‘DARK TOURISM’:

REDUCING DISSONANCE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ATROCITY AT SELECTED MUSEUMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the issue of dissonance in the interpretation of atrocity at museums and other cultural heritage sites. The existing debates in the field are outlined in an extensive literature review encompassing general and specific references. The basic conceptual framework of the dark tourism phenomenon is elaborated through case studies in Washington D.C., illustrating the variety of interpretative dilemmas faced by museum directors and curators. The cases include the permanent exhibition at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the *Enola Gay* exhibition at the National Air and Space Museum, and the National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall. The identified controversies are analyzed, and recommendations for mitigating existing conflicts and suggestions for future research are offered.

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CHAPTER I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. Introduction

What has been recently named 'dark tourism' is a form of cultural heritage tourism that involves visiting sites associated with death, disaster, human tragedy and atrocity of various kinds. The growing volume and popularity of such forms of tourism is rather alarming. It raises anxiety about certain aspects of managing, marketing, and interpreting dark tourism products and sites. Seen in the light of a larger global trend - the commodification occurring in all spheres of social life, and culture in particular - museums and heritage sites are as affected as mass media, the arts, the movie industry, music production, literature, and drama.

The attraction of death and disaster has always been and will continue to be a powerful motivator for travel. The origins of this fascination can be traced back to antiquity, when pilgrimages were a common form of travel involving a journey to places associated with the death of an individual of special religious and sometimes mystical significance. Nowadays, wars, battlefields, cemeteries, concentration camps, assassination sites, ghost stories, and other man-made disasters, are being packaged and sold to the public, oftentimes for mere entertainment. Since it is very unlikely that such tourist motivations will ever disappear, efforts should be focused on solving or at least softening the controversies generated by the unacceptable interpretation and commodification of atrocity, horror and human tragedy.

2. Problem Statement

Dark tourism does not simply imply association with death, war, assassination, genocide, horror, disaster, and other atrocities. It may signify the misuse of heritage and history, and the abuse of certain universal and often sacred human values by the cultural heritage industry for entertainment and market benefits. The specifics of managing dark tourism sites and interpreting the so-called 'heritage of atrocity' have not yet been thoroughly examined in the general literature on cultural resources management. Therefore, this thesis attempts to understand the complex nature of the controversies generated by the use of the heritage of atrocity as tourist attractions, as well as to comprehend the political, social, and cultural forces shaping these controversies. In particular, dissonance in the interpretation of atrocity at museum sites is examined.

Dissonance is often caused or exacerbated by insensitive commercial developments, but museums, heritage sites, monuments, and other heritage institutions are as culpable, if not more so, of causing heritage dissonance with more serious consequences, than any commercial development. Although it is understood that heritage dissonance is critical to the sustainability of heritage resources, there is an evident lack of awareness to the problem. Therefore, active dissonance management is very much needed in a contemporary society characterized by pluralism and multi-culturalism, involving a close dialogue between all stakeholders, notwithstanding their commercial or non-commercial orientation. Management of dissonance is important not only in the context of cultural heritage tourism, but also in the larger context of reaching global peace, harmony and understanding.

3. Research Objectives

This study attempts to understand the issues of dissonance related to: (a) the interpretation of atrocity at cultural heritage tourism sites through defining the concepts of 'dark tourism', 'heritage of atrocity', and 'dissonance', and (b) analyzing the dissonance potential related to and generated by the interpretation of the heritage of atrocity at selected museum sites and museum exhibits, occurring at different stages of the product development process.

4. Definition of Terms

The key concepts used in this thesis are: dark tourism, cultural heritage tourism, museum, heritage of atrocity, heritage interpretation, dissonance, and product life cycle. The following working definitions are fundamental to constructing the conceptual framework within this thesis.

4.1. Dark Tourism

Dark tourism is a form of cultural heritage tourism that involves visiting sites associated with death, disaster, human tragedy and atrocity of various kinds, as the main purpose of the trip.

4.2. Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism is defined as travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage and special character of a place.

4.3. Museum

A museum is an institution dedicated to collecting, documenting, preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting material evidence and associated information about the tangible and intangible heritage to the public.

4.4. Heritage of Atrocity

Atrocity is defined as "the case of deliberately inflicted extreme human suffering"[1]. Heritage of atrocity denotes all associated artifacts, buildings, sites and place associations, as well as the intangible accounts of the acts of atrocity, interpreted by the various parties involved – victims, perpetrators, by-standers, and others.

4.5. Heritage Interpretation

Heritage interpretation is a communication process designed to reveal characteristics, meanings, and relationships of cultural and/or natural heritage to the public through firsthand experience, illustrative media and references to objects, artifacts, landscapes, structures or persons.[2]

4.6. Dissonance

Dissonance in heritage is a tension or conflict, inherent to the nature of all heritage, which is caused by the simultaneous holding of mutually inconsistent attitudes and behavior among heritage institutions, heritage users, and other stakeholders in the

[1] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 94.

process of heritage production and consumption.

4.7. Product Life Cycle

The product life cycle is a marketing concept describing the four major phases in the product market dynamics – introduction, growth, maturity, and decline.

5. Methodology

The methodology applied in this thesis involves constructing a conceptual framework of the problem under study, based on the findings from the literature review and from the selected case studies in Washington, D.C.

5.1. Literature Review

The literature review covers studies directly and indirectly related to the problem. The review is organized by subject, starting with the more general studies related to the issues of tourism, commodification, and postmodernity; heritage, history, and authenticity; past, memory, and trauma; and continuing with the more specific studies on American memory, the Holocaust, thanatourism, and others. The studies on dark tourism and heritage dissonance are examined in greater detail, as being most relevant to the problem addressed in this thesis.

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[2] Based on the definition of interpretation by Freeman Tilden, the "father" of heritage interpretation, in Tilden, F. (1977). *Interpreting Our Heritage,* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 9.

5.2. Case Study Method

The unquantifiable and complex nature of the research problem necessitates a qualitative rather than a quantitative research method. An interpretive case study approach is applied here, where an inductive, hypothesis- or theory-generating mode of inquiry is adopted. The characteristics of the case study research method and their applicability are presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Characteristics and applicability of the case study research method

CHARACTERISTICS[3]	APPLICABILITY
It seeks to understand a meaning construed by the people.	This thesis seeks to understand dissonance related to the interpretation of atrocity at heritage sites, and museums in particular.
There is an inductive approach to generating knowledge.	The inductive approach involves constructing a conceptual framework of dark tourism based on the findings from the selected cases.
The research is based on the insider's perspective.	The perspective of heritage site managers, curators, interpreters, tour guides, and other stakeholders, is essential for understanding dissonance related to the interpretation of atrocity at the selected museum sites.
Meaning is to be interpreted through the investigator's perceptions.	It is through the investigator's perceptions that the final meaning of dark tourism is induced.
The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.	The advantage is that the human perspective is more sensitive to a non-verbal context and more flexible to the changing conditions of the study in progress.
The end product is narrative and descriptive.	The end product is a basic conceptual framework describing dissonance in dark tourism.

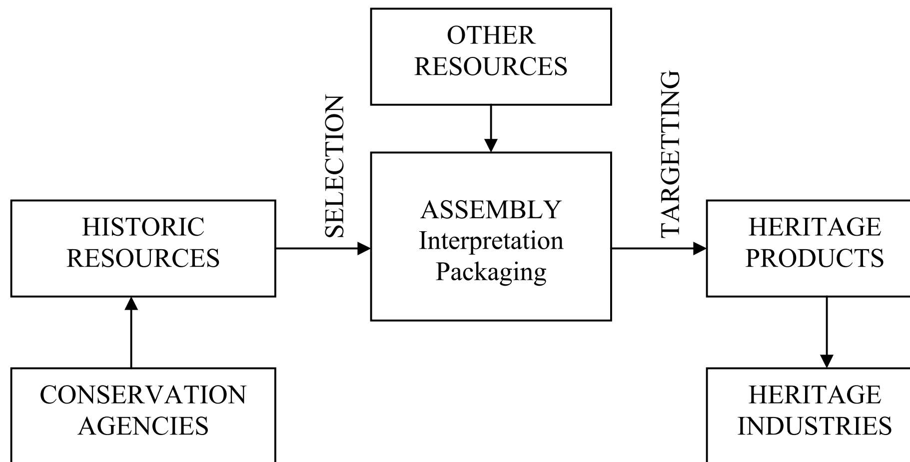
[3] Winegardner, K. E.. *The Case Study Method of Scholarly Research*. Retrieved May 31, 2002, from http://www.tgsa.edu/online/cybrary/case1.html.

For the purposes of this study, where the main implication is to understand and suggest ways to mitigate heritage dissonance created by the interpretation and use of cultural heritage by the tourism industry, the criterion product life cycle (PLC) is considered determinative in the selection. One case study is selected for each of the three major phases of the product life cycle – introduction, growth, maturity, and decline. Thus, the final selection includes three cases in different product development phases. The permanent exhibition of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum represents a heritage product in the growth phase. The National Museum of the American Indian scheduled to open on the Mall in 2004 represents a heritage product at the introduction stage. The *Enola Gay* exhibit of the National Air and Space Museum exemplifies a heritage product in the maturity phase of its life cycle.

5.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework constructed in this thesis seeks to explain and simplify the controversies generated by the interpretation of atrocity at cultural heritage sites. The 'model of heritage tourism production' by G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge *(Figure 1)* has been adopted. This model illustrates the process of commodification of heritage and transforming it into a product intended for tourist consumption. Although this simplified 'industrial' analogy of an assembly-resource-product-consumption system presents only the supply side of the heritage industry, it is helpful for the analysis. The analogous process of dark tourism production is further modified based on the findings from the literature review and from the case studies.

Figure 1. Heritage tourism production[4]



[4] Ashworth, G.J. & Tunbridge, J.E. (1996). *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict.* Chichester: Wiley, 7.

6. Limitations

The case study research methodology itself has limitations, such as the difficulty of generalizing the findings. This is particularly true in the cultural heritage field where every case is different, unique and specific. The case study method could also oversimplify or exaggerate the problem. However, conducting multiple-case studies could strengthen the basis for analytical generalizations.

This thesis is geographically limited to Washington, D.C., being the major center of cultural heritage tourism on the East Coast of the United States. The Nation's Capital, however, has its own character as a cultural heritage tourism destination. Therefore, the final conclusions may not be valid for other city, suburban and rural areas within the United States, and worldwide. Furthermore, the selection of the case studies is limited to museums and museum exhibitions only, thus providing a common ground for analysis and comparison. It must be noted, however, that two out of the three cases belong to the Smithsonian Institution, one of the giants in the heritage industry of Washington, D.C. Therefore, the findings can not be generalized for all types of museums, nor for all types of heritage institutions.

The analysis of dissonance in the interpretation and use of cultural heritage by the tourism industry is crucial for developing a better understanding of tourist attitudes towards the past, as well as for promoting higher professional standards in the travel, tourism and leisure industries. The findings from this study could help tourism professionals with guidelines for better practices in the interpretation of atrocity, which unfortunately is very likely to continue to be part of contemporary culture.

7. Thesis Outline

The background to the problem under study having been introduced, and the research methodology having been outlined in this chapter, the following Chapter II presents in detail the available academic literature related to the problem, with a focus on the key concepts of ‘dark tourism’ and ‘heritage dissonance’. Using available literature and documentary sources, the selected case studies are analyzed in Chapter III. The conclusions from the literature review and the case study analyses are summarized in Chapter IV, where a conceptual framework for dark tourism is presented, and guidelines for dissonance reduction are suggested.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Related Studies

The complex nature of the research subject requires an interdisciplinary approach. Due to the limited availability of academic literature directly related to dark tourism, the present study is based on the general body of knowledge referring to tourism anthropology, cultural heritage tourism, interpretation of cultural and natural environment, and museum studies. The existing body of articles and books on specific issues, and case studies, related to dark tourism, not necessarily referring to the same term, is also considerable. The lack of a contemporary comprehensive study of dark tourism practices in the United States, however, with a particular focus on understanding the conflicts created by these practices, validates the objectives of this thesis.

1.1. General Studies

1.1.1. Tourism, commodification and postmodernity

A lot has been recently written on tourism as a social phenomenon in the postmodern society. Some earlier studies (Urry, 1990) suggest that tourism has always been a postmodern social activity. The relationships between tourism and consumer culture in postmodern society have been studied and discussed by many scholars (Sharpley, 1996; Nuryanti, 1996); and concepts such as 'postmodern tourism' or 'post-tourisms' have been introduced. The commodification of the past, postmodern pastiche,

and the search for authentic experiences at heritage attractions has been further explored (Goulding, 1998). The heritage experience in particular has been redefined in the context of postmodernism (Hannabuss, 1999). Most recently, a sociological analysis of tourism and modernity has been developed where the connection between modernity and the tourism of authenticity has been studied (Wang, 2000). Furthermore, an ethnographic approach to tourism discourse and travel narrative highlights the differences between travel in the modern and postmodern age (Galani-Moutafi, 2000).

The list of authors and works is much too extensive to be discussed here, but it is worth noting that most studies acknowledge the commodification of heritage as an aspect of postmodern culture. It is interesting that the majority of pilot studies on postmodern tourism were initiated in 1996 - in the same year when the terms ‘dark tourism’ and ‘heritage dissonance’ were added to the vocabulary of cultural tourism studies.

1.1.2. Heritage, history and authenticity

Closely related to the topic of postmodern culture of consumption and commodification, is the issue of authenticity in the use of history and the interpretation of heritage by the tourism industry. Therefore, the literature pertaining to the inter-relations between heritage, history and authenticity of tourist experience is of particular interest to the present study.

