In a short essay, titled “The Site of Memory,” the novelist Toni Morrison describes her work as an attempt to extend, fill in, and complement slave autobiographical narratives. Reflecting upon her craft, she contends that no matter how much a writer’s work may be the product of imagination, the act of imagination itself is bound up with memory. Morrison explains the complex relationship between imagination and memory through a metaphor deeply rooted in the southern black experience. The Mississippi River, she says, was “straightened out” so as to make room for people’s homes and farms, yet occasionally it floods in these places. Flooding is the term people use to describe the river’s physical action, but to Morrison it is also the river remembering. She continues:

All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that: remembering where we were, what valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It is emotional memory—what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our “flooding.”

Morrison’s approach is an intuitive one; it is anything but rational and scientific. And yet, her method is not so unlike that of an historian who represents the past “as it really was.” That is to say, Morrison’s understanding of the river and slavery implies an appreciation of history, and accompanying histories of persecution, as phenomena that might be broken down and understood as discreet experiences, distinct both from one another and from the flow of history. History, according to Morrison, is characterized by particular experiences that stand out more than others, thus creating a hierarchy of events. When the river
floods, it does not comprise part of a new hybrid of the past and the present, but rather is physical evidence that something definitive happened there before. This definitive conceptualization of the past “as it really was” is very similar to the critique which Jean-François Lyotard levels against French classical scholar, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, regarding his book, Assassins of Memory.  

According to Lyotard, historians such as Vidal-Naquet argue from a perspective of realism. They purport to uncover in a past fraught with complications, shifting alliances, divergent powers and heterogeneous contexts, the simple truth of what happened. This “realism,” for Lyotard, is restrictive. He argues that the study of history is more complicated than merely asserting one’s objectivity by avoiding “political projects of legitimation and perpetuation.” He says:

> It is never a mistake when historians, exposed to that memorial-forgetful history, reach for their books, search the archives, put together documents, and subject them to an internal and external critique and reconstruct, as one puts it so innocently, what has really happened.³

It is in this manner that “history-as-science” purports to take hold of the past, as if its strict methodological principles enable the historian to read the minds of the dead perhaps even more easily than it might those of the living. Such an “objective approach,” Lyotard contends, is able to escape the “forgetting” maintained by “edifying history” (history that instructs by example). And yet, he continues, it produces a new “victim” (his word), an appropriate choice of terms, given the subject matter of both Morrison and Vidal-Naquet’s respective theses. This new “victim,” continues Lyotard, is “consciousness” as manifested by an illusory scientism. “Consciousness,” can be understood more properly as a state of being “unconscious-preconscious.”⁴ It is not a concept to which fixed notions of science and process might be applied. Following from this, a simple irony becomes apparent in Vidal-Naquet’s treatment of revisionist historians who deny the genocide of the Jews and the memory of those who die. His critique is guilty of defending a notion of objectivity which elides the heterogeneity of history, thereby impoverishing the very history he endeavors to preserve; in this sense, he commits his own form of paper assassination.⁵

Both Morrison and Vidal-Naquet propose a common theme. Truth, whether in the form of that which eternally reemerges or that which can be meticulously recovered, exists outside of particular interests as if it were a “scientific fact” or natural phenomena. As such, it survives the contingencies and vicissitudes of the moment, living beyond temporal and historical contexts. This paper, while sympathetic to Morrison and Vidal-Naquet’s attempts to maintain a connec-
tion to and memorialize the experiences of their respective ancestors, will take issue with the notion that truths—as situated in particular sites, the memorial floods of rivers or authentic documents—can be separated from the changing historical contexts within which they are found and reformed. Seen from this perspective, it becomes all the more important to understand that the physical structure and relics held within the former concentration and work camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau are part of a “material truth” subject to physical decay and the displacement of meaning caused by shifting political and cultural contexts. Certain of these contexts preceded the existence of the camps themselves; others inevitably follow it.

