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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces the emergence of 9/11 memory as it is shaped in relation to the event's memorialization at nationally-dedicated landscapes of memory. Focusing on the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum, The National Flight 93 Memorial, and the National Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, my research examines how cultural memory is mediated through the establishment of 'places of memory' within the built-environment. Here, I argue, the preservation of place acts as a repository of national memory by safeguarding the history of 9/11 for future generations. Contextualizing these landscapes of memory within the global war on terrorism, my analytical framework engages the transnational significance of 9/11 memory in a global world. Accordingly, this research situates 9/11 remembrance within interdisciplinary and cross-border conversations that theorize national practices of preservation and commemoration in relation to transnational flows of people, information, and ideas. Here, my research articulates the formation of 9/11 memory as a unique 'geography of trauma.' Offering an original contribution to geography, this research theorizes the spatial and temporal movement of traumatic memories across time and space. Aimed at understanding how these historic sites are mediated in relation to other landscapes of violence and cultural trauma--past and present--my research draws on critical geopolitical theorizations of the nation-state, feminist theories of emotion and embodiment, queer deployments of affect, and cultural theories of memory, as tools for navigating post-structural ideas of power, knowledge, discourse, and empire.

RUMMAGING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE:  
GEOGRAPHIES OF TRAUMA, MEMORY, AND LOSS AT THE NATIONAL  
SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup> MEMORIAL & MUSEUM AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

by

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Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Geography.

Syracuse University

May 2014

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for a more peaceful tomorrow...

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## Chapter 1. Geographies of Trauma: an Introduction

*The terrorist attack in the city was very concentrated on that 16-acre site--it was amazing. But you know, those buildings did what they were supposed to do; they came down, they pancaked down. They didn't go falling over causing collateral damage; they did what they were supposed to do. Who would have imagined that commercial jets, fully loaded with 10-20 thousand gallons of jet fuel, would be smashing into them? Because that's what happened, and the fuel from the planes burned all the fire-retardant off the steel beams, and the towers literally melted. It was quite a successful hit.*

*After 9/11, I was still working . . . I found that to be a great relief. I'm an emergency room nurse, so that was--there's nothing better than listening to other people's problems, you know? My youngest was still in college . . . I think his college had about twelve kids whose parents had been killed at the World Trade Center, and they provided them with a counselor. I think it was the third or fourth meeting with the counselor, and I asked my son how it was going, and he said, "Mom, Mr. So-n-So had a nervous breakdown." And I said, "Oh!" And he said, "Yeah, we're really worried about him" [laughs]. My daughter was working as well, but she stopped going. She just didn't want to go. She was also engaged at the time, and a year later, she broke her engagement and moved back home with me. I think if her father hadn't of been killed there, she probably would have married the young man--he was very nice. She just got thrown into another area of life that she couldn't handle getting married. Everyone has their own way of dealing with things.*

*I think the memorial should be brutally honest--people jumping from the North Tower because they had no hope, no hope at all. And I guess they [the jumpers] wanted the families to have something, a body, which they never got anyway because the buildings collapsed. I just don't want the memorial watered down . . . I don't want roses in a garden and names of loved ones with blue skies. I want it to be brutally honest; I don't want people to forget that this happened in the middle of New York City. But as I said, I have no expertise in memorials, or how to attract tourists—I just don't want it watered down. I want it to be a **true** memorial, so that people who are my granddaughter's age will have some idea of what it was like, the experience of that day, and who did this (Personal Communication, 9/11 Family Member, August 11, 2010, original emphasis).*

When death is caused by disastrous events such as terrorism, processes of bereavement become inseparable from these traumatic, life-changing events (Kübler-Ross and Kessler, 2005, p. 175-181). Reestablishing daily routines—the return to work, interpersonal relationships, schooling—and a sense of normalcy, not only takes longer,

but also requires working through grief *in relation* to trauma. Managing bereavement thus becomes fundamental to both individual and collective healing in the aftermath of traumatic events.

The recollections above are excerpts from a longer conversation recorded in the suburban home of a widow just before the ninth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Known throughout this dissertation by the shorthand “9/11”, or “September 11<sup>th</sup>”, this signatory date functions as a cultural signifier of four hijacked airplanes that were deliberately crashed by Al-Qaeda terrorists into Lower Manhattan, Washington, D.C., and a field in rural Pennsylvania, claiming the lives of 2,983 victims, including this woman’s husband. The nine-year anniversary of the attacks had spurred vast amounts of media attention and controversy, yet our two-hour exchange was relatively benign. She felt little urgency to discuss such controversies as the proposed Islamic Community Center (ICC) blocks from the World Trade Center, or of the self-appointed ‘avengers of national healing’ spinning their opposition to the ICC for political gain.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the woman spent our time together highlighting her day-to-day reality as she and her family continue to mourn the loss of a husband and father, delegating the emergence of something called ‘9/11 memory’ to heritage professionals, media pundits, and politicians. As this woman simply put it, “I don’t feel I have any kind of expertise to offer about the memorial. I’m just not that passionate about it.”

Subsequent interviews with 9/11 family members echoed her ambivalence about the memorial, even as they rationalized their views differently (see chapter 6). Yet many families participated in communities of 9/11 remembrance, education, service, support,

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include conservative politicians, such as Newt Gingrich, Michele Bachmann, Sarah Palin, see chapter two for a fuller discussion of opposition to the ICC.

and even activism. Serving as proxy witnesses to the murder of loved ones, these family members have come to organize their grief collectively in memoriam of someone, or, in many cases, *something*. As a result, government officials, the media, and, at times, the 9/11 memorial institutions themselves, have regarded 9/11 families with a kind of cultural authority on the subject of 9/11 regardless of whether such a decree is individually or collectively desired.