The connection between history and heritage industry is examined by John Urry in his classic book “*The Tourist Gaze*” (Urry, 1990). In Chapter 6 “Gazing at history”, Urry classifies tourist sites in terms of three dichotomies – “whether they are an object of romantic or collective tourist gaze; whether they are historical or modern; and whether

they are authentic or inauthentic". While many would directly blame the heritage industry for compromising on authenticity while choosing to present a spectacle and sensation of authenticity to the public (e.g. Burnett, 2001), others claim that true authenticity does not exist (Ashworth, 1996). Nevertheless, the relationship between authenticity and commodification is often recognized by most scholars as strong and direct.

A number of case studies explore the perception of authenticity among tourists, for example, in the cases of the Viking heritage tourism (Halewood & Hannam, 2001), farm tourism in Australia (Jennings & Stehlik, 2002), and others.

1.1.3. History, 'culture wars' and Hollywood

In the larger context of the so-called contemporary 'culture wars', many studies explore the relationships between history and the film industry. Some of the dilemmas in the presentation of history in Hollywood movies mirror the interpretive dilemmas at heritage sites and museums. Therefore, the present study may benefit from the findings of contemporary film studies (Roth, 1995; Terry-Chandler, 2000). Films like Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, and his short documentary on the Holocaust - *Night & Fog*, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour documentary *Shoah*, and the well-known *Titanic*, just to name a few, all face the dilemmas of authenticity and history interpretation, similar to that of cultural heritage sites.

1.1.4. Past, memory and trauma

Besides the classic *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Lowenthal, 1985), there is a growing body of literature on memory and the uses of the past (Glassberg, 1998). This new scholarship explores the ways in which the memory of a society is created, institutionalized, and understood. In addition, it provides a common conceptual framework for those working in museums, historic sites, and historic preservation.

1.2. Specific Studies

1.2.1. American memory

The numerous studies on American memory and culture, in particular, investigate how Americans construct and preserve their historical memory, and how American popular culture and national history relate to each other (Wallace, 1996; Thelen, 1989; Bodnar, 1992; Toplin, 1996; Lipsitz, 1990; and others).

1.2.2. Holocaust studies

There is a tremendous amount of literature dealing with the heritage of genocide, Holocaust memory and the so-called ‘Holocaust tourism’ in particular; as well as dealing with the ongoing debates on the memorialization, Israelization and Americanization of the Holocaust.

1.2.3. Thanatourism studies

Controversy over interpretation of war is not new. Very often the main dichotomy - education vs. entertainment - is further complicated by political circumstances. The so-called war tourism, sometimes also referred to as *thanatourism* [Gr. *thanatos* death], receives a lot of attention in the literature (Seaton, 1996). The challenges of presenting war as a tourist attraction have been extensively studied in the case of the Civil War sites in the United States (Abroe, 1998; Greene, 1990), the sites related to the World Wars of the 20th Century (Franza & Johnson, 1994; Martinez, 1992; Charleton, 1991), the Vietnam War tourism sites (Henderson, 2000), etc. In Europe, where interpretation of war and conflict has much longer history than in the United States, the use of emotional and provocative approach to the interpretation of the more shameful events of the past is referred to as 'hot interpretation' (Uzzell, 1989).

The interpretation of Civil War and Civil War battlefield sites in the United States has been a subject of a recent symposium organized by the National Park Service (Sutton, 2001; Blight, 2001). Battlefields, as Edward Linenthal argues, serve not only as ceremonial centers, but also as civil spaces where Americans "compete for the ownership of powerful national stories and argue about the nature of heroism, the meaning of war, the efficacy of martial sacrifice, and the significance of preserving the patriotic landscape of the nation" (Linenthal, 2001). Besides battlefields, national cemeteries such as the one at Gettysburg, are also recognized as important cultural resources (Georg, 1983; Tucker, 1991; Brown, 1984).

1.2.4. Other studies

Other themes that receive much attention in the academic literature include the interpretation of issues such as slavery (Horton, 2000), death of celebrities, assassination of political figures, such as John F. Kennedy (Lennon & Foley, 1996b; Zelizer, 1992), political scandals, and others.

2. Dark Tourism Studies

The concept of 'dark tourism' as such is relatively new, although the dark side of the tourism industry has been studied and analyzed extensively in the last decades. Dark tourism was first labeled so by John Lennon and Malcolm Foley at the Glasgow Caledonian University (Lennon & Foley, 1996a, 1999), particularly referring to the attraction of sites of mass killings, genocide, and assassination, for tourists. The most comprehensive study on the topic, conducted so far, although lacking a solid theoretical framework, is to be credited to the same authors (Lennon & Foley, 2000).

Since dark tourism is seen as a specific subgroup of cultural heritage tourism, the task of defining it and building a conceptual framework for further studies is rendered more difficult by the ongoing and still unresolved debates in defining cultural heritage tourism itself, which in its turn mirrors the debates over defining the more general concepts of culture and heritage. The variety of terms employed by the literature in the United States and abroad, such as cultural tourism, historic tourism, heritage tourism, and cultural heritage tourism, further illustrates this ambiguity.

'Dark tourism' was added to the vocabulary of tourism studies to signify a "fundamental shift in the way in which death, disaster and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourism products"[1]. Lennon and Foley, who introduced the term, did not take the concept any further than claiming that dark tourism is "an intimation of postmodernity". In clarifying the latter, they argued that the critical features apparent in the phenomenon are: first, the major role of global communication technology; second, the anxiety and doubt which objects of dark tourism themselves raise about the project of modernity; and third, the element of commodification accompanying the educative elements of the dark tourism products.

In this ground-breaking study, Lennon and Foley examine various dark tourism heritage sites from all around the world – battlefields, battle re-enactments, and other forms of war tourism, museums, house-museums, museum exhibitions, cemeteries and burial places, memorials, concentration camps, etc., and the various heritage themes interpreted at these sites - war, death, assassination, terrorism, murder, genocide, slavery, horror, scandals, etc. The work of Lennon and Foley although innovative in its subject, and easy to read, lacks a solid theoretical framework, and as G. J. Ashworth puts it in his review of the book, it "neither raises the ethical issues which are central to many of the current debates about heritage nor even the impact of these upon the practical choices inherent in the management of such sites".[2]

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[1] Lennon, J. & Foley, M. (2000). *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster.* London & New York: Continuum, 3.
[2] Ashworth, G. J. (2002). Book reviews. *Tourism Management, 23*, 190-191.

For the purpose of the present study, Lennon and Foley's definition of dark tourism is unsatisfactory since it does not explain the nature of the above-quoted "fundamental shift". Furthermore, the definition encompasses only the perspective of the suppliers, excluding the consumer's perspective. This definition neither allows for further taxonomy of the enormous variety of instances of the dark tourism phenomenon, nor does it provide a tool for managing the conflicts inherent in it. Therefore, the concept of dark tourism alone is not sufficient for building a comprehensive conceptual framework of the problem under study.

3. Heritage Dissonance Studies

Directly related to the topic of managing sites of atrocity for tourism is the most recent publication by Gregory Ashworth (Ashworth, 2001) at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), and some of his earlier publications (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996) written in collaboration with J. E. Tunbridge, where the so-called 'dissonance' in the various uses of heritage is defined, classified and analyzed.

3.1. The Concept of 'Heritage Dissonance'

Heritage dissonance was introduced as an academic concept applied to the studies of cultural heritage in 1996 – at about the same time when 'dark tourism' was added to the academic vocabulary. G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge, co-authors of *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* launched the concept of 'dissonant heritage' as analogous to musical disharmony, or to cognitive dissonance in psychology, signifying "a state of psychic tension caused by the simultaneous holding of

mutually inconsistent attitudes or the existence of a lack of consonance between attitudes and behavior"[3]. Similar tensions of various magnitudes and impacts, are implicit in the use of heritage by the tourism industry. Dissonance in heritage, as defined by Ashworth and Tunbridge, embraces the ideas of discrepancy and incongruity; it signifies discordance or lack of agreement and consistency between the elements involved in the process of heritage production. Dissonance, whether active or latent, is universal and intrinsic to the nature of heritage. The two authors further explored the various uses of heritage - as a cultural resource, as an economic resource, and as a political resource. The potential for dissonance in these three categories of use, which certainly very often overlap, was also analyzed meticulously.

The major categories of heritage dissonance identified by Ashworth and Tunbridge include: dissonance implicit in commodification; dissonance implicit in place-products; dissonance implicit in multi-use; dissonance implicit in the content of the interpretive messages; and dissonance through heritage disinheritance. Furthermore, Ashworth and Tunbridge differentiated a specific category of heritage – heritage of atrocity, which deserves special attention since it is prone to the most extreme instances of dissonance.

3.2. Heritage Uses and Users

Before examining the various types of heritage uses and heritage users, and the associated dissonance potential for each type, it is important to explore beforehand the expanding meanings of heritage, and its relationship to history.

[3] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 20.

In order to understand the discrepancies in the uses of the past, the distinction between the past as history, and the past as heritage must be examined. There are certain similarities - both history and heritage make use of the past for current purposes, transforming it through interpretation; and in both, there is a selective use of the past. The distinction is in who makes the selection. While in history the decision is scientifically based, and made by an elite group of historians, in heritage it is contemporary society that 'chooses' what to inherit and pass on to the future generations. In other words, "heritage is a contemporary function, selecting from the past, for transmission to the future"[4]. The whole idea of heritage implies a particular relationship between past, present and future. And since there is selection involved in both history, and heritage, it automatically creates potential for discrepancies, which may further instigate conflicts, or what Ashworth and Tunbridge call 'heritage dissonance'.

3.2.1. Heritage Uses

The three major categories of heritage use – cultural, political, and economic - certainly overlap, and it is important to realize that fact, since very often the overlapping of the uses results in heritage dissonance.

Heritage as a Cultural Resource

Among the cultural institutions that deliberately collect, preserve and exhibit heritage, the museum stands as an archetype. The function of the museum has lately evolved from passive to active, its mission - from collection to cultural transmission, its main concern - from authenticity of the object to the authenticity of the experience.

[4] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 268.

It is well-known that the uses of heritage as a cultural resource oftentimes have political implications. The decision to exhibit a selection of objects itself is inevitably political. The two extremes - presenting the official or dominant ideology, and representing the unrepresented - illustrate the same point. The reasons for collecting heritage resources, however, are not usually purely social, or simply political, they are often combined with scientific or aesthetical motives, or simply collecting for the sake of collecting.

Heritage as a Political Resource

Heritage interpretation is also used as a political instrument for forming or transforming national identities, and justifying political power. There is no question that the creation of national history is a matter of policy. Museums, for example, are just one of the tools for institutionalizing national heritage. Variations from the officially institutionalized version of national history and heritage inevitably create dissonance, and political conflicts.

The extreme case in which a national history cannot tolerate any variations from the official version is referred to as the 'dominant ideology' thesis, or its variation - the 'progress' thesis. When the dominant ideology thesis is adopted, heritage interpretation carries messages that deliberately legitimize the dominant political regime. The progress thesis, on the other hand, implies an interpretation of history as a "steady progression from an inferior past to a superior present and an even more promising future, ignoring blind alleys, recidivism and contradictory streams."[5]. A good example of this is the approach to interpreting history that was used routinely in Communist countries.

There is a direct relationship between politics and the preservation of the past. This relationship is “strong, permanent, intimate and quite unavoidable, if less crude and simplistic than is sometimes expressed”[6]. In the light of the heritage production process, the implication is that the assembly of the heritage product inevitably conveys messages with contemporary political consequences, which often become sources of dissonance.

Some of the major sources of dissonance in the political use of heritage, identified by Ashworth and Tunbridge, include: relocation and misplacement of heritage, repatriation of objects; the disinterment, transportation, and reinterment of human bodies, or parts; the abandonment of heritage; misuse of heritage, often as a result of misplacement; deliberate destruction or concealment of heritage; deliberate extension of the rights over heritage, or over the spatial representation of heritage, etc.

Heritage as an Economic Resource

Cultural heritage tourism is one of the most visible and obvious of the uses of heritage as an economic resource. The potential for dissonance in the inherent commodification of heritage is related to the following two questions: “to what extent is the tourist the same sort of heritage consumer as the other consumers, and does the tourist consume the same heritage product as the other users?”[7]. If the answer to both questions is positive, dissonance is less likely to happen; however, if at least one of the answers is negative, the likelihood of dissonance situations occurring is rather high.

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[5] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 48.
[6] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 46.
[7] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 62.

As many authors recognize, it is difficult to make generalizations about the characteristics of ‘heritage tourists’. Such tourists are too heterogeneous, their trips vary in terms of motivation, and their attitudes towards the past are more complex than generalizations usually suggest. The difficulty stems from the multi-functionality of heritage facilities on the one hand, and from the multi-motivation of heritage consumers on the other.

The attitudes of heritage visitors to history can be described in terms of two major dichotomies – ‘escape to fantasy’ and ‘escape to reality’[8]. History as fantasy is best illustrated in heritage products such as the themed entertainment park, the battle re-enactment, celebrations of historic events, and others. In such instances, the perceived ‘inauthenticity’ of the experience is not likely to create dissonance among the ‘escape to fantasy’ type of visitors, since such visitors easily accommodate the fantasy sensation in their expectations, but there is a potential for dissonance among users with different attitudes.