Auschwitz as a concentration camp is but one version of the “truth” of Auschwitz-Birkenau. In this sense, it is multivocal: it is part of the daily lives of the Polish Catholics who live (and lived) in Oswiecim; it is a final resting place for those who died there and a cemetery for those who remember them; it is a symbol of anti-semitism for some and of Polish martyrdom for others; it has been used to speak for the corruption of capitalist societies and made a paradigm for universal evil; it is a museum around which questions of preservation are raised and deliberated; it is a holy site for a convent; it is a place around which historians and demagogues assert their versions of the past “as it really was” or as it was fabricated to be; it is a place both to be forgotten and always to be remembered.

In addition to the relationship between Morrison’s and Vidal-Naquet’s mutual assertion of an unrevisable past, a second theme unites them. This is the notion that material evidence (whether documents or floods) can be used as evidence of a past that others would intentionally distort. In Morrison’s case, the distortion begins with the history of American slavery and the silencing of slave voices by the white power structure. For Vidal-Naquet, the threat is not one of suppression, but of a revision that would erase the memories of victims and survivors in the present. Rather than “straightening out the river,” revisionists manipulate and rearrange by taking documents and testimony out of context. According to Vidal-Naquet, this distortion of evidence revises the truth of the past itself. Yet, in a sense, the same charge could be leveled against Vidal-Naquet, for in memorializing site(s) such as Auschwitz as signifiers of the Holocaust, he construes them so narrowly as to obfuscate the diversity of truths they have and continue to represent. This essay will attempt to escape this dilemma by focusing on issues raised by an architectural analysis of Auschwitz-Birkenau, on the cultural monuments and every day life in Poland, and on various contemporary discussions of museology.

In his work, Geoffrey Hartman asks the reader to conceptualize the process
of public memory in the next century. In his view, public memory is closely associated with museums, but he immediately problematizes this notion of public memory by questioning whether or not museums "resurrect" the past or merely "give it a decent burial."12 Implicit in this juxtaposition of ideas is the sense that museums have a function to educate, whether through a pedagogic task of narrative, or a restorative aim to memorialize. Such a responsibility belongs not just to museums, but to literary, historical and filmic modes of representations (as well as to other types of public memorial), for these mediums are increasingly—indeed inevitably—replacing the eyewitness testimonies of those who survived the Third Reich's efforts to destroy European Jewry. Perhaps it is this transitory aspect of the present which most influences the manner in which the past has been treated in recent scholarship.

The publication of works pertaining to memory and the Holocaust has exploded of late, and with it, a variety of attitudes, ranging from the possibility of salvation to pessimism and despair have developed.13 This new historiography, comments Lawrence Langer, moves from a stage of historical writing struggling with what happened (the providence of historians) to how to remember it (the providence of our own imaginations).14 Though this distinction is somewhat simplistic, it raises an important question as to the public or private nature of memory itself. According to Langer, memory, unlike history, "can be a very private adventure." If memory is indeed a private experience, it certainly cannot sustain such a characterization when installed and exhibited in a public display. This is the case with the camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, for though they would seem to present an unmediated objective past, much has been and must continue to be reconstructed. That such transformations need occur is related as much to physical issues determined by the deterioration of the structures and objects held within, as it is to the radical political, social, and economic transformation in post-war Polish history.

Between history and imagination, there is a third possibility which Langer does not consider: mainly, why do we need to remember in the first place. This is not to ask why one would bother to represent the past; rather, it is a question of the particular motivation that is part of the territory of each memory project undertaken. Perhaps it can not be examined without some discomfort, for it implies that there is an agenda involved in such an analysis—in other words, that it is not about the objective representation of the past, but about very particular concerns in the present. Whether explicitly stated, tacitly suggested, or somewhere in between, this question emerges from discussions of the camp of Auschwitz and its past, present, and future ties to the town of Oświęcim. Just as accounts by survivors seem to elide, conflict with and alternately correspond
with one another, so too it is difficult to achieve any consensus on the symbolic place and "mythic status" of Auschwitz-Birkenau.\textsuperscript{15}

Yet attempts to narrativize events which occurred at Auschwitz-Birkenau are inevitable as the physical site and relics preserved there deteriorate. As recent films by Steven Spielberg, Claude Lanzmann, the opening of two major new museums in the U.S., and a forty-two million dollar investment to renovate and maintain Auschwitz all demonstrate, new personal, cultural and economic interest has been dedicated to memorializing the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{16} As a result, increased attention has also been focused on Auschwitz and its museum staff. "Today the whole world is watching what we do in here," claimed museum director Jerzy Wroblewski in an interview with a \textit{New Yorker} journalist in November 1993, "But for the last forty years nobody cared about Auschwitz."\textsuperscript{17} According to Wroblewski, the museum faced grave financial limitations until very recently, and certainly before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Various decisions had to be made so that the site did not fall into total collapse. While "painfully aware of questions of authenticity" and the fact that such decisions might better have been made in a larger forum, Wroblewski explains, something had to be done at the time, or "there would be nothing left today."