As the opening recollection demonstrates, not all 9/11 families employ, or even accept such cultural authority, and the experiences, identities, and political views of the families of those killed in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks cannot be reduced to a homogenous constituency of “9/11 families.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, even when individual families, or family organizations, *do* in fact employ their collective authority, it is not automatically recognized as such, or adhered to. Rather than debate the *existence* of families’ collective authority, this research focuses on the *emergence* of cultures of 9/11 remembrance, commemoration, and memorialization. How is it that 9/11 families, through their unique experiences, become integral to the conservation and promulgation of cultural history, identity, and memory? Even global audiences experienced 9/11 at various scales across the globe in real time, yet victims’ family members’ highly personal and intensely traumatic losses dominate national—and even international—discourses of loss and grief in profound ways.

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<sup>2</sup> “9/11 families”, “9/11 family members”, or “victims’ families” are government and media-derived terms used to describe individuals with next-of-kin relations to those who past in the terror attacks. The terms are also used to determine ‘authority claims’ to speak on behalf of the dead, as well as access to legal claims, including relief funds granted and determined by the U.S. government. The terms have, as a result, provoked contestation from various communities affected by the attacks. For example, most of the surviving partners of same-sex relationships were not legally recognized as next of kin at the time and therefore did not receive financial compensation for their losses.

This chapter discusses the role trauma in shaping cultural memory of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks. First, I describe the embodiment of trauma at the World Trade Center as it is signified through the site's memorialization as an absent presence. Next, I turn to spatial and temporal unfolding of trauma as it maps itself onto post-9/11 geographies of memory and emotion. Finally, I consider the implications of traumatic memory in transmitting grief onto others, vicariously.

Forming the theoretical foundation of the dissertation, this chapter provides an introduction and context for the chapters and arguments that follow. Here, I develop the temporal and spatial conundrum that trauma poses for emerging geographies of emotion and memory post-9/11, namely, its inability to be relegated to past times and places. As such, trauma continues to mark present times and spaces, and its associated mundane forms of living in rather catastrophic ways. Tracing these concurrent geographies of past and present, mundane and catastrophic, are imperative for delineating the private needs of families to mourn from the public's desire to memorialize, and the varied individual, collective, social, and institutional expressions of remembrance, from their subsequent translation into an official national narrative.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Research Project**

### *Absent Remains*

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<sup>3</sup> This statement should not be read as an attempt to create false dichotomies between the public and private, nor the catastrophic and mundane scales at which the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks continue to reverberate. For instance, there are a number of staff members working on World Trade Center redevelopment whose rebuilding efforts are deeply entrenched within personal experiences of loss, some of which are cited in this project. As such, efforts to secure the memorial's completion by these staff members correlate with personal desires to memorialize loved ones. Here, healing takes places at both scales, the individual and collective, as the memories of 9/11 startle both (also see Spielberg, 2011, as an example of this). Likewise, the everyday geographies through which these workers move, for instance, at work or at home, are intimately interconnected to the catastrophic experience of loss as its absences are continuously felt across the aforementioned scales.



The memories recalled in the chapter's opening bring to the surface the unfathomable nature of the deaths that transpired at the World Trade Center. The loss is particularly hard to conceptualize because of the lack of physical remains. Of the 2,753 people killed at the World Trade Center (WTC) on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 176 bodies were recovered from the rubble "relatively intact" (Blais and Rasic, 2011, p. 80-86). As a result, 94 percent of WTC victims were classified as 'missing,' nearly half of whom vanished forever without so much as a trace.<sup>4</sup> In part six of the Steven Spielberg (2011) documentary, "Rising: Rebuilding Ground Zero, A Place to Mourn", a widow characterized this sudden and complete loss of her husband as "mind-boggling." As the woman expressed, "It's mind-boggling when you think about someone going to work one day and not coming back at *all*. They found nothing, he just kinda disappeared" (Spielberg, 2011, original emphasis). Another mother echoed this confusion regarding the loss of her son: "It's like [my son] just disappeared. It would be better to know [what happened to him]" ("The Remains of 9/11..." 2011, brackets in original).

Denial is a natural part of the grieving process, one that is often alleviated by viewing the body of the deceased (Kübler-Ross and Kessler, 2005). Death in absentia is all the more difficult to process as one is denied a central feature for making death real: the body itself. The collapse of the WTC reduced approximately 1,125 people to microscopic fragments and particles. The impact of the attacks literally erased all physical evidence of material death for nearly half of its victims, a process that

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<sup>4</sup> In an effort to provide families with some material form, or remnant, of their loved ones, small urn-like vials were filled with WTC ashes and given to victims' family members in October 2001 (Blais and Rasic, 2011, p. 82).

compounds the traumatic absence associated with the WTC site and its subsequent memorialization.

As the events of September 11, 2001 are memorialized at specific sites across the U.S. landscape, recounting this dark historical moment assists both individual mourning and broader senses of collective grief. The National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center (NS11MM) is the institution charged with the role of memorializing the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and honoring the memories of those who perished. The NS11MM has been charged with the task of meeting the individual and social yearning for a designated place of reflection to process the events that transpired, as well as a sacred place to mourn the loss of a loved one, many of whom were never recovered from the 16-acre site.

### *Trauma Embodied*

As the previous section demonstrates, the shapes collective and individual grief take in response to 9/11 are complicated by the absence of remains to bury (see Sengupta and Baker, 2001; “Unresolved Grief Without a Body,” 2002). Consequently, the individual and collective impetus to memorialize those who died in the terrorist attacks at the WTC is impregnated with traumatic loss.

