet impossible bonding. It bears in it the haunted oscillations between loving proximity and irrevocable distance toward the other. As Maria Torok has aptly phrased it, "The more the self keeps the foreign element as a foreigner inside itself, the more it excludes it. The self *mimes* introjection."[31] The question arises as to whether the imaginative projection of living in the name and in the place of the Holocaust other allows for a respectful taking in or incorporation of his or her memory without the attendant miming of introjection. In the

enmeshed workings of incorporation and introjection, or possible and impossible mourning, the safekeeping of the other must always simultaneously participate in its camouflaged exclusion, its tender rejection.

The identity card certainly calls for a taking in of life within oneself through the abbreviated notion of self-investment. The museum visitor indeed cloaks him or herself in the identity of the departed or brutalized other. But the intensity or degree of intake may not be sustained enough to prepare for the profitable return of introjection, for the ability to find a space of appropriate distance leading to respectful and inevitable otherness. Undercover in the identity card project rests a curious inversion of investments. So much is at stake in the museum visitor's investment to take in another that the identity and personhood of the memorialized other risks being lost in the process. Indeed, the issuance of mock identity cards could turn out to be a mourning and a bearing witness turned inside out and strained at its seams. This strange fusion of selves represents a desire for urgency camouflaged as a transfixed form of displaced nostalgia. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's attempt at empathy might better function as a reminder that the few circulating photographs documenting the Nazi ruin of the lives of the people pictured on the identity cards did little to alert the Allies or to bring them to action. Especially given the identity card's simulacrum of a United States' passport, we might then ask how the documentary photographs featuring American soldiers liberating the camps on display in the permanent exhibition can pretend to function as warning signals on the level of lucid historical objec-

tivity. The current manipulation and presence of these images both re-animate and haunt their past lives. The photographs and the identity cards unintentionally yet translucently perform that lack of response as mute and potent witnesses. Thus in their tantalizing (im)possibility, the identity cards tear at the photographic wound that would make of memory a souvenir.

While the museum travellers literally traverse and descend the three floors of the permanent exhibition with their expendable identity cards in hand, a different construction of photographic memory-work is being tried in an adjoining section of the exhibition space. Set off from the main arenas of chronological articulation and simulation are four tower alcoves filled with intimate possessions of those who perished and the instruments of their death.



Toothbrushes on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. On loan from the State Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Photo A. Kramer.
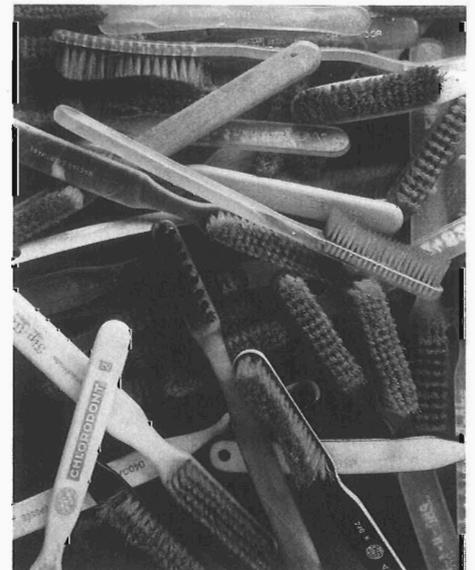
What promises to be the most expansive of these meta-exhibitions is the Tower of Faces, a space which is covered from top to bottom with 1,032 photographs of former residents of the Lithuanian town of Ejszyszki taken between 1890 and 1941. The 54-foot high, 16-foot by 28-foot sky-lit tower space was designed to stage a very specific approach for the museum visitor. Rather than being able to enter the alcove as if it were an easily accessible and perusable room, the fifth floor of the museum was removed at the point where it would connect with the tower's interior space. The visitor's journey through the Tower of Faces is thus possible only by crossing over a translucent glass bridge at the third and fourth floors. The photographs of the former townspeople of Ejszyszki are laminated over aluminum sheets and mounted on a lattice frame angling inward as it rises from its base on the third floor to its fifth floor ceiling. As the museum's newsletter describes the effect, "visitors will be able to peer over the side of the bridge and view the photographs from Ejszyszki seemingly floating above and cascading below them."[32]