3.2.2. Heritage Users

The unavoidable multi-use of the same heritage resources often results in dissonance. There is substantial dissonance potential between tourists and residents, particularly when they have different understanding of the cultural and political uses of the same heritage. The potential for dissonance lies in the selection of historic resources, the manner and intensity of their use, and most of all in the nuances of the messages communicated.

Furthermore, there is dissonance potential among the different types of heritage users, residents included – history buffs, families, students, leisure and business visitors, etc. - in terms of motivations, expectations, and cultural background.

Two contradictory assumptions, both naïve and precluding further attempts at reconciliation, explain the relationships between them – the assumption of harmony, and the assumption of dissonance. While the former implies an automatic and self-evident symbiosis between the different types of uses, the latter assumes that "there are demonstrably different uses of heritage by consumers whose motives and behaviour are quite different, then conflict is continuous and inevitable"[9]. The two possible management reactions are either *prioritization* in favor of one of the categories of uses, or *segregation* of uses.

3.3. Categories of Heritage Dissonance

One of the fundamental assumptions that Ashworth and Tunbridge make, is that dissonance is intrinsic to the nature of heritage; that it is a condition, active or latent, of all heritage to some degree. From this standpoint, there is a certain potential for dissonance at each stage of the process of dark tourism production.

[8] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 64.
[9] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 68-69.

3.3.1. Commodification

Converting historic resources into heritage products creates tensions associated with the process of commodification. Dissonance potential exists in all phases of heritage production and consumption, starting from product development, market segmentation, targeting, to the final product consumption. From the producer's perspective, the major dichotomy in the initial phase of heritage product development is the one of generalization vs. particularization, which may further transcend in the next phases. From the perspective of the heritage user, there is often a conflict between expectations and actual experience; and later among the different consumers of the same product. The result could be either consumer dissatisfaction, or production inefficiency, or both.

3.3.2. Heritage Products

Once the heritage product is developed, dissonance may appear in its relationship to time and space. Although an abstract concept, heritage products do not exist in a vacuum. They have their place in a larger spatial and temporal hierarchy, and may be easily shadowed by products of a larger scale. For example, a national or international heritage product would overshadow any contradictory regional heritage interpretations. Similarly, a national museum located on the Mall in Washington, D.C. must adhere to the common unwritten institutional code, and to the functions of the Mall as a national pilgrimage site. Additionally, there are some products, the so-called 'place-products', in which the place or the sense of place is an integral part of the product. Similarly, the past, or the sense of time and age is an integral part of most heritage products, and different pasts may sometimes present themselves in conflict.

3.3.3. Multi-Use

Multi-buying and multi-selling is implicit in any heritage product. Tourists are not the only users of heritage, and heritage users are not always tourists. However, multi-use in itself does not necessary lead to dissonance. Dissonance is likely to appear only in situations when user segments differ significantly, such as in the case of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum – Holocaust survivors, Jewish Americans, Israeli visitors, non-Jewish Americans, German visitors, other European and international visitors, would have different backgrounds, different attitudes and perceptions concerning the Holocaust.

3.3.4. Message Content

The process of heritage development and production raises some fundamental content selection dilemmas. Heritage is created through the interpretation of selected historic resources, therefore messages are an integral part of it, and the content of such messages may cause dissonance. It may be argued that heritage interpretation is ideological in the sense that it conveys ideas through the product, and it would not be less ideological if the existence of alternative messages were made clear from the outset. Not all heritage is deliberately used for political purposes, but even heritage institutions devoted to non-political causes reflect ideas and employ approaches that are currently in fashion, or are thought to be 'politically correct'. Dissonance in the content of the messages may be caused by different factors. Since interpretation involves communication, just as in every communication process, there could be a failure in the transmission of the message; the message could be only partially transmitted, distorted or even ignored.

3.4. Dissonance in the Interpretation of Atrocity

The so-called 'heritage of atrocity' needs to be considered as a separate category of heritage, first, because it is "disproportionately significant to many heritage users"[10], and second, because "dissonance created by the interpretation of atrocity is not only peculiarly intense and lasting but also particularly complex for victims, perpetrators and observers"[11]. Heritage of atrocity, and its interpretation is highly charged with controversy, and creates heritage dissonance problems of unprecedented magnitude. Debates over the identity of victims, perpetrators, and observers, as well as attempts to resolve such controversies could sometimes exacerbate the problem and have serious political consequences.

3.4.1. Defining Atrocity

Atrocity in its popular usage could mean almost any event that is abnormally bad. The difficulty in distinguishing atrocity from other human suffering derives from the variety of forms it may have, as well as from the popularization of the term. The working definition of atrocity as "the case of deliberately inflicted extreme human suffering"[12], used by Ashworth and Tunbridge is adopted here. Still, atrocity is recognized in two overlapping ways – first, as acts of deliberate cruelty perpetrated by people against people, and second, as occurrences, particularly shocking or horrifying to others. An important element of atrocity is the perceived *culpability* implicit in these occurrences, which in most cases becomes the primary source of dissonance in the interpretation.

[10] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 94.
[11] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 95.
[12] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 94.

Atrocity thus defined, *heritage of atrocity* here would denote all associated artifacts, buildings, sites and place associations, as well as the intangible accounts of the acts of atrocity, interpreted by the various parties involved – victims, perpetrators, by-standers, and others.

3.4.2. Categories of Atrocity

The humanity's millennia-old legacy of war, persecution, discrimination, and conflict between nations, classes, tribes, religions, etc. has left a huge variety of atrocities. The major categories of atrocity, as recognized by Ashworth and Tunbridge, include: the *general* categories of man-made natural and accidental disasters; acts of perpetration by an entire group of people on another group; and atrocious acts in the context of war; and the more *specific* categories of atrocity such as atrocities legitimated by former judicial systems; the persecution of racial, ethnic or social groups; large-scale massacre and genocide[13]. This classification is by no means exhaustive, but at the very least it outlines the fundamental categories of atrocity.

Man-made natural and accidental disaster

Natural and accidental disasters may be classified as atrocities, only when an alleged human action or neglect is involved. Floods, plagues, fires, earthquakes, and other natural disasters do not fall in the atrocity category as defined above, when there is no human perpetrator involved. Famine and some epidemics could become an atrocity in cases when caused by deliberate political decisions, actions, etc. The qualifying element as in all atrocity cases is the perception of human culpability.

Human acts of atrocity

Colonialism, racism, sexism, and religious fundamentalism are all clear-cut examples of human acts of atrocity, where members of one country, race, gender or religion, are victims or perpetrators. These acts, contemporary or perpetrated in the past, are long-lasting sources of dissonance in the shaping of national, regional or group heritage.

War as atrocity and atrocity in war

War, as Ashworth and Tunbridge claim, provides an almost inexhaustible source of potential atrocities. War has been a continuous, if not permanent condition of humanity, which dominates historic chronicles. It is difficult to distinguish between war as atrocity and atrocities in the context of war. Is it the scale of death and destruction only that defines an atrocity, or is it that war by definition is considered an atrocity? The elapse of time also changes perspectives. For example, the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the events of World War II revived a lot of controversies, as a result new ones were brought up.

Persecution, massacre, genocide

Besides the obvious examples of extreme atrocities such as large-scale massacres and genocide, persecution of a different nature, harassment and systematic discrimination may also be considered forms of atrocity. The deliberate destruction of a culture, rather than the killing of its people, is not a rare occurrence in the history of humanity. This type of heritage of atrocity is often used to deliberately generate a collective memory. Such

[13] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 96.

heritage may be used in a number of ways: by the perpetrators to intimidate their enemy, by the victims to inspire resistance, and by either side to influence the observers.

The atrocity of genocide deserves special attention. The term itself was coined in 1944 by Dr. Raphael Lemkin to raise attention to the atrocities associated with World War II. The United Nations adopted the term in 1949, and defined it as "actions committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group"[14]. Since then, the attention to genocide and its variations such as 'politicide', 'autogenocide', 'ethnocide', etc., has not abated at all. The Holocaust, being one of the most publicized and documented cases of genocide, was neither the first, nor the last such.

3.4.3. Interpreting Atrocity

Given the extremity of dissonance that heritage of atrocity is likely to create, it is the responsibility of heritage site managers and curators to reduce or try to prevent such dissonance. The nature of the atrocity itself influences the effectiveness of the interpretive strategy applied. Characteristics such as the nature of the cruelty perpetrated, the nature of the victims and the perpetrators, the visibility of the event, and the record that survived on the event, are to be taken into account when planning for the interpretation. Management strategies for interpreting heritage of atrocity and reducing dissonance are examined next.

[14] Quoted in Ashworth & Tunbridge, 102.

Victimization

One of the effective ways of managing victimization is through *personalization*. It is difficult to understand the scale of the atrocity simply through numbers. While it is impossible to identify with millions of victims, it is much easier to identify with individuals, or small groups of victims, as representative of the larger victim group. Anne Frank becomes not simply one of the child-victims of the Holocaust, she represents the suffering of a million or so of Jewish children. Similar is the intention of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to personalize the visitor experience by handing identity cards with the biographical story of a real person.

The self-identification of an entire ethnic group as a collective victim can be a powerful instrument as well. The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 is an example of this, where a whole state was created on the basis of *group victimization*. This approach, however, has its limitations – it usually 'privatizes' the event and the particular heritage associated with it, thus excluding groups indirectly affected, which could have associated themselves with the event otherwise.

Finally, a rare method of managing atrocity is through partially *accepting the blame* by the victims, or placing the atrocity in a wider context in which victims become in some sense accomplices in their own victimization. For instance, the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima has been reinterpreted to present the wider context of the Japanese aggression in World War II. A similar attempt was done by the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum with the *Enola Gay* exhibit.

Perpetration

Managing the heritage of perpetration is as difficult as managing the heritage of victimization, and while the latter usually inflates the atrocity, the former tends to deny it. One such defensive group strategy is deliberate *collective amnesia*. If collective amnesia fails, Ashworth and Tunbridge suggest, there are two other alternative approaches – relativism and demonization. In *relativism*, the perpetrators' group is deliberately extended. The idea is that if everyone is guilty, nobody can be blamed. The opposite approach of *demonization* delimits the perpetrators group to a very small group of individuals, who are 'demonized' as the solely guilty. Another, more aggressive strategy is to "blame it all" on the victims.

Reinterpretation

Reconciliation through reinterpretation can be dangerous. Contemporary reinterpretations may reverse the atrocity perception, which even if being the right thing at certain moment, should not happen too often. As a result from the recent 'social history' trend, some historic house museums and heritage sites in the United States have undergone substantial reinterpretation to include and sometimes focus exclusively on the heritage of slavery, or the heritage of the Native Americans, even when such heritage is not of primary relevance to a given site.

3.4.4. Dissonance in the Interpretation of Atrocity

Whatever the interpretive approach adopted, multiple dissonance problems are likely to appear, which are further complicated by the increased need for sensitivity of the heritage of atrocity.

Message content

A common dissonance problem when interpreting the heritage of atrocity is the conflict between intended and received messages. The messages communicated by the producers, and the messages received by the consumers (i.e. the visitors) are very likely to differ. Such messages are emotionally charged, and may activate the visitors' protective barriers against events too horrific to be understood; or on the contrary, the visitors' fascination with horror may dominate the experience, and overshadow the educational or other type of message embodied in the product. After all, the messages projected by the site managers, even if carefully and meaningfully expressed, may have little to do with the visitors' motivations, expectations, and experiences.

Product, event and site

The interpretation of events of atrocity may be complicated by the nature of the site associated with the event. Locational creativity is very much needed when the current use of the site bears no relationship to the past event, or the current users of the site are opposed to the use of the site for atrocity interpretation. The strategic location of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C. is an interesting example – the location of the museum has no relation to the location of the original event.

Atrocity as entertainment: multi-use and commodification

Last but not least, the interpretation of the heritage of atrocity exacerbates the commodification-related type of dissonance, complicated further by the multiple use of the product by different users for different purposes. As already discussed, horror and atrocity can be deliberately transformed into entertainment attractions. The elapse of time may soften some of the events, and alleviate the implicit dissonance, however, it is still a valid question whether it is ever acceptable to allow the conversion of atrocity into entertainment.

4. Findings from the Literature Review

The concept of 'dark tourism' alone appears insufficient to grasp the problem this thesis is addressing. Dark tourism as defined by Lennon and Foley illuminates only the heritage themes selected, packaged, and sold by heritage industry operators, and consequently consumed by the tourists. Thus dark tourism describes only the symptoms of the phenomenon, not the forces causing and shaping it. This is not to assert that the 'dark tourism' category has neither place nor significance in the taxonomy of cultural heritage tourism. It certainly does add to the classification of cultural heritage tourism by heritage themes. However, in order to address the research problem, a more comprehensive conceptual framework is needed. Such a structuring tool is the concept of 'heritage dissonance' that encompasses all issues involved – social, cultural, economic, and political - in their complexity, and has practical implications on the management level. The concept of heritage dissonance not only provides a means for taxonomic description of the issues but also directly relates to the management practices controlling it. Thus, it serves both as a tool for description, and as a guide to management interventions.

That dissonance is intrinsic to the nature of heritage does not mean that dissonance is not manageable. As Ashworth and Tunbridge argue, "most dissonance is trivial, ignorable or bearable; much is avoidable, often quite simply, and much that is not avoidable is certainly mitigable in various ways"[15]. This may require, however, more sensitive and active management efforts.

[15] Ashworth & Tunbridge, 263.