The western etymology of trauma stems from bodily injury (see Greenberg, 2003, p. 26). According to Judith Greenberg in her text, *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*, “Our first home...is the body—the maternal body and then our own. If home can be interpreted through the body, then the shattering of a sense of a secure national home may evoke feelings about the shattering of a collective body” (Greenberg, 2003, p. 26). By analogizing the wounded body with the destabilization of one’s sense of home,

Greenberg understands trauma as simultaneously individual and collective, embodied and psychic. Trauma thus becomes a way of upending the constitution of safety, self, and place in relationship to others. To this end, Greenberg theorizes the destruction of the World Trade Center as a process that shattered both collective and individual psyches. Otherwise put: when the Twin Towers fell it produced a nation that was socially, politically, economically, physically, and emotionally wounded.

The trauma of 9/11 and the national injuries that resulted on the collective body have produced new psychological spaces in addition to physical ones. Indeed, the new *geographies of trauma* created in the aftermath of 9/11 have been central to understandings of commemoration and memorialization with regard to this historic event. For instance, the morbid portrayal of the afflicted sites as saturated with human remains serves to reproduce trauma as an absence that continues to be felt. Here, trauma highlights the presence of past events and social relations in affecting present-day realities, material and psychic.

Although the geographical literatures on memory and emotion have addressed the symbiotic relationship amongst places, memories, and emotions (see Davidson, Smith, Bondi, 2005, as a seminal example of this), the powerful influence of trauma in shaping our most intimate memories and emotions has been largely undertheorized by the discipline as a whole (see Burk, 2006; Till 2012a; 2012b; Blum and Secor, 2011 as notable exceptions). More so, trauma theory is, in general, all but absent from geographic arguments. This has likewise resulted in the underprivileging of geography and geographic frameworks within trauma studies more broadly, despite the continuous diffusion of traumatic memories across space, place, and time. In this dissertation, I

bring together trauma studies and geographies of memory and emotion to establish a geographical framework for understanding trauma as it materializes within a highly contested place of memory: the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center.

This dissertation argues that the memorialization of 9/11 unleashes a multi-scalar, transnational geography of traumatic memory that shapes political life in the decade after 9/11. I critically analyze the emerging discourse of ‘9/11 memory’ in the decade following the terror attacks.<sup>5</sup> Trauma, I argue, is central to both the formation and dissemination of collective and cultural memory in relation to the event’s memorialization at the World Trade Center. By focusing on the NS11MM, this empirically grounded research illuminates individual and collective experiences of trauma and memory within the memorial site most associated with the events of 9/11.

### *Site Selection*

The decision to focus this research on the NS11MM was influenced by several factors. First, the NS11MM is institutionally much larger than the other two memorials addressed throughout this research—the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, PA, and the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial in Washington, D.C. Even though the NS11MM was not equipped to address researchers and research requests when I first approached them in 2008, their staff size was still approximately 20 times that of the Pentagon and Flight 93 memorials. As a result, this greatly enhanced their ability to

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<sup>5</sup> I am specifically utilizing the term ‘9/11 memory’ throughout this project in reference to its exceptionalist underpinnings. Since this project is concerned with understanding how nationalist narratives of memory and memorialization are central to re-producing the ‘official story’ of September 11, 2001, the very homogenization of the date itself—9/11—as a stand-in for these local-gone-global events is a small, but important example of such processes (Also see Pain, 2010 and Orr, 2004 for similar critiques).

accommodate my presence by allocating time and other resources to this project.

Secondly, focusing on the NS11MM allowed me to make the most of my financial resources and proximity to New York City.

The NS11MM resides in the footprints of the original World Trade Towers in the heart of lower Manhattan. Its location at “Ground Zero” is central to its ability to mobilize national and international narratives of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks and the production of cultural memory. The NS11MM is in many ways viewed as the ‘official’ memorial site for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks because of the sheer amount of media attention allocated to the site.<sup>6</sup> Receiving the highest number of domestic and international visitors traveling to pay homage to 9/11, the NS11MM, unlike its memorial counterparts in D.C. and Shanksville, incorporates the victims of the remaining two sites into its physical design, narrative copy, and collections acquisition process. The combination of its institutional resources, as well as the centrality of “Ground Zero” to the formation of both collective and cultural memory, reinforced the case for focusing on the NS11MM.

### *Research Questions*

According to the literature on collective memory, all memories are actively shaped by societies and malleable across time and space (see Halbwachs, 1992; Connerton, 1989). Remembrances are, therefore, socially mediated in relation to multiple groups and their divergent investments in sites of memory (See Nora, 1989) and

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<sup>6</sup> Ironically, the NS11MM has yet to secure federal designation despite multiple legislative attempts. As a result, it does not receive annual funding from the federal government to offset operating costs. At the time of this writing, the Flight 93 National Memorial is the only 9/11 memorial funded in part by the National Parks Service, which resides under the auspices of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

competing historical discourses. The World Trade Center functions as a highly contested place of memory, and thus becomes, I argue, an active archive of trauma (see Cvetkovich, 2003). The traumatic events of 9/11 are embedded within the various emotional, logistical, social, cultural, and political stages of erecting a memorial at the World Trade Center. This research prioritizes the various and, at times, conflicting, organizational, municipal, and familial criteria and demands that shape how we collectively remember 9/11 and the lives it claimed.