A larger assembly did finally take place there in August 1993 when a group of approximately thirty conservators, architects, historians, religious leaders, and government representatives from the United States, Western Europe, and Israel gathered at the Auschwitz Museum to confer with museum administrators regarding the future of the site.\textsuperscript{18} The conference was titled, "The Future of Auschwitz: Should the Relics be Preserved?" This small roundtable meeting took place in the fashion of a dialogue rather than a formal conference with the presentation of papers. Participants agreed in advance to refrain from circulating meeting materials due to what Jonathan Webber described as the "potential sensitivity of the subject."\textsuperscript{19} In a discussion with Timothy Ryback at the \textit{New Yorker}, a participant described some of the most important issues raised at the gathering. According to Detlef Hoffmann, a German professor of art history and an organizer of the conference, the question of function was of primary importance: "The museum staff must ultimately decide what the place is supposed to be." Hoffmann argued that the identity of Auschwitz might alternately be described as a memorial, a museum, a cemetery, even a place to educate, or as some combination of them all. An interrogation of function seems an understandable place to begin a dialogue. A discussion directed to the proposed handling of a museum by officials would seem by definition, however, to be limited to a selection of actions to be taken. After all, Auschwitz is and will continue to operate as both a museum and a state institution. Even the title of
the conference betrays this bias, by articulating a yes or no question. In effect, the site was a priori conceptualized as a place with a function in the present because the conference was assembled in the first place to better establish (or revise) just what this might be. Indeed, whatever the discussant’s opinions, however, it is an inevitable fact that time will pass, that things will fall apart, and that the physical presentation of Auschwitz at any given moment will change. Or, as Witold Smrek, the Museum’s chief conservator explained, “[W]e are trying to preserve everything we can, but we can do only so much. The problem is that nothing lasts forever.”

If one designates Auschwitz-Birkenau a museum and a place to educate, it certainly does not fit conventional discussions of didacticism, authenticity and preservation. That there is a “senseless reverence” endowed upon objects merely because of their authenticity, as argued by David Horne, does not seem an appropriate criticism in this particular case. That is to say, while reverence might not be the appropriate gesture, for example, toward the tons of human hair preserved by the museum, neither is its sanctification unreasonable. However, Horne’s contention that there is an “overriding concern with authentic objects in conventional history museums” does seem applicable to this discussion of the Auschwitz Museum in general. Through an exploration of an analogy between collecting artifacts and writing history, Horne expresses his uneasiness with the authority generated by the “authenticity” of relics. Artifacts are displayed in museums as if to tell a story by themselves which would be the equivalent of a situation in which historians simply produced volumes of random and unedited documents rather than authoring narratives. “What,” Horne asks, “can these museums do that books cannot do better?” One might consider further, he suggests, the quality of a presentation given a situation where no objects were available to begin with, therefore making necessary and legitimate the use of facsimiles and photographs.