CHAPTER III. DISSONANCE ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

The selected three case studies are analyzed within the conceptual framework and research methodology developed in Chapters I and II. The aim of the analysis is to: (a) identify the major conflicts, or heritage dissonance problems, caused by the interpretation and use of the heritage of atrocity by the tourism industry, and (b) suggest management strategies to alleviate dissonance. The analysis is placed within the context of Washington, D.C. as a tourism destination of national and international significance, as well as in the larger context of the current trends in cultural heritage tourism in the United States, and worldwide. The findings from the case study analysis are used as a testing ground for the conceptual framework being constructed within this thesis.

Each case study presents dissonance problems implicit at one of the phases of the heritage product life cycle – introduction, growth, maturity, and decline - with different management implications. The case of the *Enola Gay* exhibit which opened in 1995 at the National Air and Space Museum shows the full life cycle of a museum exhibition - starting from introduction, and going through the phases of growth and maturity, including its decline, and eventual closing. The permanent exhibition at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which opened in 1993, is representative of a current museum exhibition. It covers the first three phases only – introduction, growth and maturity. The National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall, scheduled to open in 2004, represents the critical phase of introducing a heritage museum.

1. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

1.1. Introduction

The story of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) that opened in 1993 in Washington, D.C. has never been short of controversy. From the very first idea of creating a memorial museum in the late-1970s during the Carter administration, throughout the long and painful struggle to implement the idea continued through the course of the museum's development, planning, opening, and operation, until the present USHMM has been constantly attacked on different fronts by different constituencies. With its prominent location in the nation's capital, just off the Mall, near the Washington Monument, and with the national and international publicity of the debates around its funding, mission, and success, the USHMM could not have been more visible. Even though this was neither the first nor the last attempt to present the Holocaust to the American public in a museum setting, it was certainly the grandest. It had been preceded and followed by a number of exhibitions hosted by other cultural institutions in Washington, D.C. – "The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It" symposium at the National Air and Space Museum; "Sacred Image, Sacred Text: Art of the Holocaust" exhibit at B'nai B'rith Klutznick Museum; "GI's Remember: Liberating the Concentration Camps" exhibit at the National Museum of American Jewish Military History; and others. The numerous centers for Holocaust studies, and Holocaust memorials, established in the 1990s in the United States, such as the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, Boston's New England Holocaust Memorial, and many others, epitomize the so-called Americanization of the Holocaust.

In this context, it is not surprising that the USHMM was labeled “a costly and dangerous mistake”[1], a “horror museum”, and even an “anti-museum”[2] by its critics. The same critics, however, acknowledge that the USHMM provides a “powerful experience” which as its market research proves, “evokes a strong and largely favorable response from visitors” (Eskenazi, 1994). One cannot ignore the extremely high visitation levels the museum has had ever since its opening – more than 2 million visitors per year, or five thousand per day.

This case study will focus on the dissonance issues the USHMM has had to deal with throughout its development and operation. After a concise review of the literature on the major problems on Holocaust memory, interpretation and representation, the events that led to the creation of the USHMM will be outlined. Next, the permanent exhibition of the museum will be analyzed in terms of the heritage dissonance concept.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Holocaust memory in America

The complexity and volatility of the Holocaust memory has been the subject of no single academic discipline in any particular country. Despite the growing volume of studies, the Holocaust still remains a mystery to many scholars - an unimaginable, and even not to be explained atrocity, without precedent in the history of humanity. The standpoint of such scholars, not surprisingly, is that the Holocaust would never be

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[1] O’Keefe, T. (1995). The US Holocaust Memorial Museum: A Costly and Dangerous Mistake. *Journal of Historical Review, 15*(2).
[2] Cole, T. (1999). The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In Cole, T. *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler. How history is bought, packaged, and sold*. New York: Routledge.

understood - could never be understood, but nevertheless it has to be remembered. One of the prominent figures that played an important role in the shaping of the USHMM is Elie Wiesel, 1986 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and author of the outstanding novel, *The Night Trilogy*. Wiesel's standpoint was that any aesthetic form of presentation of the Holocaust by definition trivializes the story, that Holocaust defies any form of presentation - a fundamental assumption in the initial debates on the museum's interpretive approach.

The present and future implications of Holocaust memory and remembrance, in America in particular, and the interpretation and narration of the Holocaust lessons, have been further examined (Novick, 1994; Young, 1988; Young, 1994; Lang, 1999; Hartman, 1994; Berenbaum, 1998). The art and the politics of Holocaust memorials, and their function in the postmodern age is another topic that received a lot of attention in the 1990s (Young, 1994; Huyssen, 1994; Milton, 1991). In the quest for an adequate medium to convey, transmit and interpret the unimaginable, the cinematic art has been also analyzed as a powerful tool for presentation of the Holocaust (Avisar, 1988). Films like Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (France, 1955), Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* (France, 1969), and Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (France, 1985), are but a few examples.

1.2.2. Holocaust tourism

The heritage of the Holocaust in Central and Western Europe – the 'death' camps, the former ghettos, and surviving structures, particularly synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, has been recently assimilated by the tourism industry. Unsurprisingly, though, the largest memorials to the Holocaust are not in Europe but in Israel and the United States, where the largest Jewish populations are. This phenomenon, referred to as

'Holocaust tourism' (Kugelmass, 1994), and some specific case studies, have been investigated within the context of dark tourism (Ashworth, 1996; Lennon, 2000).

1.2.3. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

In the short period of its existence, the USHMM has attracted much publicity. The literature on the USHMM has frequently been one-sided, often not only critical, but straightforwardly negative. It is rather easy to denounce such a large project dealing with a controversial and sensitive subject, blaming it on political interests, commodification, historical revisionism, etc. Some of the critics take it to an extreme, viewing the USHMM as the best place to view the Americanized myth of the Holocaust, an anti-museum, an "un-American museum telling the story of an un-American crime to Americans" (Cole, 1999). Others call it "a costly and dangerous mistake" interpreting the political side of the museum story as "a propaganda campaign, financed through the unwitting largesse of the American taxpayer, in the interests of Israel and its adherents in America" (O'Keefe, 1995). The effectiveness of the educational mission of the museum and its interpretive approach has been questioned as well (Lennon & Foley, 1999).

One of the rare accounts of the history of the museum that neither sensationalizes nor takes sides in the controversies is Edward Linenthal's *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (Linenthal, 1994). The architecture of the museum building, its urban context and vocabulary, has been explicitly outlined by its creator – the architect James Ingo Freed (Freed, 1994). The history of the Holocaust has been told through the images, exhibitions and collections of the USHMM in a number of publications (Berenbaum, 1993; Bachrach, 1994). The availability of literature on the

multi-faceted story of this unique museum makes the task of the researcher harder because of the subjective and emotional tone of most studies.

1.3. Background

1.3.1. The President's Commission on the Holocaust

The USHMM has been in operation for less than a decade, but its beginnings date back to November 1, 1978, when President Jimmy Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust. Throughout the Commission's work, two guiding principles provided the philosophical rationale: (1) the uniqueness of the Holocaust, and (2) the moral obligation to remember. In less than a year, the Commission submitted its report on Holocaust remembrance and education in the United States. The four main recommendations in this report were:

- That a living memorial be established to honor the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust will be taught in perpetuity;
- That an educational foundation be established to stimulate and support research in the teaching of the Holocaust;
- That a Committee on Conscience be established that would collect information on and alert the national conscience regarding reports of actual or potential outbreaks of genocide throughout the world; and
- That a national Day of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust be established in perpetuity and be held annually. [3]

[3] USHMM Homepage. *Frequently Asked Questions: How Did the Museum Get Started?* Retrieved August 2, 2002, from http://www.ushmm.org/research/library/.

1.3.2. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council

Following the Commission's report, Congress established the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council in 1980. The Council, which succeeded the President's Commission, was charged with carrying out the above recommendations. Elie Wiesel was the first Chairman of the Council and Mark E. Talisman the first Vice Chairman. This marked the start of the museum's development.

1.3.3. Elie Wiesel's era

Elie Wiesel was one of the visionaries and spiritual leaders of the museum. Wiesel agreed to join the project under the condition that the nature of the museum would be educational and commemorative. His definition of the Holocaust, embracing the sacred mystery of the Holocaust, set the mood for a whole era in the museum's development. Wiesel's understanding that the museum needed to be "a place where the impossibility of knowing existed alongside the traditional ways of 'knowing' in a museum,"[4] reflected the essential interpretive dilemma of this museum – how to present an atrocity of this kind that by definition defies presentation. The following summarizes Wiesel's message to the future visitors of the museum: "You don't understand, don't try. Just remember."[5] All did not understand the purity of Wiesel's vision. When Wiesel eventually withdrew from the project in 1986, some saw his departure as the "end of an era, when 'dreamers' gave way to 'builders'"[6]. He would not take part in any official

[4] Linenthal, E. T. (1995). *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Viking Penguin, 122.
[5] Linenthal, 122.
[6] Linenthal, 135.

activity of the Council until his speech at the opening of the museum in 1993.

1.3.4. Chronology of the museum development

It took more than a decade to create the vision for the USHMM and to make that vision come true. In 1983, the land for the museum building was transferred from the General Services Administration to the Council. A symbolic ground breaking ceremony was held at the site of the future museum in 1984. The actual ground breaking took place one year later in October 1985 when two milk cans containing soil and ashes from different concentration camps were buried on site. The cornerstone for the museum was laid in October 1988. President Ronald Reagan made a speech at the ceremony. It was not until July 1989, when the contract for the construction of the museum was awarded to the Blake Construction Company, and actual construction began in August 1989. The USHMM was dedicated in 1993. The speakers at the opening ceremony included President Bill Clinton, Israeli President Chaim Herzog, Harvey Meyerhoff, Chairman of the Council, and Elie Wiesel. The museum opened officially to the public on April 26, 1993 with its first visitor His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. The museum was granted permanent status in October 2000.

The above chronological outline of the museum development is simply factual; it does not go into all the controversy behind every single decision.

1.4. Dissonance Analysis

1.4.1. The museum concept

The concept of the museum was first set in the Commission's Report to the President in 1979. A minority was in favor of a traditional monument. The idea of a 'living memorial' was dominant. What that meant to many was conducting educational programs in a Holocaust resource center. Another vision – that of a 'living memorial', as expressed by Yaffa Eliach, was a combination of "library, archives and reference files relating to all existing Holocaust material which will serve on-going research, and a museum, a memorial section and an outdoor memorial park."[7] The discussion on the actual functions of the envisioned 'living memorial' was later continued in the planning of the museum building and the permanent exhibition. Another fundamental element of the initial concept was the idea of the USHMM being a "national memorial". This would be another major consideration when planning for the location, and the site of the memorial.

1.4.2. Defining the Holocaust

A major controversy at the initial stage of planning, revisited many times during the implementation stage, was the issue of defining the Holocaust. As essential as this issue was to the success of the whole project, it was indicative of its complexity.

[7] Linenthal, 110.

The 1979 Commission's Report to the President defined the Holocaust as the "systematic, bureaucratic extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War… As night descended, millions of other people were swept into this net of death… Never before in human history had genocide been an all-pervasive government policy unaffected by territorial or economic advantage and unchecked by moral constraints."[8] The phrase "as night descended" was Wiesel's intention to focus on the "mystery" of the Holocaust, and its uniqueness as a Jewish event. The definition of the Holocaust quoted in Executive Order 12169, however, had a different emphasis – the Holocaust was the "systematic and State-sponsored extermination of six million Jews and some five million other peoples by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II." This discrepancy stirred up the struggle over the Jewish ownership of Holocaust memory. The political realities demanded a broad-based definition, including the non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust, while Wiesel and the Commission insisted on the change of the language, and the amendment of the Executive Order since the inclusive definition of the Holocaust was seen as effacement of the Jewish victims. Elie Wiesel and Monroe Freedman, Executive Director of the Council, suggested an alteration of language that would grammatically make a distinction between the Jewish and non-Jewish victims – the so-called Freedman-Wiesel "dash solution". The proposal was not accepted by President Carter, who was firm in the broad definition. This was the first battle lost in many to follow. In Wiesel's own words: "… the emphasis has been on politics, not loyalty to the dead."[9]

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[8] Linenthal, 36.
[9] E. Wiesel, quoted in Linenthal, 51.

1.4.3. The boundaries of the Holocaust memory

The controversies embodied in the adopted broad-based definition of the Holocaust transcended in the representation of the sixty-member Council, and further on in the interpretation of the Holocaust. By expanding the boundaries of the Holocaust memory, the council had expanded to fifty, not including the requisite ten congressional members. Three-quarters of the members were Jewish, thirty-one were from the Northeast, ten were women, two were African American, two were of Polish ancestry, one was of Ukranian, and one of Slovenian ancestry. This diversity, although politically necessary at the time, was a source of interpretive dilemmas in the next phases of the museum planning and implementation.

1.4.4. The museum site

The discussion over the location and the site of the future museum is a good example of the politicization of the Holocaust memory. The two major locations considered from the beginning were Washington, D.C. and New York City, NY. Some of the Council members favored New York as the center of the American Jewish population, a cultural crossroads of the world, and the place where most of the Holocaust survivors came. The nation's capital was eventually chosen as a more appropriate location for an institution housing the national memory of the Holocaust. There were general concerns, however, about the appropriateness of any location in the United States being interpreted as an outright displacement and commodification of the Holocaust heritage.