This project draws on qualitative data collected at the NS11MM in New York City from 2009 to 2012 to address the following research questions:

- How is collective memory generated by the National September 11th Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center?<sup>7</sup>
- How is both the formation and presentation of collective memories at this historic site mediated in relation to an emerging discourse of cultural trauma, post-9/11?

By cultural trauma, I am referring to the transformation of collective memories into cultural history (see Alexander et al., 2004; Alexander, 2012). For instance, as accepted memories and narratives surrounding traumatic events become further removed—spatially and temporally—from lived experience, they risk disappearing from collective consciousness unless maintained through social ritual, performance, or engraved upon the landscape itself. As such, culture must be mobilized in relation to memory (see Assmann

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this study, I use the term collective to connote the summation of individual recollections to form generally accepted social narratives surrounding certain historic events, as well as to indicate the socially constructed nature of collective memory in relation to present-day contexts and social-relations from which social impetuses to remember arise. Thus acknowledging the relationality between collective and individual memories, I distinguish the two terms by scale. For a discussion of collective memory, please see Connerton, 1989 and Halbwachs, 1952, 1941. Also, for an important critique of and departure from Halbwach's Durkheimian model of a collective conscious, see Winter and Emmanuel, 1999).

and Czaplicka, 1995 for a related argument) in order to *represent* trauma to a group or society over time and space. In other words, culture mobilizes memory to produce landscapes of trauma, of which memorial museums are premier examples.

I contextualize these questions within emerging 9/11 memorial discourse by using an analytical framework that engages the various constituents participating in the sites' memorialization process. For instance, I ask, who actively shapes the memorial site and its corresponding memory discourses, and to what effect? Which narratives do the memorial and museum landscapes choose to communicate to their intended audiences about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the lives to which they pay tribute? Whose lives are mourned and how are they represented within the memorial spaces and throughout the afflicted communities? Are previous experiences and practices of commemorating cultural trauma referenced within 9/11 memorial discourse?

When I approached the NS11MM in 2008, I wanted to understand how the events and victims of September 11<sup>th</sup> were being memorialized within this nationally-designated place of memory.<sup>8</sup> Although issues of memorialization were, and remain, the primary focus of my data collection and analysis of the NS11MM, the direction of the project would unfold, as expected, somewhat differently in the end. My research questions have

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<sup>8</sup> I determine the NS11MM to reside under the auspice of the federal government based in part on the organization's founding, which was made possible with the assistance of a 3 billion dollar HUD grant, as well as the fact that four former U.S. presidents sit on its board of directors. My remaining justification of this claim stems from previously articulated rationale regarding the visibility of the site and its centrality to the formation of national history. It should also be noted that all of the memorials engaged with throughout this project, NS11MM, Flight 93, and the Pentagon Memorial, are largely privately funded through corporate sponsorship and private donations, although some federal funds have been awarded on a one-time, or recurrent basis. Therefore, how each of these memorial sites is connected to the nation-state in different, although not necessarily disconnected, ways, albeit financially, physically, or discursively, is a focus of this study.

adjusted to meet the changing formation of this symbolic cultural landscape and the discursive struggles waged by various stakeholders to dictate the legacies of 9/11.

### *Methods*

To answer the aforementioned research questions, I conducted qualitative research (see Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005) drawing on theoretical frameworks in cultural, feminist, and political geographies. Research methods employed include: participant observation at NS11MM-related offices, archives, construction sites, and events (See Moss, 2002); historical and archival analysis of NS11MM institutional records and meeting notes (see Harris, 2001); and semi-structured interviews with senior-level NS11MM staff members (see Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995; and Wolf, 1996).<sup>9</sup> I also employed discourse analysis (see Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Duncan and Ley, 1993; Wodak and Meyer, 2009), media (see Gregory, 1994; ÓTuathail, 1996), and visual analyses (see Rose, 2001), of NS11MM materials, including but not limited to, didactic information, exhibit presentation, and general design. I served as a volunteer fellow at the NS11MM in 2009 and 2010 (for ten weeks in total), which also afforded me the opportunity to work on memorial projects and with museum objects, gaining first-hand access to institutional offices, staffers, and collection materials.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> All interviews conducted for this study were between 30-70 minutes in length. Each interview was digitally recorded and supported with written notes taken by the researcher. All interviews were transcribed.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that the museum was fully aware of my dual role as a volunteer fellow and graduate student researcher. In fact, I had to sign a waiver indicating the conflicting role that I embodied while at the organization. As such, the projects and information that I had access to while serving as a volunteer fellow at the NS11MM are not referenced in detail, or made specific throughout this project in accordance with this contractual obligation.



To triangulate my findings, I conducted semi-structured interviews with employees of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, The Flight 93 National Memorial, The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, 9/11 family-members, local city residents and workers, and World Trade Center construction workers—past and present-day.<sup>11</sup> I recorded 40 interviews between 2009 and 2013, 16 of which were conducted with mid and upper-level NS11MM personnel, approximately 15 percent of their current staff.<sup>12</sup>

Because of its constant subjection to external criticism, the selected site was a sensitive place to conduct primary research. As such, the analytical scope of my project was never made explicit throughout the majority of interviews conducted with NS11MM staff members. Rather, my interview questions were constructed around three thematic areas: first, the role of memorials in establishing identity and community; second, battles over memorial space and place; and third, connections between 9/11 and other memorials and cultures of memory.