Unlike the identity card's mode of address based on insistent self-identifications, the Tower of Faces stages the spectator to occupy the role of near-invisibility. We are allowed to pass through the photographically haunting identities of the Jews from Ejszyszki; no virtual attempt will be made to psychically or historically bond us with them as their pre-Holocaust likenesses bring us near. Absent, too, from this more gentle memory-trial is the strained anticipation and parcelated telling of the brutalities at work in the identity card project. The events that occurred at Ejszyszki are recounted after the visitor passes through the photographic chamber via the glass bridge for the first time. It is told how, during the period of the Jewish high holidays in 1941, from September 25 to 26, the Nazi mobile killing squads or *Einsatzgruppen* rounded up people from the synagogues, took them to the marketplace and then to the fields outside the town to be massacred. Throughout Europe and with the help of non-German collaborators, the *Einsatzgruppen* mass-murdered over two million Jews and still-unmeasured numbers of Gypsies, Byelorussians and Russians before the organized plan of the concentration and exterminations camps was in place. The visitor's second encounter with the photographic ghosts of the slaughtered Ejszyszkians, those few who survived and their ancestors occurs on the third floor of the museum, at which point he or she crosses the glass bridge yet another time.

Although the Tower of Faces and the identity card project are both animated by ambivalent desires to intervene in a purely linear and chronological telling of the events of the Holocaust, the unravelling, or more precisely, the filling up of information on the identity card nonetheless progresses on a path parallel with the larger narrative. Because of the identity card's plea for assimilation of the Holocaust victim's history into our supposedly

singular identities, the articulation of the past into the present and the desire to abridge the sense of pastness remains a story of easily separable spaces of time and memory. The visitor never returns to the same place and time again; history is told in a logically sequential framework. Circulating on a different register in the Tower of Faces, the histories and identities of the town and the people of Ejszyszki are provocatively staged through repetitions of almost identical spaces that do not follow one after the other. The first tenuous crossing of the glass bridge is repeated on the next lower floor only after the museum visitor has undergone the full onslaught of the fourth and third floor exhibitions. The second entrance into the photographic tower allows for a second glimpse or a revision that functions more in harmony with the layered way in which memories overlap and cross the mental time zones of the past and the present, especially involving circumstances of extreme traumatic dislocation. In her book, *A Scrap of Time*, Polish Holocaust survivor Ida Fink writes about her own tenuous return to the remembrance of the unarticulated and immeasurable past:

> I want to talk about a certain time not measured in months and years. For so long I have
> wanted to talk about this time.... I wanted to, but I couldn't; I didn't know how. I was
> afraid, too, that this second time, which is measured in months and years, had buried the
> other time under a layer of years, that this second time had crushed the first and destroyed
> it within me. But no. Today, digging around in the ruins of memory, I found it fresh and
> untouched by forgetfulness. [33]

The dilemmas and the interweavings between chronologically measurable calendar time and the cyclical structure of repeatable time in nature and memory – a time which, however, never returns as the same – is a constant joy and tension in Jewish tradition. The ability of the Tower of Faces to both evoke the "ruins of memory," as Ida Fink described her own internal journey, and to provoke historical remembrance so vividly through the resiliant re-visioned faces attests to a specific tradition of Holocaust remembrance related to the larger Jewish tradition that overlaps chronological time and cyclical space. *Yisker biher*, literally "tombstones of paper," refers to the religious and historical obligation to remember annihilated communities as well as the collective and individual memorial books themselves spontaneously produced by survivors who perform this work of remembrance. The first contemporary *yisker biher* were produced following the post-World War I pogroms in Central and Eastern Europe; and these memorial books proliferated after the genocides of World War II. The aftermath of the Nazi mass murders and the disappearance of entire communities profoundly redefined the purpose of the *yisker biher*. Their task became ever more doubled: to chronicle the events of destruction and to simultaneously attest to the

memory and vibrancy of what was. In an important article, Nathan Wachtel describes the traditional format of the memorial books as including an introductory historical section on the cultural life of the community in question, followed by individual and group accounts – with photographs if they survived – of the times before World War I, the period between the two wars and then the genocide.[34] Wachtel reminds us that the time periods composing these histories often overlap, and their recounting is overlayed with the survivor-writers' own diverse and spontaneous memories. Bleeding beyond the historical edges of the *yisker biher* are the grassroots acts by survivors to enliven and re-enact the vibrancy of the lives that comprised their communities.