Perhaps it is precisely the relationship between the object and objectivity itself that renders such fragments unique in terms of their interest to the public. Despite the variety of significations such artifacts might represent across testimonies, academic analyses and controversial disputations, one cannot contest their genuineness as remains. In this sense, they bear witness to a past just as the Mississippi “floods.” Similarly, one might speculate that as testimony necessarily yields to representations, the importance of these physical remnants increases. They are, indeed, a form of evidence to the recent past through their incontestable linkage to events, and even to individuals. “A picture is worth a thousand words”, states Geoffrey H. Hartman in “Public Memory and Modern Experience”, “only because it endows those words with the illusion of immediacy and
self-evidence." In this manner, it is our own presence in interpreting images and objects (and texts) that lends them an aspect of subjectivity. Hartman's comments are not unlike those of James Young, who has drawn attention to the meaning invested in memorial sites by successive generations. To visit such places is to make a pilgrimage of sorts, suggests Horne. But, he continues, this "European" pilgrimage to the monuments of fascism is undertaken as a part of a horrible past which is "never the present, never the future." Hence, the singular contexts of such visits lend to the experience an even greater degree of subjectivity. In keeping with Lyotard's comments above, it is as if the museums themselves are like the historians who "put together documents... and reconstruct, as one puts it so innocently, what has really happened." The arrangement of objects, whether preserved, reconstructed, or re-created, are their own formal composition. As people from outside the daily routine of the Oswiecim community view them, they cannot maintain an innocence unmediated by either the purity of their presentation or by the material quality of the objects they offer.

Ultimately, memory is a selection process, and monuments of stone are "built on quicksand" in that they are constructed upon an ever changing set of concerns. As Andreas Huyssen has observed, a society's memory is negotiated by its beliefs, values, rituals, and institutions. Memorials are impermanent to the extent that they are subject to the politics of the day. Indeed, this seems readily apparent in the case of those who would voice the "Auschwitz Myth." Other monuments are "ossified," Huyssen continues, "either as myth or cliche." With the passage of time, they lose their original meanings and significations. He asks whether it even make sense to oppose memory and forgetting, "as we so often do, with forgetting at best being acknowledged as the inevitable flaw and deficiency of memory itself?" There is always an inevitable degree of forgetting intrinsic to remembering. Indeed, if everything were truly frozen against time by virtue of its "authenticity," or, as James Young suggests, preserved "almost exactly as the Russians found them forty years ago," there would be no need for the deliberative interventions of conservators, architects, historians, religious leaders, and government representatives in the first place. The paradox between realism and re-presentation is, of course, inherent to the deliberations themselves.

Even as a cemetery, Auschwitz-Birkenau cannot escape from a subjective connection to the present, as cemeteries are themselves memorials for the living to revisit the dead. The nature of a graveyard or burial ground is distinct from a site of archaeological excavation; it is a site of deliberate exhibition rather than of discovery, even when such a designation is proclaimed ex post facto.
ther complicating the matter, one might consider the fact that Birkenau itself was built on a bed of ruins. James E. Young states that “For their massive extermination center, the Germans razed the Polish village of Brzezinka... Thus what the Germans would call Birkenau was itself built on the site of a demolished village.”35 Ultimately, by separating Auschwitz-Birkenau from a traditional resting place for the dead, its “occupants” can only be remembered at best in the abstract. It is impossible to know exactly who died and where. Indeed, even if the victims were all recorded somewhere, it would not mediate the omission of those customs generally observed at cemeteries immediately following the time of death. In cemeteries, people are laid to rest with rituals: They are buried along side family and their loved ones with some recognition of their past and the future of those who survive them. They are not, quite simply, abandoned.

Auschwitz-Birkenau has been fixed against a particular narrative in that it has been reconstructed and renovated according to the plans of the Warsaw Culture Ministry. “Unlike most monuments in the world,” said ministry official Bohdan Rymaszewski, “Auschwitz was never intended to last.”36 This raises an important dilemma: by and for whom, in the most immediate senses of community and geography, are relics preserved in a country that is ninety-five percent Catholic?

To some extent, museum officials have been able to “stabilize” the deterioration of certain materials (brick, concrete, wood, leather and paper) against the elements of time. Other forms of erosion cannot be so easily suspended. The deterioration, scavenging, and subsequent reconstruction of wooden barracks demonstrates well the link between time, place, and representation at Auschwitz-Birkenau. As explained by Wroblewski, who is currently responsible for the preservation work done at the camps, many of the experts gathered at the conference in 1993 criticized the fact that the museum staff had built foundations made of brick for the wooden barracks. During the war, these temporary buildings sat directly on the ground. Wroblewski argued that if he had followed the advice of some conservators to leave the structures in their original state, the wood from which they were made would certainly have rotted. In effect, without the museum’s manipulation of this “evidence” it would have ceased to exist.37 Furthermore, even with such reconstructions, a variety of transformations persisted nevertheless. Anticipating the arrival of the Red Army in late November of 1944, the Germans lit several barracks on fire. Upon reaching Birkenau, the Red Army patrols themselves were compelled to burn down several more barracks in order to prohibit the spread of disease. Additional barracks were taken apart by homeless locals at the time desperate for building materials and
firewood. More recently, a windstorm tore apart yet another barrack at the camp.