Collecting these interviews has enabled me to document the experiences of those involved in creating the memorial and museum at the World Trade Center. By capturing and recording the memories of research participants on the frontline of these historic events, the interviews offer testimony of the psychic, material, social, and political formation of the site first-hand. They offer glimpses into processes of memorialization as

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<sup>11</sup> Although the NS11MM is the primary research site for this study, the Flight 93 and the Pentagon memorials also function throughout this research as sites of comparison or engagement—not only as nationally dedicated projects, but also in terms of preserving and fostering collective memory. Interviews conducted at the Flight 93 National Memorial and The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial were also done with upper level employees.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to the aforementioned interviews, more informal meetings were held at the NS11MM and the PANYNJ between 2009-2012. Although these meetings involved discussion topics found throughout the interviews, they are not counted among the data set because respondents did not consent to formal interview protocol.

lived memory is translated into historical and institutional memory for the consumption of future generations.

### *Positionality*

My own memories of September 11, 2001, the day itself, are very limited. As an undergraduate at the time, I mostly recall fragments of televisual imagery from news reports playing over a drone of busy signals as I made panicked phone calls to my family. I am originally from ‘downstate’ New York, Long Island specifically, and my father worked for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, an inter-state agency that operated several offices out of the World Trade Center, including the North Tower, where he reported monthly for managerial meetings on construction projects. As a result, my own memories of 9/11 largely manifest in what the day could have meant, and did mean for my family and myself, as my father—the central figure of these memories—frequented the place that would soon come to be known as “Ground Zero.”

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> manifested rather unconsciously throughout my work as an activist-artist, student, and researcher over the last decade. Since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have always been connected to personal experiences rather than political or collective ones, it was never my intention to study the politically charged historical event now known as “9/11” as a graduate student. In retrospect, it was through seemingly random ‘twists and turns’ taken throughout the research process—from its inception to its execution—that my own relationship to trauma and 9/11 were made tangible, a point to which I return much later in chapter 6. My arrival at this project happened rather haphazardly through broader interests in visual culture that led me to renderings of design plans for the World Trade Center and Flight 93 memorials.

Initially engaging with these images from an aesthetic standpoint, I arrived at issues of collective memory and cultural trauma inductively, driven by the sites themselves and research questions they fostered, rather than any one decision implemented throughout the project's design. Ironically, the memorial's aesthetic layout was actually a battleground for collective memory among divergent social actors invested in the site and its meaning. As notions of cultural trauma continued to saturate the research findings throughout the writing process, I shifted theoretical focus from collective memory to collective memories of trauma. This is not to say that trauma was mobilized here as an afterthought; trauma was in fact always present. Its identification as such, however, was delayed.

### **Trauma's 'Spatial Turn'**

The western cannon historically defines trauma as a physical wound inflicted on the body (See Freud, (1920-22) 1955). Modern psychologists, however, have since theorized trauma as an emotional wound, or psychic form of distress (see Caruth, 1996). As a result, much contemporary scholarship regards trauma as unpredictable, the unforeseen effect of external events prior (See Freud, (1920-22) 1955; 1939; Felman and Laub, 1992; Caruth, 1995; 1996; Brown; 1995; LaCarpa, 1996; 2001). The symptomatic localization of trauma in and on the mind and body is, consequently, made accessible through its temporal and spatial delay. Trauma's inexplicable ability to reappear in different places and at different times forges a temporal and spatial link, or trace, between forgotten or unknowable pasts and future elsewheres. As Cathy Caruth, a leading trauma scholar, explains:

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is experienced at all. ...since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs [given that it is too exceptional to comprehend], it is fully evident only in connection with another *place*, and in another *time*. ...the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance *outside the boundaries of any single place or time* (Caruth, 1995, p. 8-9, emphasis added).

Processes of traumatic knowing are, therefore, ultimately made tangible through hindsight. As past memories of trauma are triggered by present-day events, or, as present-day events are recalled in relation to past traumas, traumatic knowledge reveals itself as both affective truth and manipulation.

Past trajectories of trauma scholarship emerged throughout the west in Victorian-era female hysteria, post-WWI 'shell shock,' and Holocaust-related witnessing. As such, trauma has been the fodder of many academic debates over the past two decades, particularly in the humanities and amongst feminists engaging issues of memory (See Herman, 1992; Early, 1993; Brown, 1995; Henke, 1998; Roth and Salas 2001; Radstone, 2000; Leys, 2000; Luckhurst, 1997; 2008). Today, studies of trauma range from systematic forms of racial and gender disenfranchisement, sexual and child abuse, to the social and psychological effects of historically poignant events, such as industrialization, colonialism, war, genocide, forced migration, globalization, and terrorism (see Cvetkovich, 2003; Eng and Kazanjian, 2003; Kaplan, 2005; Gilroy, 2005; and Hirsch and Miller, 2011). More recently, an emerging 'spatial turn' is taking place among interdisciplinary conversations about trauma and is central to my research on collective

memory (see Burk, 2006; Trigg, 2009; Perera, 2010; Walker, 2010; Blum and Secor, 2011; Till, 2012a, 2012b; Shields, 2012; Güney and Gökcan, 2012).<sup>13</sup>

### *Traumatic Delay*

Addressing the spatial, temporal, and scalar aspects of trauma, this growing ‘spatial turn’ traces two key threads of inquiry, positing important frameworks for re-theorizing geographies of memory. First, in emphasizing traumatic delay, or trauma’s ability to be temporally and spatially recalled in future times and spaces, this burgeoning scholarship theorizes the affective reproduction and relationality of an initial trauma with other traumatic times, spaces, and places.

In her work on the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, for example, Suvendrini Perera maps the discursive formation of the tsunami as a “disastrous event” through various modalities of traumatic representation—past and present—available and accessible vis-à-vis global capitalism. According to the author, “Trauma is a medium that enables dialogue and exchange; it is eminently transactable, mobile and adaptable in its current circulation...; it ramifies, with uneven meaning and effects, across and between subjects, scenes, sites, practices and relations” (Perera, 2010, p. 33).