Once the location was selected, the quest for an appropriate site and building started. Among the twelve sites considered in the nation's capital were the Pension Building at Judiciary Square, the Sumner School, a vacant plot in Georgetown, and another school building near L'Enfant Plaza. The council also looked at available General Services Administration sites, and one of the attractive options in terms of location were the two annexes to the Auditor's Building – unused low, red brick buildings that reminded some of the barracks at Auschwitz. The location of the whole complex, just off the Mall, and in immediate proximity to the Washington Monument was really an extraordinary possibility, and Annexes 1 and 2 were transferred to the council shortly.

Instantaneously, debates were initiated with regards to the appropriateness of the Mall as a location for an American Holocaust museum. The advantage of the museum being situated on the main tourist artery of the city was of some concern, since the Mall was considered by many a place for celebration of the nation's ideals. The dynamic history of the Mall and its present character, however, was the winning counter-argument. Even then, some would not change their view that it was "the wrong place, wrong country, wrong time" [10] for a museum of that nature.

1.4.5. The museum building

With such an outstanding location, it was understood that the exterior of the museum building was extremely significant as a statement about the Holocaust. It was soon clear that the two annexes were insufficient in size to house the museum. The

Council got permission to raze them, after having the buildings first "delisted" from the National Register of Historic Places. Next, after reviewing three proposals by Finegold, Enav, and Kaufman, respectively of the architectural firms *Finegold, Alexander & Associates Inc., Zalman & Ruth Enav Architects Ltd.,* and *Abramson's Tower Construction Company,* the Kaufman proposal was selected. The Council had to then consider the Commission of the Fine Arts' view on the museum's "distinctively secondary position to other memorials on the Mall"[11], therefore requiring a building subordinate in its role to the major symbols of the nation.

Disagreement over the aesthetic impact of the exterior of the building was extended over the symbolic ownership of the interior space and its functions – museum, memorial, and educational center, and respectively the major halls – the Hall of Witness, the Hall of Remembrance, and the Hall of Learning. The tension was particularly strong over the ownership of the memorial space. Some saw it as a place for commemoration of Jewish victims only, others thought it appropriate that every victim group had their own memorial, and yet another group argued for a non-religious memorial. The problem was once again the issue of inclusion, exclusion, and clash of victim-group identities and memories.

1.4.6. The architecture

After an unsuccessful attempt to modify the initially selected Kaufman design, the Council considered other proposals for a new building. A new architect was introduced to the project - James Ingo Freed from the New York firm *I. M. Pei and Partners*, whose

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[10] Linenthal, 64.

design proposal was eventually chosen. Freed's building was an abstractly symbolic building that had to be experienced "viscerally", not intellectually, in his own view, since the Holocaust itself could never be understood with the mind, it could only be felt. The building's vocabulary combined the "hard industrial forms" and raw materials evocative of the Holocaust - brick walls, exposed beams, boarded windows, metal fences, bridges and gates. The building was also designed as a "good neighbor" to the adjacent Victorian brick Auditor's Building to the north, and the neoclassical limestone Bureau of Printing and Engraving to the south. Freed's building "reads" in a number of ways – first, it reads as a coded building, a collection of Holocaust symbols; and second, it reads in the urban context of the Mall.

The design was not spared criticism. For some it remained an "anomalous place housing an anomalous event"[12]; others thought it too "positive" for the atrocity it was going to house. Yet some considered the building more significant than the permanent exhibition itself – a "concentration camp [built] on the Mall".[13] The architect himself wrote, "It is not meant to be an architectural walk, or a walk through memory, or an exposition of emotion, but all of this. I want to leave it open as a resonator of emotions."[14] How Freed's design for the museum, with its symbolic meanings, layers of context, and manipulation of interior space, would further impose certain limitations on the design of the permanent exhibition, is examined next.

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[11] Linenthal, 78.
[12] Linenthal, 106.
[13] Linenthal, 107.
[14] Freed, J. (1994). The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In Young, J. (Ed.). *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History.* New York & Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 101.

1.4.7. The vision

The discourse on the interpretive vision of the museum was closely related to the design of the building. Wiesel's vision had a strong influence in the period from 1980 till 1987, when Wiesel resigned from the position of Council Chairman. His desire for "purity" was dependent on a consensus regarding the politics and aesthetics of the museum which was not feasible at that time. In Wiesel's vision, the visitor would take the journey with a "heart and soul heavy and dark"[15]. The museum visit would be an emotional encounter with the Holocaust, a physical experience that would make the visitor a thousand years older when leaving the museum. At the same time, Wiesel was insistent on not revealing the sacred "mystery" of the Holocaust, and still convinced that the Holocaust defies any attempt at representation.

These years were marked by frustration and lack of consensus, indicated by the frequent change of design planning teams and high turnover of ideas for museum simulations of the Holocaust experience. The initial disagreement over the definition of the Holocaust, and the unresolved issue of the victims' representation were extended over the planning of the permanent exhibition. The hope that conceptual clarity would emerge in the course of the intellectual construction of the exhibition did not prove true. In 1988, the team that pushed the museum development further included: Michael Berenbaum as project director, Shaike Weinberg as museum's director in 1989, Martin Smith, a British documentary film-maker as director of the exhibition department, Raye Farr who would later become director of the permanent exhibition, and Ralph Appelbaum as exhibit

[15] Linenthal, 170.

designer. These people were key in shaping the permanent exhibition at USHMM.

1.4.8. The collection

The emotional power of Holocaust artifacts was not overlooked in the exhibition planning process. The initial collection of over 10,000 items donated by survivors, a minimal start, was enriched significantly through acquiring Holocaust-related artifacts in Europe. By 1992, the collection included 32,000 objects, among which a casting of the only remaining segment of the Warsaw ghetto wall, two Zyklon-B canisters, a Danish rescue boat, a railcar, victims' shoes, 9 kilograms of women's hair, etc. These artifacts were given an important role in the narrative - the role of props in a larger story, bringing a strong sense of reality to the visitor experience. The evil power of some of the artifacts was a concern since it could evoke "numbness, anger, fear, horror, disbelief, grotesque, attraction and the slumbering presence of evil."[16] The controversies associated with the display of particular artifacts are examined further in the context of the permanent exhibition narrative.

1.4.9. The narrative

The main dichotomy in the narrative of the permanent exhibition appears to be the tension between the educative and the commemorative voice of the museum, often times in dissonance. While for the purposes of education, it is considered appropriate, even necessary, to show as much horror as possible, for the purposes of commemoration, however, displaying the most intimate moments of death is seen as an act of defilement, a

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[16] Linenthal, 162.

sacrilege against the memory of the victims. Achieving balance between the commemorative and the educational function of the museum was the major interpretive challenge for the planning team. Furthermore, many of the Council members were Holocaust survivors, and defended the commemorative function, as opposed to the designers' desire for an educational emphasis, and the use of dramatic forms to that end.

The amount of horror to be displayed in the permanent exhibition, and the balance between the representation of life and death, was corollary of the major interpretive dilemma. Display of genitalia and nudity was particularly controversial. Privacy walls were installed where extreme atrocities were exhibited, despite some arguments about the opposite effect the privacy walls could have – the 'peep-show' effect. Nevertheless, the argument for showing horror was not to provoke fascination with the dark side of the Holocaust, but rather to inflict the Holocaust on the visitors, and by showing them the ultimate atrocity, to teach them, and make them remember. There was hardly a way to control the potential for dissonance in the message content, since in this case it depended exclusively on the motivations, expectations, and background of the visitors.

The visitor's journey starts and ends with an American voice – watching a black-and-white short documentary on the American GI's' first encounter with Buchenwald in the elevator on the way to the fourth floor where the exhibition starts; and watching a film featuring testimonies of Holocaust survivors who immigrated to the United States at the end. The American perspective is also present in the opening photomural showing American troops looking at charred human remains on a pyre.

The manipulation of time in the narrative is purposeful. Upon entering the museum, the visitors are both spatially and temporally removed from Washington, D.C., first, they are removed from the Mall, and then, lifted up to the fourth floor and immersed in Freed's "emotional" building, where the narrative builds in intensity, along with the mood of the interior space. The experience starts with the end of the war, the Americans liberating the camps. The narrative that unfolds next is structured like a play in three acts: "Nazi Assault (1933 - 1939)", "Final Solution (1940 – 1945)", and "Last Chapter". Thus the visitor experience comes *full circle* not only in terms of time, but also in terms of space – starting from the Hall of Witness on the first floor, then up to the fourth floor, and down the floors to end up at the starting point, and back to the American reality.

The story is personalized using the *victimization* approach. The vocabulary of victims, survivors, perpetrators, and liberators is central to the narrative. For comparison, the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem employs a different vocabulary – it speaks of 'heroes' and 'martyrs' instead. This example illustrates the significance of the location – the context of the United States, and the context of Israel require different vocabularies.

The power of the photographs of the faces of Holocaust victims is a strong asset. "One's first encounter with the photographic inventory of ultimate horrors is a kind of revelation, the prototypically modern revelation: a *negative epiphany*…"[17] Yaffa Eliach's collection of photographs of a Lithuanian shtetl before the assault of the Nazis, arranged in a tower-like space on the third floor, is also very powerful. Life is present in the faces

[17] Linenthal, 176.

on the pictures, “You see them in their *innocence*, and you know their fate.”[18].

The ID card project is another victimization approach that attempts to personalize the experience of the visitors by providing them an identity of a real Holocaust victim, following the life-story of that person throughout the narrative. Of the 558 ID cards, there are 364 Eastern European Jews, 115 Western European Jews, 47 Polish prisoners, 20 Jehovah’s Witnesses, 9 homosexuals, 3 Gypsies, and 2 victims of the euthanasia program. Despite the attempt to have a broad representation of the victim groups, these figures are not representative of the real victim proportions. Furthermore, the intentional identification with victims only – not with perpetrators, nor by-standers, is a corruption of the victimization approach. Besides, visitors are given a historically disproportionate chance to survive - of the 558 individuals, the majority survives - 260 are murdered, and 298 are survivors[19]. The exhibition designer, Ralph Appelbaum’s understanding was that “if the visitors could take the same journey, they would understand the story, because they will have experienced the story”.[20] The fallacy here was that the visitor would have never taken *the same journey.*

The presentation of the perpetrators – the Nazis and their collaborators, is also important to the victimization approach. Initially the exhibition was criticized for the near invisibility of the perpetrators, mainly for fear of provoking fascination with the Nazis. Yitzchak Mais, director of the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, expressed his concern that it appeared as if a “superhuman force that just took over,” as if, “there was this *metaphysical evil* that mysteriously killed the Jews.” Consequently, installing powerful

[18] Linenthal, 185.
[19] Cole, 162.

photographs of the faces of the murderers increased the perpetrators presence in the exhibition.

The use of artifacts, particularly human remains such as the 9 kilograms of female hair acquired from the Auschwitz concentration camp, was also meant to personalize the story, and illustrate the ultimate rationality of the destruction process, and thus to build the desired crescendo in the narrative. The objections were strong – such objects were thought to possess innate sanctity, and displaying them in a museum setting was sacrilegious. Most survivors thought that the hair did not belong in a museum setting, particularly at a location in Washington, D.C., rather in a memorial. The opinion of some was that the hair should have never left Auschwitz, and crossed the ocean. Finally, a photo depicting the hair display at the museum in Auschwitz was displayed instead.

One of the most difficult interpretive challenges was to construct a proper ending to the exhibition, an ending that was intellectually and emotionally satisfying. As Michael Berenbaum argued, "… the Holocaust offers no happy ending, no transcendent meaning, no easy moralism".[21] The temptation of a redemptive ending - the creating of the state of Israel - was there. However, even Holocaust survivors objected to a "happy", triumphal, redemptive ending. They knew better that no survivor of the Holocaust could ever be completely liberated.[22]

Another interpretive dilemma was the issue of the American involvement and response to the Holocaust. Ironically, the museum's narrative of America's indifference emphasizes America's role as a refuge. The question of the possibility of bombing

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[20] Cole, 161.

Auschwitz was also controversial. A major criticism was that the wider context of the war was missing. And finally, the interpretation of the Christian anti-semitism in Europe was another sensitive issue, taking into consideration the popular understanding of the positive role of religion in American life.

1.5. Conclusion

The USHMM is an example of heritage dissonance created by the mixed political and economic uses of the heritage of atrocity. The major question of the boundaries of the Holocaust memory could not get resolved in the permanent exhibition at USHMM. Some interpretive flexibility is achieved through the museum's temporary exhibitions, and the research activities of the educational center. The permanent exhibition does not, and cannot resolve the complex tensions inherent in such a complex historical event.

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[21] Cole, 157.
[22] Linenthal, 254.

2. The *Enola Gay* Exhibit

2.1. Introduction

The amputated *Enola Gay* exhibit that eventually opened to the public at the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) in 1995 and closed three years later was no less controversial than the opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). In fact, just as in the case of USHMM, some thought it was "the wrong show in the wrong place at the wrong time"[23]. After the script for the exhibit had gone through five revisions, it was replaced with a narrow straightforward commentary. Some considered it the most popular exhibit in the museum's history, while others considered it a battle lost.

Some of the dissonance issues considered in this case study are similar to the issues already analyzed in the USHMM case, such as the tension between commemoration, celebration, and education, the clashes between the emotions and interests of the stakeholders, the issues of presentation and display of horror, the application of the victimization approach, and others. However, there is another political dimension to be analyzed here. The political censorship to which the initially designed script for the exhibit "*Crossroads: The End of World War II, The Atomic Bomb, and The Origins of the Cold War*" had been subjected to is still without precedent in the annals of American museology. But there is more to that than political censorship. The *Enola Gay* case and its implications are to be interpreted within the wider context of the ongoing battles on the history front of America's culture wars.