Yet ultimately, these problems of reconstruction at Birkenau (Auschwitz II) have little resonance for the vast majority of visitors to the camps, as most never make the five minute walk there after having viewed the reconstructed museum site at Auschwitz I. Ironically, most Jews killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau (which is made up of several different locations) never even set foot at Auschwitz I, let alone died there. Nor did many see, for example, the infamous metal sign stating that work makes one free (“Arbeit Macht Frei”). Indeed, the sign itself has been made to appear as the initial entrance point to the nether world of the concentration camp by the museum tour, although this was not originally the case. (I will return to this subject later.) Hence, the tension between the desire for material evidence to confirm the established central narrative, even as illusion, and the unalterable effects of time is cultivated.

Auschwitz, after all, was not built to last. “The Germans built the camp with the intention of exterminating an entire race and then destroying all the evidence of this deed,” comments Rymaszewski, “Everything was poorly made—the barracks, the crematoriums, the paper used for documents. It is difficult to preserve something that was made to vanish.” In preserving a sense of authenticity around that which was constructed to fall apart, Young comments that people are invited “to mistake remnants of the past for events themselves, physical evidence for almost any accompanying explanations.” The “icons of destruction,” in a sense, come to represent the dead to which they once related. Even the memorial of Morrison’s river demonstrates a similar phenomena: the river floods occasionally. It does not ever make a permanent return. This is not to say that evidence of the past does not remain in some forms. In order to represent such memory, however, narrative inevitably takes the place of authenticity.

A second problem of renovation presents itself with Crematory I at Auschwitz. With this, the dilemma presented is not one of exposure, but rather a crisis of expectations. “When Auschwitz was transformed into a museum after the war,” explain Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, “the decision was taken to concentrate the history of the whole complex in one of its component parts.” Hence, the crematories at Birkenau (mainly in ruins), where most of the mass annihilations had taken place, were designated to be too far away for a “memorial journey.” Crematory I was thus reconstructed at Auschwitz I so as to represent the history of the other site just a few kilometers away. This recreation included a chimney, four hatched openings in the roof (presumably for Zyklon-B), and two furnaces. “There are no signs to explain these restitutions,” continue Dwork and van Pelt, “[and] the guides remain silent about it when they
take visitors through this ‘palpably intact’ building that is presumed by tourists to be the place where *it happened.* In fact, such a gas chamber did exist at Auschwitz I in 1942. By 1943, however, all of its furnaces had been dismantled. A year later, the structure was converted again into an air-raid shelter with an emergency operating room, and it was in this state that the Red Army presumably would have found the building. The Crematory at Auschwitz I is but one example of the variations and adjustments that have taken place. In another instance, the principal building through which prisoners of Auschwitz I experienced a myriad of humiliations upon first arrival—“the metamorphosis from *Mensch* to *Untermensch*” according to Dwork and van Pelt—became the modern reception center “with a restaurant, cafeteria, post office, money exchange, cinema, book shop, conference room and hotel.” Such transformations and rearrangements, whether motivated by practical or political concerns, betray a level of necessary and/or intentional falsification inherent in presenting objects in the present as if to demonstrate the ultimate truth of the past. In the meanwhile, some changes clearly cannot be suspended. It is to this final predicament which the last of these brief illuminations turns.