Drawing her analysis from conversations with local Sri Lankan residents in the aftermath of the tsunami, Perera’s informants articulate non-linear narratives of disaster and recovery as they intersect with past memories of trauma. As Perera characterizes the data collection,

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<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the vast majority of spatially-focused trauma scholarship is located within medical and public health scholarship utilizing GIS methodologies to predict the spatial organization of traumatic-risk within urban environments in order to better place treatment facilities, such as hospitals and trauma centers (See Schuurman, Hameed, Fiedler, Bell, and Simons, 2008; Warden, Sahni, and Newgard, 2010, for their review of this literature).

Listening to their stories I remembered a reflection made by another researcher about how recounting the experiences of the 1978 cyclone in Batticaloa had enabled survivors to articulate other, unspeakable experiences of war and violence... One terror shading into another, war and tsunami soon became interwoven in our talk (2010, p. 34).

As such, the memories and experiences of one trauma become inextricably linked and defined in relation to other *geographical* spaces and times.

Since trauma ruptures both spatial and temporal continuity, its epistemic power exposes the threshold separating past from present, here from there, self from other. As authors Kübler-Ross and Kessler similarly note, “[normative]...memory is linear. When trauma occurs, however, there are often blank spaces...” (2005, p. 117; also see Edkins, 2003, on non-linear time). Thus contextualized vis-à-vis decades of war between the Tamil Tigers and the country’s Sinhalese-dominated government, the 2004 tsunami’s devastation is recalled by local residents throughout Perera’s study in relation to the scars—visible and invisible—of ongoing violence, political struggle, and civil war (Perera, 2010). Trauma can embody multiple temporalities and spatialities as traumatic time and space move both forwards and backwards, occupying here and there, center and margin.

The presence of multiple temporal and spatial realms is, likewise, a persistent theme within much of the geographic literature on memory (See Johnson, 2005; Legg, 2005; Dwyer and Alderman, 2008; Azaryahu and Foote, 2008; Rose-Redwood et al, 2008; Till, 2005; Hoskins, 2007; Hoelscher, 2008; Stangl, 2008). Conceiving the social production of memory largely in and through its materialization in place, geographers have been central in theorizing the intimate relationship between “places of memory,” space, and time.

Geographers Steven Hoelscher and Derek Alderman (2004) for instance, reflect on the symbiotic relationship between memory, space, and time, in their essay, “Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship.” For these authors, socio-political processes of place-making are rooted in our abilities to saturate specific topographies with social meaning vis-à-vis individual and collective memories of said places. As palimpsestic assemblages, landscapes of memory are infused with past narratives that are realized in and through their *re*-materialization in contemporary time and space. Such processes of re-materializing the past in the present are localized within contemporary productions of memory through which past and present exist as montage in relation to particular re-constructions of space, place, and time. Places of memory are, therefore, re-made as extensions of something, or rather, somewhere anew (again, see Nora, 1989).

British geographer Stephen Legg (2007) similarly articulates the precarious relationship between past and present within places of memory as a type of socio-political or spatial-temporal unfolding in lieu of collective amnesia. For the author, “memory changes through both space and time” (Legg, 2007, p. 457). Accordingly, processes of remembering and forgetting are neither determined, nor fixed, despite their proprietors’ (or propagators’) attempts to map meaning onto physical space and time vis-à-vis geography. This natural scaling of memory, the idea that memory-making occurs in and across multiple spaces at multiple times, underscores the point that memories—and their corresponding places—are mutable entities.

According to the above geographic literature, memory, like trauma, is both temporally and spatially dynamic. As a result, multiple temporalities and spatialities are present and possible within sites, or places of memory. As geographer Owain Jones

eloquently articulates, “memory is not just a retrieval from the past or of the past, it is always a fresh, new creation where memories are retrieved into the conscious realm and something new is created. The *strangeness* of memory is the presence of what is apparently past in the present” (qtd in Davidson, et. al, 2005, p. 208, emphasis added). Memory is, therefore, also an inherently affective form of knowing.<sup>14</sup>

Situated within a growing literature that addresses the non-linear and polymorphous temporalities and spatialities of collective and cultural trauma (see Edkins, 2003; Rothberg, 2009; Gopinath, 2010; Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013), my engagements with the memorialization of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center are invested in understanding 9/11 memory through trauma’s temporal and spatial delay. In other words, how are memories of 9/11 made tangible in and through its affective materialization within, and connection to, other places of trauma and their corresponding memories? Navigating traumatic time and space mandates an analytical intervention that moves away from theorizing places—and their corresponding memories—as bounded by geographic borders, albeit physical or psychic.

Drawing in part on the recent ‘transnational turn’ within memory studies (See Bennett and Kennedy, 2003; Levy and Sznajder, 2006; Rothberg, 2009; Hebel, 2009; Gutman, Brown, and Sodaro, 2010; Assmann and Conrad, 2010; Hirsch and Miller, 2011; Phillips and Reyes, 2011; Creet and Kitzmann, 2011; Crownshaw et al., 2011), this research mobilizes traumatic delay in relation to what Michael Rothberg terms

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<sup>14</sup> This study employs affect to characterize socio-political processes by which human beings are emotionally moved by the peoples, environments, and ideas around them. Noted for its symbiotic relationship to emotions, affect is both conductor and receptor for conscious and unconscious modes of life as material and immaterial worlds collide to produce individual and cultural knowledges, personal and collective subjectivities.