The Tower of Faces partakes of the *yisker biher* memorial tradition and its structuring of history and memory at the crucial overlappings where the narrative of destruction is conveyed so that the telling of the lives that were will live on. Where the memorial books accomplish these doubled deeds primarily with words and memoirs, the Tower of Faces insists on the pre-war vitality of Ejszyszki with its 1,032 pre-Holocaust photographs. That the archive composing these photographs was painstakingly re-assembled by a survivor of Ejszyszki reaffirms the Tower of Faces' affinity with the production of the *yisker biher* books. Yaffa Eliach, now Breuklundian Professor of Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College, was a young girl when the *Einsatzgruppen* murders occurred. Her parents managed to escape from the synagogue, fled and were reunited with Yaffa three weeks later in another town. After the liberation she returned to Ejszyszki with her family. On 20 October 1944, the local Polish population staged a pogrom against the surviving 29 Jews, killing Yaffa's mother and younger brother. In the face of this double dying, her father paid the Polish residents of the town, who had taken over the formerly Jewish-owned homes, for the few remaining photographs still housed in these occupied spaces. Over the years, Professor Eliach procured still more photographs by contacting fellow survivors who emigrated before the Holocaust and by tracking the records of the Ejszyszki Society in Chicago. The majority of the 5,000 photographs in her archive, however, were reassembled by tracing relatives and friends to whom Ejszyskians may have sent copies of photographs before 1941. The grave irony of Professor Eliach's recollection process is that her grandmother, Alte Katz, was the prominent town photographer before the *Einsatzgruppen* murders of 1941 occurred. Her practice was taken over by her non-Jewish competitor. None of the negatives from Professor Eliach's grandmother's practice survived.

Returning to Derrida's reading of Maria Torok's description of the processes of introjective mourning as "gradual, slow, laborious, mediated, effective," we see how deeply at variance are the workings of the identity card project from those animating the Tower of

Faces. As an act of remembrance, the Tower of Faces is doubly maintained by Professor Eliach's arduous task of re-collection and the deed of love underlying it. Indeed, the laborious and resilient archival work occurring here, which is only visible through explication, is evoked through the tempered labyrinthian passageway through which the spectator is storied. The recurring glass bridge allowing entrance into the broken prism of lives and destruction suggests a slow unfolding and a tender yet unswerving approach to the events. If the small photographic semblances of persons on the identity cards buffer the museum visitor from the horrific while they also allow the accompanying text to do its narrative work, the photographs measuring one to three feet which line the Tower of Faces become not only performative bridges to representation but also pervade the hauntingly articulated space. While the identity card faces ask us to assimilate their identities into ours through the abbreviated processes of incorporative mourning, the Tower's pressing photographic likenesses perform otherness not through a forced notion of sameness, but through a startling revelation of difference. That is, on one reading the faces can actually be construed as giving something to the viewer rather than asking the viewer to efface the subject to be mourned by abridging the acts of mourning. The towering faces mime solace and offer oscillating sites of repose. Walter Benjamin's dialectical discussion of the portrait in relationship to the cult of remembrance touches on this double-edged dilemma of the power of the photographic face. Writing in 1936 not without some trace of regret, he was thinking about the technical reproduction of the human countenance as the last retrenchment of photography's cult value:

> It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty.[35]

The vibrant images in the Tower of Faces do not fulfill the cult of remembrance through facile refuge or solace. These are not just any anonymous mementoes commemorating a life's passing through natural or even foreshortened death. They are passing figures to the cult of remembrance and even more impressive signals of the severe rupture in the notion of a natural death. Their gentle weight cuts between solace and warning. The task is not to mime mourning in its abbreviated states, but to compound that act of miming mourning immeasurably when the deaths and the losses at issue here surpass the normal paradigm of life's worth in death. Unlike the identity card project, which gets caught between performing as a history lesson and as a device for mourning, the Tower of Faces' similarly doubled obligation acknowledges the riddled (im)possibility of mourning itself.