At Birkenau, a small pond is concealed behind some trees just a few paces behind the ruins of Crematorium IV, which was itself dynamited in 1944 by an uprising of inmates. A sign indicates its contents: it is called the “Pond of Ashes.” Before the liberation of the camps, this water served as a dumping ground for the mass of human remains taken from the incinerators at the nearby crematorium. The fate of these bits and pieces of bone resting in this muddy site, unlike some of the other remains, cannot possibly be debated or reconciled. The contents of the pond cannot be preserved. Meanwhile, according to Young, Polish teenagers “fish quietly on the bank of a little pond behind the crematoria, its shallows still white with human ash.” They do not mean harm, Young notes, because “Our memory space is, after all, their city park and state preserve.” Local Poles are automatically a part of a memorial process which “reinforces prejudices” and “feeds distrust.” That is to say it is an unavoidable circumstance that the horror of such a site is understood differently in terms of one’s relation to it. To an extent, Young argues, a place only remains sacred by virtue of the distance between its past and our present. Sites retain a certain symbolic importance precisely because we do not live *there.* For the Poles who live in Oswiecim and neighboring villages, the “pilgrimage” in and through the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau is a daily experience. Poles understand the place in the context of a daily routine rather than a once-in-a-lifetime encounter. “It is part of a larger place called Polska,” continues Young. He observes that, by contrast, “we memory-tourists tend to see not only Auschwitz through the lens of its
miserable past, but all of Poland through the image of Auschwitz itself.” In the end, it is not the contemplation of young people fishing in an ashen pond of human remains that is ultimately so disturbing; but rather the absence of the people who once lived there that is so much more horrendous.

In a story about a recent journey in search of an old synagogue in Kazimierz, Poland, Young comments on a formerly Jewish town in which Poles still speak a smattering of Yiddish which they learned from their former neighbors. When Young’s Polish friend asked a local girl where the synagogue was, she replied that “the cinema is there.” Young’s friend clarified, “No, not the cinema . . . . the synagogue is what we’re looking for.” The young girl, who had properly understood the question, simply replied that “the synagogue is the cinema.” Indeed, behind the movie screen, a frame for the holy ark remained. Later, the teenagers of the village could be overheard discussing the previous night’s film at what they referred to as “the synagogue.” “What the villagers may have forgotten,” concluded Young, “their language still remembers, if only as a dead metaphor.”

The decision to place a cinema in this former house of prayer, according to the local movie manager, was made with the Jews in mind. Locals agreed that such a space could not be used toward a practical end such as a restaurant or work place. Instead, the synagogue was designated a “monument to culture,” and thus a cinema. In fact, earlier plans had at one time been considered to renovate the site to its original purpose or turn it into a Jewish museum. These plans were abandoned, however, because the community felt that without any Jews left to visit a synagogue, or Jewish museum, such an endeavor would be pointless. Also, there was no film-house in Kazimierz. In a country with only a few thousand Jews and nearly that many official memorials to them, Jewish memory projects must invariably be undertaken and expressed in Polish (not Jewish) ways, with their respective problems of language, visitation, construction, and finance, all posing significant obstacles in the balance between sensitivity and touristic consumption.

What will ultimately become of the “official” memorial at Auschwitz is uncertain. The Pond of Ashes, however, will most likely be identified in the distant future as nothing more than a simple pond. “All water” as Morrison says “has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.” In the case of the Pond of Ashes, however, “where it was” before the construction of Birkenau is specifically a place which does not oppose forgetting. In this sense, its former “reality” would contain no evidence of the past in the way that Morrison makes claims about the history of slavery and “flooding.” The memory represented by the pond is only sustained by the locals, conservators, historians, and the like who continue to remember it — not by the water itself. Its truth is not
naturally recurring in any way. Perhaps writing history is like that: to an extent, forgetting where we were in the act of remembering is "the route back to [our] original place," because memory is inherently selective. In a sense, one must ignore most of the past as well as the future of the pond in order to mark the importance of events which took place across just a few years. The "rush of imagination," which Morrison likens to a flooding of truths, is rather then a reflection of the prejudices inherent in our selection processes as we remember history.

Notes
5. For examples of "holocaust deniers," see writings by Arthur R. Butz, Robert Faurisson, Paul Rassinier, and works published by the Paris publisher, "La Vielle taupe."
6. Pierre Vidal-Naquet's text opens with a dedication to his mother who was killed at Auschwitz. Morrison's aforementioned essay ends with the following statement in the first person: "Still, like the water, I remember where I was before I was straightened out."
7. See James Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Meanings and Memorials (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1993), especially Part II.
15. For a more developed explanation of this point see, for example, Lawrence L. Langer, Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory (New Haven: Yale, 1991).
18. For a general description of the conference see Ryback, “Evidence of Evil.”