“multidirectional memory”—a praxis of collective memory formation that “acknowledges how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites” (2009, p. 11).<sup>15</sup> For instance, since the traumatic impact of 9/11 cannot be fully understood in the present due to its initial incomprehensibility, other collective experiences of trauma—and their corresponding memories—are essential in comprehending and framing emerging discourses of 9/11 memory. In theorizing 9/11 memory beyond its spatially-fixed, geographically-bound points of reference, such as the nation-state, this research theorizes how 9/11 memory—understood as a traumatic collective event—is affectively produced across seemingly disparate times and spaces and disconnected geopolitical histories.

### *Insidious Trauma*

Building upon the intellectual efforts of feminist geographers, particularly those engaging with emotional geographies, the second theoretical aim of trauma’s ‘spatial turn’ addresses the relational experience of trauma as it is affectively manifested within day-to-day spatial interactions and engagements with the built environment (Again, see Burk, 2006; Perera, 2010; Walker, 2010; Till, 2012a, 2012b; Shields, 2012).

For instance, Karen Till’s work on “wounded cities” (2012a; 2012b) offers alternative conceptualizations of the trauma as it is inflicted upon sites of urban gentrification and restructuring. Criticizing both poststructural and psychoanalytical

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<sup>15</sup> Theories of non-linear temporality have also been proliferated by feminist-post-colonial scholars. For example, in borrowing the term “ideological trafficking” from Payal Banerjee, M. Jacqui Alexander (2005) argues for the convergence of post-colonialism, imperialism, and empire across geographic, or palimpsestic notions, of time and space. Noting the ways in which the past is simultaneously present, and the present is simultaneously rooted in past events, histories, and their corresponding memories and identities, Alexander marks the non-linear production of time and space across modern nation-states (2005).

approaches that reduce the traumatic to an external, catastrophic event, or that which is confined to the inner working of individual bodies and minds. Till articulates trauma as an insidious process that occurs, rather covertly, over long durations of time. As the author explains,

To analyze wounded cities, places, and inhabitants primarily according to the ordinary processes of capitalist urbanization and their concomitant violence would be a mistake. Creative destruction as a concept cannot adequately address the material, emotional, intergeneration, and place-based forms of state-perpetrated violence... .The map of empty lots...does not demonstrate the slow removal of homes, community centers, or social networks and personal mazes. Nor does it indicate the decades of institutional, state, and everyday racism in these assaults upon inner city neighborhood and their residents, of the fears that people have living in and/or visiting these neighborhoods (2012b, p. 23).

Shifting the scale of trauma back and forth from the catastrophic to the banal and the mundane, this theoretical turn considers how traumatic memory is affectively produced across spaces and insidiously registered through embodied spatial relations. For example, how does the body register and transmit trauma across space, place, and time? Accordingly, this research addresses the role of the body and embodiment in storing and transmitting traumatic memory across place, space, and time, vis-à-vis emotional and visceral haunting (See Gordon, 1997).

For instance, in Cathy Caruth's summary of Freud in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), traumatic experiences are registered in the body and mind as a form of repetition, or "double wound" (p. 3). As the author expands, trauma:

is not...a simple and healable event..., like...a mortal [read bodily] wound...[trauma] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again...  
...trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was

precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt...later on (p. 4, emphasis in original).

Although characterizations of trauma as unknowable often invoke exceptionalism (See Edkins, 2003; and Greenberg, 2003 for their critiques of this), trauma is—as Caruth also acknowledges—much more prevalent in its return throughout the systematic and everyday (see Cvetkovich, 2003; Caruth, 1995). In terms of 9/11, part of what I argue is that catastrophic events continue to manifest as more insidious forms of trauma within everyday and mundane forms of being. As Anne Cvetkovich concurs, “When serving as a point of entry into understanding the affective life of social systems, trauma must be seen to inhabit both intense sensation and numbness, both everyday and extreme circumstances” (2003, p. 42). Acknowledgement of trauma as a delayed response to an otherwise ‘deep wound,’ knowable in and through its relationship to, and resurfacing in, other sites of trauma, necessitates a theorization of trauma in relationship to everyday places of memory, and the affective modes of knowing, such as haunting, viscosity, and emotion, that they emit.

Embodied everyday forms of trauma are also related to emotional geographic scholarship. In their introductory essay on geographies of emotion, Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan discuss the “emotional nature of embodiment” (2004, 523). Emerging in relation to non-representational geographies (read: geographies of affect) (also see Thrift, 2004; Thien, 2004; and Bondi, 2005 for critiques of Thrift), geographies of emotion emphasize the psychic experiences of embodiment, thus necessitating a move away from the Cartesian dichotomy separating the thinking brain from the feeling body. As Joanne Sharp (2009) suggests, “In the history of western thought, the binaries that structure knowledge of the world placed emotion on the side of the feminine, opposing

the enlightenment ideal of the rational, objective masculine knower” (75). Accordingly, geographies of emotion push geographers to resituate embodiment as a site through which both thinking and feeling occur (Also see Grosz 1994; Nast and Pile, 1998, and Longhurst, 2001, for foundational scholarship on the body and embodiment).

Feminist geography’s ‘emotional turn’ offers a framework to investigate the co-constitutional production of thinking and feeling, embodiment and emotion, and the emotionality of place. This scholarship aids in the theorization of geographies of trauma and memory, as both are saturated with emotional attachments and recollections of temporally and spatially disparate peoples and places. As Davidson and Milligan concur,

Emotions can clearly alter the way the world is for us, affecting our sense of time as well as space. Our sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we *feel*. Likewise, place must be *felt* to make sense. This leads to our feeling that meaningful senses of space emerge only via movements *between* people and places (2004, 524, emphasis added).