Going back to Freud's notion of accomplished mourning, all energy is spent on de-investing the libido from the lost one. In "Mourning and Melancolia," Freud discusses the work the ego undertakes to be "set free" from the lost one in order for "the loss of the object" to be "surmounted."[36] While both the workings of the identity card and the Tower of Faces involuntarily defy Freud's notion of mastery over the lost one, they do so in very different ways. The identity card acknowledges that it can never simulate the long and arduous processes of introjective mourning. Rather than giving up the lost loved one or the "object" as Freud's model suggests, the identity card project seeks its mock-adoption. The Tower of Faces, however, sets up a soft barrier between the taking in of an analogized self and keeps its distance from the trespass of sites of deaths and identities that never had the luxury of being fixed. It rejects the Freudian assumption that the memory and pain of losing the lost one, and in this case, the lost many, can be surmounted and mastered. Rather than miming the dual processes of mourning and drawing the viewer in through crucial yet overtly artificial identifications with the lost or traumatized Holocaust other as in the identity card project, the dynamics between museum visitor and the mourned other in the Tower of Faces are at once more modest and more far-reaching. Specifically in relation to the cutting employment of nostalgia in the portraits reproduced in the Tower of Faces, philosopher Emmanuel Levinas' difficult formulations of facing, otherness and alterity come into focus:

> This incommensurability with consciousness, which becomes a trace of the one who knows where, is not the inoffensive relationship of a knowledge in which everything is equalised, not the indifference of spatial contiguity; it is an assimilation of me by another, a responsibility with regard to men we do not even know. The relationship of proximity cannot be reduced to any modality of distance or geometrical contiguity, not to the simple "representation" of a neighbour; it is already an assignation – an obligation, anachronistically prior to any commitment.[37]

In Levinas' perspective it is not only the dialectic of the other being assimilated into the subject that is at stake. His thinking on alterity emphasizes the demand the other holds on the subject in opening up that fragile, tense and impalpable space between self and other. Akin to Levinas' notion of alterity, the Tower of Faces does not ask the subject to recognize the other through the kind of blind and frontal acknowledgement upon which some documentary photography represents the other in order to involuntarily dismiss him or her. The hovering photographs in the Tower of Faces challenge the viewer's sense of precarious involvement in the terror and stage the entire apparatus to perform more as a fluctuating memorial rather than as a stable and self-assured monument.

1. For incisive analyses of aspects of the documentary tradition, especially those bearing on its social documentary and reportage inflections, see especially Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions About Documentary Photography," *Event Horizon*: *Essays on Hope, Sexuality, Social Space and Media(tion) in Art*, eds. Lorna Falk and Barbara Fischer (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1987); Martha Rosler, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts on Documentary Photography," *Martha Rosler: Three Works* (Halifax/Cape Breton, Nova Scotia: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1981); Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," *Massachusetts Review* 19. 4 (Winter 1978); reprinted in *Photography Against the Grain* (Halifax/Cape Breton, Nova Scotia: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); and William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

2. A published example of Nazi propaganda photography is that of the prints taken by Albert Cusian and Erhard Josef Knoblock, members of Propaganda-Kompanie 689. This unit worked under the auspices of *Signal*, the Nazi's main international propaganda magazine, with over 20 foreign language editions and a run of 2.5 million. Cusian and Knoblock's photographs, taken in the Warsaw Ghetto during the spring of 1941, are reproduced in *The Warsaw Ghetto in Photographs*, ed. Ulrich Keller (New York: Dover Publications, 1984). The film rolls are housed at the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz. See also the chilling "report" by the Nazi commander of the Warsaw Ghetto, *The Stroop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More*, translated and annotated by Sybil Milton (New York: Pantheon, 1979).