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[23] Mike Wallace (1996). The Battle of the Enola Gay. In Wallace, M. *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 284.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. The Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of WWII

The *Enola Gay* controversy was not an isolated event. As the 50th anniversary of the events of World War II was approaching, commemoration activities were being planned, history – revisited, memories from the war – revived. Questions on why to preserve and commemorate, and how to preserve and commemorate the legacy from the war, were raised in the Untied States, Europe, and around the globe (Charleton, 1991; Martinez, 1992; Franza & Johnson, 1994; Bearss, 1994; Whitmarsh, 2001). In this context, the publicity that the *Enola Gay* case received in the mass media, and in the academic literature, is not surprising. Even today, almost a decade after the controversies began in the early 1990s, the case is still being discussed, analyzed, and often revisited.

2.2.2. Hiroshima in American history and memory

There is a wealth of academic scholarship on the political and historical issues related to the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and its strategic role in World War II, as well as on the consequences of the bombing, in the light of the decades of the Cold War that followed. The place of Hiroshima in American history and memory, particularly in the context of the ongoing battles for the American past, has drawn the attention of many scholars (Hogan, 1996; Bird & Lifschults, 1998; Linenthal & Engelhardt, 1996). This case study, however, does not explore the historical debates associated with the event. Instead it focuses on the contemporary political implications of the interpretive dilemmas resulting from these unresolved historical debates.

2.2.3. The Enola Gay exhibit

The Smithsonian Institution's extremely controversial exhibit of *Enola Gay* itself has engaged mass media, political circles, museums, and academia alike in a bitter discourse. What instigated the controversy was a series of articles published in the *Air Force* magazine, a publication of the Air Force Association. The press took it up quickly, and major newspapers like the *Washington Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and others, accused the curators of the exhibit of anti-Americanism and "revisionist travesty". The book "*An Exhibit Denied: Lobbying the History of Enola Gay*" gives a thorough account of the story of the National Air and Space Museum, the origin of the "Enola Gay" exhibit, and the development of the controversy, including documentation and media coverage, from the standpoint of the museum director at the time – Martin Harwit (Harwit, 1996). The uncensored script of the exhibit was published subsequently, along with an analysis of the Smithsonian's involvement in the battle between history and chauvinism, and an examination of the Hiroshima narrative, developed in the historical literature over five decades (Nobile, 1995).

A large number of articles came out at the time of the controversy, and shortly after, written by historians, museum specialists, and other scholars - most in support of the original exhibit, and some criticizing it. The analyses were made in the wider context of the ongoing debates of historical revisionism, political correctness, academic freedom, public presentation of history, etc. By and large, the *Enola Gay* case was interpreted as a lost battle on the history front in America's culture wars. (Linenthal, 1995; Wallace, 1996; Kohn, 1995; Thelen, 1995; Harwit, 1995). The arguments are further expanded on

in the dissonance analysis, which follows after a short chronology of the controversy.

2.3. Background

2.3.1. Chronology of the controversy

The story started in the late 1940s, when the Smithsonian Institution acquired the Boeing B-29 *Enola Gay*. The aircraft was almost forgotten, and abandoned at the Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, where it decayed throughout the 1950s and 1960s. There was some ambivalence regarding the location and restoration of the aircraft even prior to the events in the early 1990s.

It was not until 1987 when the idea of exhibiting the *Enola Gay* aircraft was proposed by Martin Harwit, the new director of NASM. The planning of the exhibit started one year later, and continued throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. NASM sponsored a number of lectures, films, discussions and scholarly symposia on the topic. Starting the fall of 1992 through the summer of 1993, NASM organized a series of meetings with representatives of the Air Force Association (AFA), Japanese officials and museum directors. The first conceptual document of the exhibit was completed in July 1993, and three months later reviewed by AFA representatives.

The first script "*The Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb, and the Origins of the Cold War*" was completed in mid-January 1994, and sent to AFA for review in the end of the same month. In February, the Exhibit Advisory Committee appointed by NASM, started discussing the script with the exhibit curators. The initial comments were encouraging. The U.S. Air Force historian Dr. Richard Hallion

pronounced it ‘a great script’, and shared the opinion of the military historian Herman Wolk, also a member of the Advisory Committee, that it was “a most impressive piece of work, comprehensive and dramatic, obviously based upon a great deal of sound research, primary and secondary”.[24] A few months later, though, Hallion would become one of the most fervent critics of the exhibit.

The controversy burst in April 1994, when the AFA’s *Air Force* Magazine published a series of articles accusing NASM of “politically correct curating” and in betraying the museum’s original mission “to collect, preserve, and display aeronautical and space flight equipment”.[25] In response to that, in mid-April, Harwit appointed a six-member team of NASM staff, the “Tiger Team”, with the task of reviewing the script. After the completion of the second version of the script under a new title “*The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*”, in the end of May 1994, NASM officials met with representatives of the AFA and veteran groups. Despite the revisions, the conflict expanded. In August 1994, a letter was signed by twenty-four members of Congress, and sent to the Smithsonian, expressing concerns about the exhibit. A third version of the script was released at the end of August. The critics were not yet satisfied. In September 1994, Michael Heyman was appointed Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. In the same month, a “Sense of the Senate” resolution characterized the script as “revisionist and offensive to many World War II veterans”. Meanwhile, until the release of the fourth script in the beginning of October 1994, and a fifth one at the end of the same month, NASM continued discussing the current version of the script with the

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[24] Wallace, 277.

[25] Shadewald, P. (1995). Chronology of the Enola Gay Controversy. In Harwit, M. Academic Freedom in “The Last Act” (pp. 1083-1084). *The Journal of American History,* 82(3).

American Legion, and other membership organizations. Finally, some scholarly groups reacted in support of the exhibit - the Organization of American Historians passed a resolution in defense of the academic freedom of the Smithsonian Institution. Sixty-two historians also supported the historical correctness of the script.

Nevertheless, the controversy escalated further and on January 24, 1995, eighty-one members of Congress called for the cancellation of the exhibit, and the firing of Harwit. Eventually, in the end of January, Smithsonian secretary Heyman cancelled "The Last Act" and announced plans to display the *Enola Gay* aircraft with minimal commentary. NASM director Martin Harwit resigned a couple of months later. The *Enola Gay* display opened to the public in June 1995, "heavily larded with AFA-style interpretation".[26]

2.3.2. NASM-AFA relationship

From the above outline of the controversy, it seems that the conflict was mainly between veterans and scholars, or between AFA and NASM. In order to understand the full context of this battle, however, it is important to examine the institutional history of both AFA and NASM, and the evolution of their relationship.

Founded in 1946, NASM has become one of the most visited museums in the world with visitation level of over eight million people a year. In its more than half-a-century-long history, NASM evolved from "a giant advertisement for air and space technology"[27], a museum serving the air wing of the so-called military-industrial

[26] Wallace, 300.
[27] Wallace, 289.

complex, towards an institution representing the social impacts of aviation and space technology. The AFA's relationship with the NASM during these years was mostly "cordial and fraternal"[28]. AFA itself was founded in the same year as NASM, and at the instigation of the very same individual - Hap Arnold. It has served as the semiofficial lobbying organization of the U.S. Air Force ever since. This explains the growing discontent of AFA with the NASM's departures from its original mission, and at losing control over interpretation at the museum, which reached its culmination with the *Enola Gay* exhibit.

2.4. Dissonance Analysis

2.4.1. The stakeholders

The Smithsonian was subsequently blamed for paying insufficient attention to its stakeholders. Understanding the motives and feelings of the stakeholders, including the Smithsonian Institution, NASM, and in particular, the *Enola Gay* exhibit curators, veteran groups, the Air Force Association, scholars, historians, Congress, media, and the public, would have greatly helped to reduce dissonance in this case. The evolution of the museum, as already discussed, from the greatest advertisement of the country's air and space technology to a place that investigates and analyzes the social impacts and role of that industry, was seen as betrayal, and stirred the antagonism of the air force veterans. The editor of *Aviation* magazine wrote: "A new order is perverting the museum's original purpose from restoring and displaying aviation and space artifacts to presenting

[28] Wallace, 287.

gratuitous social commentary on the uses to which they have been put."[29] The feelings of the air force veterans were aggravated by their commemorative expectations at the 50th anniversary from World War II. Upon announcing the cancellation of the original exhibit and its replacement, Michael Heyman, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution explained: "We made a basic error in attempting to couple an historical treatment of the use of atomic weapons with the 50th anniversary commemoration of the end of the war… Veterans and their families were expecting… that the nation would honor and commemorate their valor and sacrifice… They were not looking for analysis, and… we did not give enough thought to the intense feelings… analysis would evoke."[30]

Furthermore, the media coverage of the controversy was a grotesque interpretation of the script for the exhibit and the intentions of the NASM curators. A typical description in *The Washington Post* presented the script as "an antinuke morality play in which Americans were portrayed as ruthless racists hellbent on revenge for Pearl Harbor, with the Japanese as innocent, even noble victims fighting to defend their unique culture from 'Western imperialism'."[31] Commentaries in other major newspapers were no less denunciatory. The *Washington Times* called the museum staff a bunch of "politically correct pinheads". The *Wall Street Journal* accused NASM in "revisionist travesty", and the text was proclaimed "an act of something worse than ignorance; it had the ring of a perverse generational upsidedownspeak and Oedipal lese majeste worthy of a fraud like Oliver Stone."

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[29] Sanfelici, A. H. (1993). Is NASM Thumbing Its Nose at Congress While No One's Watching? *Aviation, 3*(July), n.p.
[30] Thelen, D. (1995). History after the Enola Gay Controversy: An Introduction. *The Journal of American History, 82*(3), 1029.
[31] Wallace, 270.

The ignorance and arrogance of certain members of Congress, as Linenthal comments, was even more disturbing. For them, these "completely unfamiliar historical debates about the bomb registered as un-American activity".[32] The Republican response was particularly disparaging. Congressman Tom Lewis (Florida) opined that the museum's job was to tell history, not rewrite it.[33] Congressman Sam Johnson (Texas) was even more direct in his accusation: "We've got to get patriotism back into the Smithsonian. We want the Smithsonian to reflect real America and not something that a historian dreamed up." Congressman Peter Blute (Massachusetts) joined in: "I don't want sixteen-year-olds walking out of there thinking badly of the U.S."

In the battle between museum curators, scholars, and World War II veterans, many forgot the museum public. Most critics were of the opinion that people came to NASM to see historical aircrafts. "They are not interested in counterculture morality pageants put on by academic activists", claimed John T. Correll, editor of the *Air Force* magazine.[34]

2.4.2. The script

It is not that the NASM curators were unaware of the tension between the commemorative and the historical voice of the exhibit. In their attempt to achieve balance in the interpretive mix, however, they introduced two clashing historical narratives and two commemorative agendas, bound to create dissonance in the message content. The first one entailed the conventional historical narrative regarding the political decision to

[32] Linenthal, E. T. (1995). Struggling with History and Memory. *The Journal of American History, 82*(3), 1100.
[33] Wallace, 296.

drop the atomic bomb to end the war in the Pacific, and to save many lives. The historical context of this narrative was the pre-bomb horror and destruction of the war. The script shunned the hypothetical questions of how many lives had been saved, and whether there had been another way to end the war. The commemorative message embedded here, according to Linenthal, was: “Remember what we did and what it cost.”[35] The second narrative reconsidered this turning point in world history in the light of the postwar legacy of the nuclear arms race. The commemorative message here, in Linenthal’s interpretation, was: “Never again.”[36]

The series of revisions to which the script had been subjected simply stirred more criticism in the media. Resulting from the continuing discourse between museum officials, historians, veterans and peace activists, script after script deleted material about the historical controversies regarding the decision to drop the bomb, and removed most photographs of the Japanese victims. Eventually, all the groups involved felt that they had lost the battle, the end result was seen either as “revisionist”, “politically correct”, anti-American, or as an exhibit lacking historical integrity, and violating academic freedom.

2.4.3. The artifact

Although most critics focused primarily on the narrative of the exhibit, some turned their attention on the aircraft itself. The presence of the *Enola Gay* in a museum setting was disputed, since it was feared that the mere size and visual impact of the

[34] Wallace, 291.
[35] Linenthal, 1097.
[36] Linenthal, 1097.

aircraft would be too overwhelming. Historian Greg Mitchell expressed the opinion that glorification was the central, even if not intentional, message in the entire script.[37] The different meanings the aircraft had for the stakeholders were yet another source of dissonance. Some veterans saw the *Enola Gay* as a "peacekeeper", while most of the supporters of the original uncensored exhibit saw it as a "harbinger of a new holocaust"[38]. Others felt that it was offensive to have it exhibited in a museum. The implications of the discrepancy in the meanings the aircraft held for the different stakeholders, reflected the same tension existing in the script – the tension between the commemorative and the educative voice of the exhibit.

2.5. Conclusion

The *Enola Gay* exhibit is an example of dissonance created by the use of the heritage of atrocity as a political resource. It illustrates the extreme sensitivity of heritage of war from the recent past with its complex contemporary implications for creating national identities, and serving political agendas. This case study also demonstrates the actions and reactions of all the heritage users and stakeholders involved, and the extreme tensions which can develop amongst these relationships.

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[37] Linenthal, 1095.
[38] Linenthal, 1094.

3. The National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall

3.1. Introduction

The establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) through an Act of Congress in 1989 was seen at the time as a milestone in the relationship between the federal government and Native Americans. In light of the changing presentation of the American Indians in the museums in the past decade, brought about partially by the enforcement of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990, the hope was that NMAI would alter the stereotypical image of American Indian culture as a dying culture, and instead, reinforce the image of a living culture.