14. Also on the subject of this historiography move, see Patrick H. Hutton, and “Review Essays” in History and Theory (February 1994): 95-107. According to Hutton, “[R]ising unobtrusively during the 1980s on the wings of an imposing scholarly discussion about the rhetoric of historical interpretation, the problem of memory's relationship to history has in the 1990s moved to the center of the historiographical stage. From the standpoint of the theory of history, the memory/history puzzle is conceivably today's most engaging topic.” Also see, for example, Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory,” in Les Lieux de Memoire, trans. Marc Roudebusch, Representation 26 (Spring 1989): 19, and Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution.
28. To further problematize this issue, one might turn to an article by Michal Unger titled “The Prisoner’s First Encounter With Auschwitz,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (1986): 279-295. Although a study of adaptation and survival in extreme circumstances, Unger demonstrates the variety of reactions inmates had upon first coming to the camps. In this sense, a representation of Auschwitz according to any centralized narrative would clearly betray the variety of experiences had by survivors, and undoubtedly victims as well.
30. On selection and memory, see also Leon Wieseltier in “After Memory,” 16-26. According to Wieseltier, “[R]emembering is the twin of forgetting. Memory is not retention, it is selection.”
31. See Andreas Huyssen in “Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age,” in *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6 (Fall 1993): 249-261.
33. Young, in *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, as cited by Dwork and van Pelt, “Reclaiming Auschwitz,” 232.
34. Although an exception to this might be found in recent debates concerning the collection and display of American Indian remains in archaeological museums. This presents an interesting question, albeit beyond the scope of this paper. That is, to what extent does the connection between a living people (particularly one of relative minority status) and the display of their respective ancestral remains shape controversies of representation and appropriation? To an extent, such debates seem to stem from attempts to save and/or resuscitate an identity in the present as is based on a connection with a history of persecution.
38. Young, The Texture of Memory, 128.
41. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, “Reclaiming Auschwitz,” 232-251. According to Dwork and van Pelt, the Panstwowe Muzeum Oswiecim Brzezinka only offers visitors a tour of Auschwitz I. Other sites which were formerly part of the camp are not developed for tours. One may enter Birkenau (Auschwitz II), for example, but few formal markers designate its “history” as do for Auschwitz I. Auschwitz III, where an industrial plant for I.G. Farbin was constructed, is not visited, and is indeed the subject of some recent controversy as to the state of its disuse. Other peripheral camps (Rajsko, Brzeszce, Trzebinia and other places) are only minimally noted with stone markers.
43. Young, “The Veneration of Ruins,” 278.
44. Indeed, it seems unlikely that survivors too would describe their own experiences through such remnants as piles of hair, glasses, and shoes. Primo Levi, for example, explains the encounter with Auschwitz in terms of an absence of knowledge. According to Levi “Everything was as silent...We had expected something more apocalyptic: they seemed simple police agents. It was disconcerting and disarming...In less than ten minutes, all the fit men had been collected together in a group. What happened to the others, to the women, to the children, to the old men, we could establish neither then nor later: the night swallowed them up, purely and simply.” Hence, a question of display is raised—is the purpose ultimately to make “witnesses” (in terms of the experiences of the victims and survivors), or to evidence criminality (in terms of the perpetrators)? Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz (New York and London: Collier Macmillan, 1961), 15.
46. Dwork and van Pelt, “Reclaiming Auschwitz,” 239.
47. Dwork and van Pelt, “Reclaiming Auschwitz,” 239.
50. Young, The Texture of Memory, 144.
51. Young, The Texture of Memory, 144.
52. See Young, “Jewish Memory in Poland,” 219-222.
53. See Young, Jewish Memory in Poland, 229. See also Horne, The Great Museum, 238. According to Horne, “[I]n Poland, the Council for the Preservation of Monuments to Resistance and Martyrdom has produced a guide with more than 500 pages in which are listed 2,500 of the 20,000 recorded places marked by acts of Nazi brutality.” On tourism and the appropriation of monuments to fascism, see especially David Horne, The Great Museum.