3. Of course, Margaret Bourke-White's photographs for *Life* magazine, later published in her 1946 book, *Dear Fatherland, Rest Quietly*, rely, too, on highly contingent photographic realism. In the last few years, photographs are surfacing that fall unevenly between the cracks of the polarized institutional regimes. Among the many enigmatic photographic projects, shots taken by the German Wehrmacht soldier Heinz Jöst are being circulated through 1995. The exhibition, *19.9.1941, A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto: A Birthday Trip in Hell*, is organized by Yad Vashem and is circulated in the United States by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. See my "An Uneasy Witness," *Afterimage* (Dec. 1991):15-6 for a critical review of this exhibition. For more background on the ghetto and the people who became the camera's targets, including those the author was able to trace after the war, see Günther Schwarberg's remarkably researched *Das Getto* (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 1989). A more sustained and softly outraged photographic project is that produced by another German soldier, Joe J. Heydecker, a German army conscript who came from a liberal German family. His photographs were not printed until 1981 and have been published in *Joe J. Heydecker: Das Warschauer Getto: Foto-Dokumente eines deutschen Soldaten aus dem Jahr 1941*, with a foreword by Heinrich Böll (München:

Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983). This book has been translated as *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Photographic Record, 1941–1944* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1990). For an exception to the victim depictions of ghetto life during the war, see the documentation of Lodz ghetto's underground activities in *With a Camera in the Ghetto: Mendel Grossman*, eds. Z. Szner and A. Sened (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

4. Quoted in Carla Hall, "Celebrating the Will to Remember," *The Washington Post*, 29 April 1987, Style Section, 1.

5. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

6. This term is crucial in Benjamin's essay on pure and impure language, "On Language as Such and On the Language of Man," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York and London: A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978).

7. Ibid., 330.

8. The relevant text is of course Barthes' *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984). Although Barthes conflates the realist and commemorative status of photography with his own poignant need to recapture his bond with his deceased mother, he also considers the photograph's unsettling ability to disrupt the private sphere through the photograph's simultaneously disembodied public identity. For a concise survey of the history of the photograph as death commemoration, see *Memento Mori: Death in Nineteenth-Century Photography*, exhibition catalogue (Riverside: California Museum of Photography, University of California, 1990).

9. Edith Wyschogrod's important study, *Spirit in Ashes: Hegel, Heidegger, and Man-Made Mass Death* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), intervenes in the guiding Western philosophical discourse on death, which Wyschogrod characterizes as "dominated by a single pattern which depends upon interpreting the self as a cognition monad and the process of dying as requiring behavior appropriate to a rational subject." This "authenticity paradigm" also assumes the notion that death is integral to life and will not be in vain if life has been full and intense. Wyschogrod refuses this notion of quality of death in life in relation to the phenomenon of mass death, making the point that in this case the authenticity paradigm is reduced to self-parody since the experience of life and any sense of quality in death are destroyed. She suggests that philosophical perceptions of language, self and society must be re-evaluated in light of technologically accomplished mass death. She thus strives to think what a philosophical grieving could be, a grieving in which the work of mourning must go on not only for "the lost one," but for "the lost many." This grieving process relies on the re-establishment of poetic language and the act of recollective naming. However, as Judith Butler insightfully queries in her review of Wyschogrod's book (in *History and Theory* 27.1 [1986]: 69), "Do names really 'open' us to an intersubjective ground, or are they simply so many ruins which designate a history irrevocably lost? Do these names really signify for us the fullness of the lives that were lost, or are they so many tokens of what we cannot know, enigmas, inscrutable and silent?"

10. Saul Friedländer, "The 'Final Solution': Unease in Interpretation," *History and Memory* 1.2 (Fall/Winter 1989): 75, footnote 14. In Friedländer's lucid and compelling essay, he discusses the dilemma facing the historian attempting to interpret the "Final Solution," a complex of events that themselves defy historicizing comprehension. "On the one hand," Friedländer writes, "[the historian] cannot but study the 'Final Solution' as any other past phenomenon. The reconstruction of the most detailed sequences of events related to the extermination of the Jews is progressing apace. On the other hand, for some historians at least, an opaqueness remains at the very core of the historical understanding and interpretation of what happened." (p. 61, emphasis added) Friedländer cites impeccable Holocaust scholars including Arno Mayer, Charles Maier and Raul Hilberg in reference to a common indismissible sense of their lack of understanding of the events despite, or rather, in the face of, their relentless research.

11. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988). Lyotard's earlier thinking on this subject appeared in "Discussions, or phrasing 'after Auschwitz'," which was first presented as a lecture in 1980 for the colloquium, "Les fins de l'homme; à partir du travail de Jacques Derrida," at Cerisay-la-Salle. It was translated by Georges van den Abbeele and first published as *Working Paper* no.2, 1986 for the Center for Twentieth-Century Studies, University of Milwaukee. It is reprinted in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 360-92. This essay appears in Lyotard's *The Differend* as part of the chapter "Result." In keeping with the tone and structure of *The Differend*, "Result" differs from "Discussions" in its more rhetorical insistence on the linking of one notice to another (all of them are numbered).