Overall, the expectations towards the museum on the Mall were extremely elevated. The promise made by the Smithsonian Institution to the Native peoples of the Americas was that NMAI would be a place where they would be the interpreters of their own history, their own culture, art and contribution. However, today, some feel that the Smithsonian has broken this promise, and has betrayed the trust of the American Indians.

The construction of a $110-million new building of the NMAI is well underway on the strategic, last available site on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Scheduled to open to the public in the fall of 2004, the museum is struggling with numerous challenges related to its highly sensitive mission, and the potential cultural dissonance between American Indian folkways and tourist expectations.

3.2. Literature Review

3.2.1. American Indian History

Native American studies is a relatively new, rapidly growing and evolving discipline. Nevertheless, the historical debate on the history of the American Indian is still unsettled, with little hope of getting settled in the near future. An extensive literature review on the subject is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The problem of history, the trauma of history, and uses of the past, is central to the works of many Native and non-Native historians (Martin, 1987; Duran, Duran & Brave Heart, 1998; Fixico, 1998; Cook-Lynn, 1998; White, 1998). One of the larger problems within this area is that Native American history is still often seen as a field dominated by white male historians who rarely ask or care about what the people they study have to say about their works. As long as the history of the Native people of the Americas continues to be studied in this manner, Angela Wilson argues, the field should more appropriately be called non-Indian perceptions of American Indian history (Wilson, 1998).

3.2.2. American Indians and Museums

The controversy in the history and identity of the American Indians is easily transferred to their presentation in cultural heritage institutions, particularly museums. The first attempt to examine the issue in depth was done in 1995 with *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures* symposium in

NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in New York.

The book under the same title that followed several years later presents the viewpoints of six prominent museum professionals – Native and non-Native. This publication, although not an exhaustive treatment of this complex multi-layered issue, examines the way in which American Indians and their cultures have been represented by museums in North America within the realm of the new directions museums are now taking. Traditional museum exhibitions of Native American art, history and culture have often presented only the past, ignoring the living Native voice. Today museums have begun to incorporate the Native perspective in their displays. There appears to be a wide consensus over the need for museums to involve Native communities in exhibition planning and design.

3.2.3. NMAI

The Smithsonian Institution's publications about NMAI feature some major exhibits from the past. Such publications, however, serve mainly advertising and promotional purposes. NMAI has received substantial mass media coverage, particularly with regards to its new building under construction on the Mall. There is a growing number of articles expressing criticism of the project, and questioning some of its basic premises (Klein, 2001; Camp; 2001).

Very insightful, and yet very bitter, is the story of the NMAI's design process, told by the architect who is to be given credit for the conceptual design - Douglas J. Cardinal, a Canadian of Blackfoot origin. *The Forgery for the Smithsonian* presents his own story as opposed to the editorialized version of the conflict by the Smithsonian.

3.3. Background

3.3.1. Chronology of the museum

Discussions between the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in New York City – in possession of one of the largest Native American collections in the world, consisting of 800,000 objects – about affiliating with the Smithsonian, began in 1980. It was not until May 1987 when the Board of Trustees of the Museum of the American Indian actually adopted a resolution on such an affiliation between the museum and the Smithsonian, as well as for the relocation of the museum collections to a new building on the Mall in Washington, D.C. In the following years, an agreement was negotiated between the Smithsonian's Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the Heye Foundation. The agreement was eventually signed in March 1989, and endorsed by Smithsonian Secretary Adams in May. On November 28, 1989, President George Bush signed legislation establishing NMAI as part of the Smithsonian Institution. W. Richard West (Southern Cheyenne) was appointed the founding director of the new museum in May 1990.

In April 1991, the Smithsonian selected *Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates Inc.*, of Philadelphia to develop general architectural program requirements and criteria for the design of the new museum in Washington, D.C., and for the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Maryland, where the museum's collections were to be housed. The architectural program was developed after a series of consultations with Native people from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central and South America. The end product, called *The Way of the People* serves as a guide to creating the new museum.

In June 1992, the Smithsonian selected *Polshek and Partners* of New York City, *Tobey + Davis* of Reston, Virginia, and the Native Design Collaborative to provide architectural and engineering services for the CRC. One year later, the Smithsonian selected the architectural firm *GWQC* of Philadelphia in association with *Douglas Cardinal Architect Ltd.* of Ottawa, Ontario (Canada), to create the design concept for NMAI on the Mall in Washington, D.C. At the same time, a preview exhibition entitled *Pathways of Tradition* was on view at the George Gustav Heye Center of NMAI in New York City. The George Gustav Heye Center officially opened in October 1994, in the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in New York City, and soon became one of New York City's most visited museums.

The vision session and design workshop for the NMAI on the Mall was conducted with the participation of the project architects, Native artists, designers, Elders, educators, and other community leaders in 1995. Three years later, after a muddled contractual debate, the Smithsonian terminated its relationship with Douglas J. Cardinal (Blackfoot) and assumed responsibility for the design and construction of the museum on the Mall. Assisting the Smithsonian are *Polshek and Partners*, *Tobey + Davis*, and John Paul Jones (Cherokee-Choctaw).

In 1998 the construction of CRC in Suitland, Maryland, was completed. Staffing and operations began in 1999. The relocation of the museum's collections is currently underway. A groundbreaking and blessing ceremony at the site of the NMAI on the Mall was held in September 1999. In June 2001, the Smithsonian contracted *CLARK/TMR, A Joint Venture* to build the 260,000-square-foot NMAI on the Mall, scheduled to open in the fall of 2004. An on-site Welcome Center facility was opened in 2001.

3.3.2. Mission statement

The mission statement of the NMAI proclaims it an institution of *living cultures* dedicated to the preservation, study and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native People of the Americas.[39] As such, the museum works in collaboration with Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to protect and foster their cultures by reaffirming traditions and beliefs, encouraging contemporary artistic expression, and providing a *forum* for Native voices.

The educational objectives of the museum further reinforce its mission. The following three statements, which are the basis for the interpretive approach of the museum, represent its overall stance regarding the Native Peoples: 1) Native Peoples are here today; 2) Native Peoples are diverse but share some common beliefs and worldviews; 3) The stories here are told by Native Peoples of the past and present because Native Peoples are the best teachers about their perspectives on history, art, culture, beliefs and contemporary issues.[40]

Righteous at first reading, these statements are inherently controversial. For example, the first statement may easily lead to debates on cultural genocide issues, or what some would call, the American Holocaust. The third statement ignores the controversies between the historical interpretations of the different tribes. The fallacy inherent in these underpinning interpretive statements is further analyzed as sources of dissonance. The functions of the museum are discussed next in the dissonance analysis.

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[39] NMAI Homepage. Retrieved August 1, 2002, from http://www.nmai.si.edu.
[40] Klein, J. (2001). Native Americans in Museums: Lost in Translation? *APF Reporter, 19*(4). Retrieved August 20, 2002, from http://www.aliciapatterson.org/APF1904/Klein/Klein.html.

3.4. Dissonance Analysis

3.4.1. The museum concept

A fundamental source of dissonance in the case of NMAI is the concept of the museum itself, which is foreign to the cultural traditions of the American Indians. Since wealth in the Native American culture is understood as a capacity to give and contribute to the community, rather than to gather objects and display them, products are mainly prized as objects for use or trade. Thus, a museum is not part of the Native traditions; it is seen as "a European way to exhibit one's spoils".[41] This was, in fact, one of the main issues raised at the vision session. Why even talk about museums? Museums take artifacts that are sacred and arrange them in ways that are sacrilegious to the Native culture. The applicability of the term museum itself was questioned.

This explains the one aspect of the opposition to museums existing in Native communities, particularly to museums of natural history, which promote stereotypical images of Native people – images of a prehistoric extinct culture, not a living and developing one. Nevertheless, Native communities recognize that institutions such as NMAI could ideally provide an opportunity for their young people to learn more about their culture and history, which are part of the tribal history. The forms of presentation in such a museum, however, may not necessarily be the same forms used by traditional museums of Western culture.

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[41] Cardinal, D. J. (2000) *A Forgery for the Smithsonian: The Story of the National Museum of the American Indian*. Retrieved August 1, 2002, from http://www.djcarchitect.com/NMAIStory/NMAIintro.htm.

3.4.2. The location

Another primary question raised at the vision session was whether such a museum should be housed in Washington, D.C., since Washington can be regarded an institution that played a significant role in destroying the Indian ways of the Americas.

Some of the Elders at the vision session felt that there was nothing wrong with the city of Washington being the place to house NMAI. The Chief of the Seminoles indicated that the planning and the layout of the city was similar to the way traditional cities of the Americas were planned – with the male and female symbols of the Mall to the East, which is the way native American cities of the living looked; with the River, and the City of the Dead across the River to the West.

3.4.3. Museum vision

Once the NMAI was recognized as an opportunity to present American Indian contribution to the rest of the world, and to tell the story from the American Indian perspective, the museum vision was developed:

> Let us have a place where we can welcome people and feed them, show them our history, our culture, our songs, our dances, the vibrancy of our people, the celebrations of our people and inspire them when they come into the building… Let's develop a place of nurturing and caring, not one of showing all of our suffering. It's a place where we have to show our forgiveness, because if we do not forgive and we carry that with us, it becomes a burden. It has to be a place of forgiveness, it has to be a place where it can really describe and let people know really who we are, and share that with everyone. It's a place of sharing.[42]

[42] Cardinal, D., n.p.

As the above quotation suggests, the consensus reached entailed a positive vision - a vision for a museum which would not tell about the tragic history, the pain and the suffering of the Native people, but would emphasize their cultural contributions instead.

Not all were supportive of such a positive vision. Arguments against the celebratory function of the museum were related to the political opportunity the site on the Mall presented. Parallels between the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the future NMAI were made often to support the alternative approach. Some thought there had to be an American Holocaust museum on the Mall – a museum to commemorate the five hundred years of systematic murder of over 200 million people. The supporters of this vision saw the "positive" NMAI as "the permanent enshrinement of the American lie and the final resting place of Indian history";[43] as another cultural rip-off imposed on the Native people. Visitors to the hypothetical "positive" museum, would leave the museum amazed and pleased at the beauty of the past, but "without seeing or knowing the "time of horror" each and every Tribe went through upon contact with the European… without realizing how much of the slaughter was an officially inspired, government planned, racist policy of genocide… not knowing that our people still suffer ongoing policies of genocide and attacks on our existence."[44] Once again, USHMM was given as an example of a powerful instrument to protect a minority's heritage against any repeat of genocide, to commemorate the dead, and to use the past to protect the future.

Just like in the other two case studies examined in this thesis, the discussion on the function of the museum – celebratory or memorial – was essential in determining the

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[43] Camp, C. (2001, January 20). Is the NMAI Hiding Genocide? *The People's Voice.* Retrieved August 15, 2002, from http://www.yvwiiusdinvnohii.net/Articles2001/CCamp010120NMAI.htm.

appropriate interpretive approach. Contrary to the USHMM case, where the memorial function seems to dominate, as the name of the museum itself suggests, NMAI's emphasis is on the celebration of Native culture in its interpretation. Bruce Bernstein, the museum's Assistant Director for Cultural Resources, comments: "It's a place that tells of the triumphs of Native people, the survivals and sovereignties of Native people. Now, if you're telling about the sovereignties and the triumphs, you've got to talk about some of the horrible things that have gone on, too – and perhaps some of the things that aren't so pleasant going on in Native communities today."[45] It is questionable still whether NMAI will be able to tell the "unpleasant" story, as an institution very much dependent on federal funding.

3.4.4. The building design

The architecture of the NMAI building, just as in the case of USHMM, is seen as an integral part of the whole project, as an architectural statement about the Native culture, reinforcing the museum vision. The concept itself, though, is fundamentally different.

The challenge was to create a place that is an expression of Native culture while respecting the existing monumental context of the Mall. The architect of the building, Douglas J. Cardinal, describes the design concept of the NMAI building as an abstraction of nature. The end result is a building that relates to all buildings on the Mall, a building that respects the Mall. This abstraction is to be conceived as a block of stone, sculpted by wind and water; and the shape and form of that stone would reinforce the overall concept

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[44] Camp, C.

of the Mall itself. This stone building is an abstraction of the rock that formed the North American continent, the backbone of Turtle Island.

The landscaping is also an important aspect of the overall design. The formal landscaping around the periphery of the site is to be consistent with the landscaping of the Mall. However, on approaching the building, there will be a transition from the formal to the informal – the abstraction of nature that the building itself represents. The Elders, D.J. Cardinal explains, wanted visitors to experience a spirit mountain, a building that felt like a natural outcropping. The first experience of the site will be the sound of water.

The urban context of the building is also crucial, given its primary location. The overall composition of the Mall would have the Washington Monument at one end, and two stone sculptures at the other – I.M. Pei's National Gallery of Art, and the NMAI building. After D.J. Cardinal studied the design concept of the Pei's building, he developed the geometry of the NMAI building to complement Pei's geometry. One building was designed as a series of triangles, while the other – as a series of circles.

The building's orientation, respectful of Native cosmology, with the four cardinal directions, the earth and the sky, and the winter and summer solstice, is also an essential element of the architectural vocabulary. The main entrance of the museum faces east, which is evocative of Native structures, and the U.S. Capitol, as the focal point of the Mall.

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[45] Klein, J., n.p.