12. Ibid., 57.

13. Ibid., 5.

14. Ibid., 56-57.

15. Ibid., 13. [emphasis added]

16. See Theodor W. Adorno, "Valéry Proust Museum," *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981).

17. In the spirit of Benjamin and projecting from his ideas on historical approaches toward the past, Friedländer's term for the difficult unease in interpreting and formulating the meaning and history of the Holocaust is "unredeemable." See Friedländer's essay, "The 'Final Solution': On the Unease in Historical Interpretation," cited in note 10 above.

18. The following discussion on the identity card project and the Tower of Faces is based in part on the museum's publicity as well as interviews I conducted with key planning members of the permanent exhibition team in Washington, D.C. over the last two years. Any inaccuracies in describing these aspects of the permanent exhibition are my own. I look forward to working further with the identity card project and the Tower of Faces when the museum opens on 22 April 1993, at which time I will have the opportunity to walk through the museum, as well as listen to others' responses. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

will be the nation's first officially sanctioned and federally mandated (but privately funded) institution dedicated to the memory of and continued education about the Holocaust in the United States. The concept for the museum was instituted by an act of Congress on October 7, 1980 under the auspices of President Carter. It is located adjacent to the Mall, between 14th Street and Raoul Wallenberg Place (formerly 15th Street), east of Independence Avenue and within view of the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial.

19. Similar assumptions about ownership of an historical event also occur when the name of the museum appears abbreviated, in its perhaps unconscious act of conforming to the bureaucratized economies of Washington, D.C. Its use of the acronym USHMM serves to neutralize the frenetic dynamics that the institution houses and animates. The presumptions of abbreviating only underline the authoritative and definitive name that inaugurates this institution. For a counter-measure in a very different genre, a literary act that names and safeguards reference to Holocaust memory without laying authoritative claim to it, see Jacques Derrida, *Feu la cendre* (Paris: Des Femmes, 1987). This book has been translated into English by Ned Lukacher as *Cinders* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

20. Smith is known for his work with historical subjects and what he himself refers to as "difficult" material. His *The World At War* television special on World War II aired on United States television. His work at the museum was produced in tandem with exhibition designer Ralph Appelbaum.

Ralph Applebaum Associates, a New York City firm, specializes in the planning and design of natural, cultural and social history museums. Interestingly, the company's past projects include working on the permanent installation *Native Peoples of the Southwest* at the Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona (1984) and the travelling exhibition *Jackie Robinson: An American Journey* (1987) for the New York Historical Society. Currently the firm is working on *A Vision of the Americas*, a new installation for the Smithsonian Institution, which will "challenge misconceptions about Native Americans," as well as planning and designing an exhibition on 4,000 years of Jewish identity and culture at the newly renovated Jewish Museum in New York City.

21. Reported by Judith Weinraub, "Passing On The Memory of The Holocaust," *The Washington Post*, 2 Feb. 1990, C4.

22. Interview between the author and Martin Smith at the temporary offices of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. on 22 August 1990.

23. My thanks go to Raye Farr, current director of the permanent exhibition program, for giving me a tour of the museum model in early March 1992.

24. Op. cit., interview with Martin Smith.

25. From a statement included in the museum's publicity packet.

26. Irving Howe, preface to Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton, *Art of the Holocaust* (New York: Routledge Press, 1981), 11.

27. Op. cit., interview with Martin Smith.

28. Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava

and Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 34-35.

29. Jacques Derrida, *"Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," trans. Barbara Johnson, foreword to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xvi. Abraham and Torok's study mytho-poetically re-psychoanalyzes the cryptic case and protective/enigmatic words of Sergei Constantinovitch Pankeiev and takes an insightful view into the history of this famous case in relation to Sigmund Freud's efforts to legitimize the founding of psychoanalysis.

30. Ibid., xvii.

31. Ibid.

32. "A Tower of Faces, A Tower of Life," *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Newsletter* (March 1991): 5.

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