According to the design concept, the exterior of the building, its interior, and the content of the exhibits work together as one. The exhibit design is expected to be highly expressive of Native culture as well. In this way, every public space inside the Museum would provide an appropriate setting for the celebration of Native culture.

The design process was planned in such a way as to incorporate the input of all stakeholders, and eventually the final design was unanimously approved not only by the Smithsonian, but also by all necessary jurisdictions. However, after an ambiguous contractual dispute, the Smithsonian fired its design architect, Douglas J. Cardinal. Many interpreted this incident as the Smithsonian's successful attempt at using the Native descent of Cardinal and his credentials as an architect with a lot of experience in designing museums (his design for the Canadian Museum of Civilization is world-famous), as an "Indian" screen for the whole project.

3.4.5. Exhibitions

The inaugural exhibitions, planned to open in 2004, entitled *Our Universes, Our Peoples*, and *Our Lives,* will focus on Native worldviews, Native history, and Native identity. These exhibitions are being developed with the direct involvement of Native people, providing critical oversight on the exhibitions' content. However, because of the continuing suspicions towards museums, some tribes have declined to cooperate even with the supposedly Indian-led NMAI. It is not only the Smithsonian label that is of concern to them, but also the fact that so many high officials at the museum, such as Bruce Bernstein and Jim Volkert, are not Native American. Given the reservations of the Native people towards museums, first of all, and towards the Smithsonian, and the

participation of non-Natives, it is questionable how representative the presentation and interpretation of the American Indian at NMAI will eventually be.

3.4.6. Collections and artifacts

There are certain concerns about the use and interpretation of Native artifacts at NMAI. Many of the the artifacts in the museum's collection are considered sacred, and their public display would be sacrilegious. There is a popular understanding among Native communities that most of these artifacts should be returned back to the tribes they belong to. "Artifacts in Washington, D.C. are dead, cut-off relics in nothingness,"[46] Carter Camp comments. In some cases, the Smithsonian does not know the stories that go along with the objects. Furthermore, for many Native tribes, religion is something very personal, private, and internal. There is no way to display religious objects, or present religious rituals without desecrating them in a museum setting.

3.4.7. Interpretation

The challenge of interpreting the Native cultures of the Americas, therefore, is unique. The traditional museum presentation techniques, first of all, are in conflict with the sacredness of some Native artifacts, and secondly, they follow a linear narrative, a logical and rational pattern, which is antithetical to the Native American philosophical patterns. The architect of the building, D.J. Cardinal, highlights this challenge by explaining that in the Indian culture, one must follow the path of the heart, rather than the path of the head:

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[46] Camp, C. n.p.

> The path of the heart is done by feeling, by emotion, by intuition. It has a spiritual dimension; it is unreasonable. It operates from commitment to the heart. Unreasonableness is part of following the path from the heart… A reasonable, logical representation of Native Americans is not the path in which Native Americans… would interpret themselves.[47]

The concept of time in Native cultures also differs. As Calvin Martin argues in *The American Indian and the Problems of History*, the Native American concept of time is cyclical, with history based on an oral tradition of storytelling. Therefore, to succeed, NMAI will have to translate Native American concepts and objects into exhibitions and programs that are accessible, intelligible, and provocative to a largely non-Native audience estimated at 3 million per year. There are other issues of no less importance with regards to both the form and the content of the future exhibits - how innovative the exhibits should be, how controversial, particularly when interpreting the "unpleasant" chapters of the story, and how compromising. The problem of "translation", however, seems to be the hardest interpretive task of the museum overall.

3.5. Conclusion

The case of the NMAI can be analyzed as an example of dissonance created by the uses of heritage as cultural resource. It is certainly not a clear-cut cultural dissonance case. The political implications are too many, and too serious to be ignored, or belittled. The museum's mission is to tell the multi-faceted story of the American Indian – a story of celebration of culture and triumph of survival, as well as of destruction and historical trauma. How to tell that story without hurting either the museum's Native American constituents, or confusing the mass tourist audience, is a true challenge.

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[47] Cardinal, D., n.p.

CHAPTER IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter summarizes the findings from the dissonance analysis of the three case studies – the permanent exhibition of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; the *Enola Gay* exhibition at the National Air and Space Museum; and the National Museum of the American Indian, scheduled to open in 2004, currently under construction on the Mall in Washington, D.C. In this chapter, the researcher presents a conceptual framework applicable to dark tourism production and dissonance reduction. The chapter concludes with recommendations for alleviating dissonance created by the use and interpretation of atrocity by the cultural heritage tourism industry. Suggestions for future research are also included.

1. Findings from the Case Studies

As diverse as the three selected case studies are in terms of category of atrocity interpreted, they clearly demonstrate the fundamental assumption of heritage dissonance - that dissonance is intrinsic to all heritage. The stories of the three museums are all marked by controversy, conflict, and dissonance. In the light of the process of dark tourism production, dissonance in the three cases results from the multi-use of heritage as a political, cultural and economic resource by multiple users. Although the political implications of dissonance seem to dominate in all cases examined, which his inevitable given their location on or near the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the political center of the United States - each case study illuminates one of the three major categories of heritage uses – economic, political, or cultural.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is interpreted as an example of dissonance created by the economic uses of the heritage of atrocity, particularly the commodification of the Holocaust for the American public. The *Enola Gay* exhibit at the National Air and Space Museum exemplifies dissonance created by the political uses of heritage, in the context of the ongoing battle between history and politics. Finally, the National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall is considered an example of heritage dissonance resulting from the presentation of Native culture to the general public. Such generalization is by no means irrefutable, since the political, cultural and economic uses of heritage overlap by rule, but it assists in building a conceptual framework of dissonance in dark tourism for the purposes of this thesis.

Besides being representative of dissonance created by the three major uses of the heritage of atrocity, each case study illustrates a unique interpretive challenge. In the case of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the major challenge, as articulated by one of its spiritual leaders, Elie Wiesel, was to create "a place where the impossibility of knowing existed alongside the traditional ways of 'knowing' in a museum". The case of the *Enola Gay* exhibit, although interpreted as a lost battle on the historical front of America's culture wars, entails important lessons about the political power of the heritage of war from the recent past. In the case of the National Museum of the American Indian, the challenge was to 'translate' the culture and history of the Native Peoples of the Americas to a largely non-Native public, at the same time balancing between triumph and trauma, and preserving the sacredness of Native artifacts.

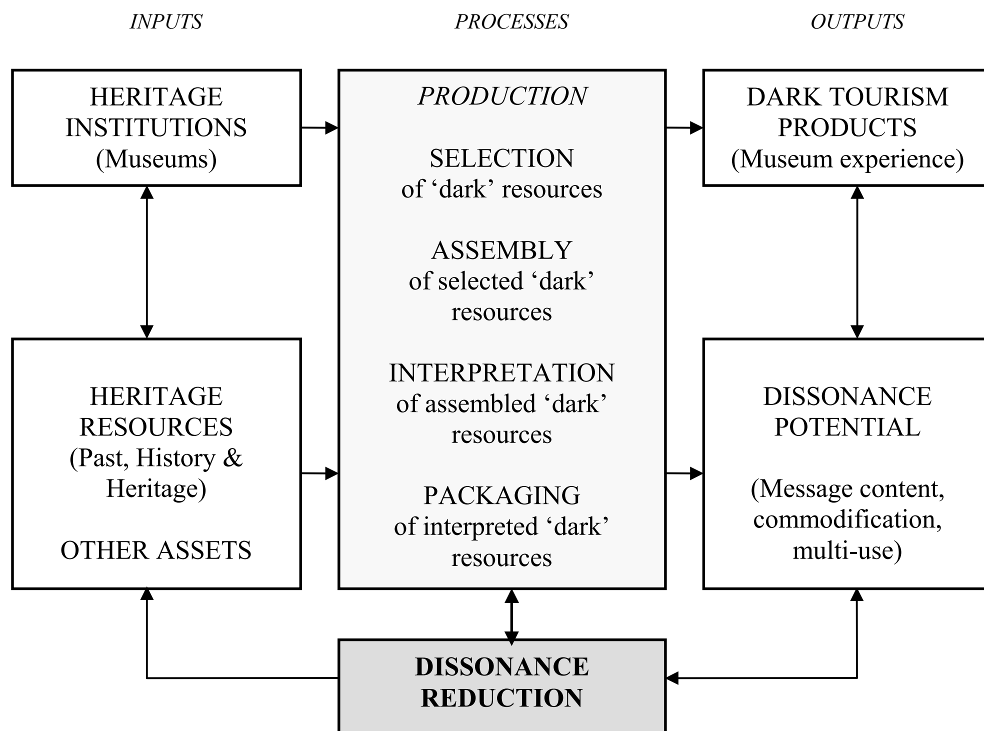
Despite these differences, the three case studies do share certain similarities. The fundamental question, equally important at the planning stage of each museum, is the interpretive dilemma between commemoration and education, commemoration and celebration, or commemoration and entertainment. These interpretive dichotomies, in fact, are variations expressive of the function of the heritage institution under study. While the priority function of USHMM is commemoration, it is education in the case of the *Enola Gay* exhibit, and celebration at NMAI. It is not to claim that combining the antipodes of these functions is not possible. It probably is, but it may turn out to be extremely difficult, and it may require innovative presentation and interpretation techniques, as well as reconstruction of the present notion of the museum.

2. Revised Conceptual Framework

Based on the findings from the literature review, and from the selected case studies, this thesis attempts to understand the problem of dissonance resulting from the interpretation of the heritage of atrocity at heritage sites, museums in particular, through constructing a basic conceptual framework of the problem. The findings from the case studies support the assumption that there is potential for dissonance implicit in each phase of the process of dark tourism production. Since dissonance is characteristic of all heritage, and therefore, can not be prevented, it is important to reduce its magnitude by: (a) integrating the analysis of dissonance into the management process, and (b) monitoring the occurrences of dissonance in each phase of the process. Thus, making dissonance potential visible and comprehensible to all groups of heritage users involved may at least reduce the magnitude of dissonance.

The following diagram *(Figure 2)* illustrates a conceptual framework for dark tourism production and the associated potential for dissonance at each phase of the production process. The resulting dissonance may be of different categories – message content, commodification, multi-use, etc. Whatever the category of dissonance, as indicated on the diagram, the needed management interventions aim at dissonance reduction, implying the introduction of interpretation strategies which make the identified dissonance sources more comprehensible and the conflicts less stringent to the parties involved in the process.

Figure 2. Dark tourism production and dissonance reduction



3. Recommendations for Dissonance Reduction

Based on the similarities identified in the dissonance analysis of the three selected case studies, one can conclude that the initial stage of conceptualizing, visioning and planning is fundamental. Nevertheless, there are certain management interventions for dissonance reduction that are recommended for each phase of the production process.

First, before the production process begins, there should be a clearly stated vision and mission of the heritage institution, embraced by the majority of the stakeholders involved. At that stage, all the stakeholders involved must have already been identified – museum professionals, scholars, mass media, political circles, audience, and others, along with their interests, and motivations. Involving the stakeholders in the next stages of the heritage product development is essential.

Having selected the 'dark' resources from the available heritage resources, an unambiguous definition of the heritage of atrocity to be interpreted is needed; or at least a clear understanding of the multiple definitions already in use. The next stage, the assembly of the selected 'dark' resources and other resources, needs to identify the various uses of the heritage need, along with the potential for dissonance associated with each use. When interpreting the assembled 'dark' resources, the heritage users must be identified. Their social profiles, consumer motivations and expectations need to be considered at this stage in order to come up with a good interpretation product. Finally, when packaging the interpreted 'dark' resources, the compatibility of heritage users and product uses needs to be ensured.

The above general recommendations, applied at the different production phases, would help in preventing the occurrences and reducing the magnitude of dissonance at the succeeding stages. It is naïve to consider the above recommendations as a universal solution to the problem of dissonance. Dissonance can never be fully eradicated, and that is not the task; however, it can be made comprehensible to all the parties involved, and thus at least reduced.

4. Conclusion

This thesis reinforces the assumption that dissonance is inherent in all heritage to some extent. As demonstrated through the literature review and the case studies, the potential for dissonance is more critical in the interpretation of the heritage of atrocity for cultural tourism. Heritage dissonance, however, can be reduced through management interventions at each phase of the dark tourism production process.

5. Suggestions for Future Research

Since the findings from the case studies examined in this thesis suggest that the initial planning phase is fundamental in laying the grounds for future dissonance occurrences, it is therefore recommended that this conceptual framework be tested with a larger selection of cases at the initial product planning stage. The Newseum, currently being relocated from Arlington, VA, to a new site close to the Mall, and the World War II Memorial, being constructed on the Mall, are but a few examples where the concept of dissonance may be applied and tested.

The conceptual framework suggested in this thesis, is by no means comprehensive, and needs further elaboration. In order to understand better the problem of dissonance in the interpretation of atrocity at cultural heritage tourism sites, this basic conceptual framework needs to be applied to a more diverse selection of dark tourism sites. Moreover, the concept of dissonance is limited neither to the museum sphere only, nor to the heritage of atrocity. The dissonance analysis is applicable to other cultural heritage products, such as guided tours, historic house museums, archaeological sites, memorials, art galleries, and other places of cultural interest, as well as to natural heritage sites, such as parks and trails. Furthermore, the concept of dissonance is certainly not limited geographically to the United States only. Heritage sites in smaller cities, suburbs, and rural areas worldwide need to be considered as well. Finally, the concept of dissonance may help in improving not only the interpretation of the heritage of atrocity for cultural tourism, but also the use of heritage in contemporary culture in general.

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