Emotional geographies frame the emotional significance of the World Trade Center and help to navigate the affective spaces produced in conjunction with its remembrance and memorialization.

The widow’s recollections at the onset of the chapter for instance, illustrate the contagiousness of emotional trauma across space and time. In her rather lighthearted portrayal of her son’s school-appointed, grief counselor having a nervous breakdown from his work with victims’ family members, the woman highlights the role of secondary witnessing and its slippage into vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma is defined as the emphatic identification with trauma victims and survivors through modes of secondary witnessing (Nelson, 1996). Typically theorized in the context of healing and service professions such as grief and trauma counselors, mental health professionals, and

emergency responders, vicarious trauma is said to result from overexposure to another's trauma (see Rothschild and Rand, 2006; Van Dernoot Lipsky and Burk, 2009).

For example, recounting WTC memorialization through intimate familial narratives of absent bodies serves to transform secondary witnessing into vicarious trauma. Here, individual trauma, the loss of a loved one, is remade into collective trauma as private modes of grief and mourning are merged with public discourses of nationalism and historical memory at memorial institutions. Geographic scholarship on emotion is thus central for espousing *collective* understandings of 9/11 memory landscapes, particularly when the trauma is experienced indirectly, or second-hand.

### *Vicarious Emotion*

Although memory has been studied by social scientists as a collective phenomenon (see Connerton, 1989; Halbwachs, 1992), the ability to connect the social production of memory with *collective* emotions is essential to thwarting liberal critiques that limit studies of emotion—including trauma—to the individual (see Anderson and Smith, 2001). Moving away from traditional psychoanalytic approaches that locate trauma within a continuum of individualized medical and mental health discourses (Freud, 1920-22), recent interventions in psychoanalytic theory by humanities and social-science scholars also seek to deploy trauma from within the frameworks of *collective* social and political happenings.

“Trauma”, according to Ann Cvetkovich (2003), “[i]s a central category for looking at the intersections of emotional and social processes along with the intersections of memory and history; it gives rise to... ‘cultural memory’” (2003, p. 18). Throughout her text, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*,

Cvetkovich offers an alternative approach to traditional trauma scholarship by decentering its Freudian status as ‘accidental’ (2003, p. 19). As a result, the author aims to reassert human agency in producing and resisting the subsequent urge to repeat trauma by acknowledging a historical continuum within the traumatic.

Foreclosing notions of trauma that risk reducing the complexity of human experiences and emotions to individual symptoms of trauma, such as repetition, hyperarousal, and numbing, Cvetkovich shifts the frameworks of trauma studies from the therapeutic to the cultural in order to account for trauma’s social, political, and affective modes of existence (2003, p. 18). By reimagining the field beyond a medical approach, Cvetkovich’s engagement shifts contemporary studies of trauma toward understanding the political, collective, and affective production and circulation of traumatic identities under modern capitalism (p. 18; also see Traverso and Broderick, 2010, for a related approach to trauma). As such, trauma offers the ability to bridge emotional and material geographies, a development that meshes well with current geographical scholarship on fear (e.g. Pain and Smith, 2008), political violence (e.g. Gregory and Pred, 2006), and their embodied effects (e.g. Silvey, 2005). Indeed, as Cvetkovich (2003) writes, “trauma discourse is important precisely because it challenges distinctions between the mental and physical, psychic and social, and the internal and external as locations or sources of pain” (p. 18).

Throughout this research, trauma serves as both an analytic and a material condition in a growing archive of memory underway at the World Trade Center. Specifically, this study seeks to understand trauma as a post-9/11 temporal and spatial regime operating through processes of memory and their affective trajectories. As 9/11

memory circulates both domestically and internationally, certain emotional responses are produced in relation to other histories of trauma and their corresponding cultural memories. As Caruth similarly acknowledges, “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, ...history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (1996, p. 24). Individual and collective emotions surrounding trauma—archived in memory’s name—must therefore be understood as relationally produced (See Bondi, 2005, p. 433-436; and Thien, 2005). Consequently, this study seeks to engage the emotional economies of traumatic memory emerging across time and space in relation to ‘other’ bodies and places.

### **Chapter outline**

This study engages geographies of memory and feminist geographies of emotion and embodiment within larger interdisciplinary conversations happening within memory studies, trauma studies, and queer theory. Theorizing memories of 9/11 across a range of scales—the body, the local, the regional, the national, the global—this research also accounts for critical and feminist geopolitical interventions into state power (see chapters 4 and 5). Memory is both individual and collective, national and global, as such it is intimately produced and mobilized at multiple scales (See Marston, 2000; Jessop, 2009).

The arguments throughout this dissertation unfold in the following ways. First, by focusing on the spatial and temporal contours of traumatic delay, I argue that the initial trauma of 9/11 can only be understood in relation to past events and future geographies of memory. Traumatic instances are affectively recalled in relation to other times and places (See Caruth, 1995; 1996). Past experiences of trauma are not only

revived, but mapped onto contemporary emotional landscapes to procure new futures. As such, traumatic time-space is both non-linear and polymorphous.

The second mode of inquiry argued throughout this dissertation is that trauma affectively manifests within our interactions with the built environment. Thus as a memorial landscape emerges in lower Manhattan, the trauma of 9/11 is viscerally felt by those engaging with the site. The emotional and affective currencies of memorial landscapes are, therefore, central to the mobilization of post-9/11 ways of being and knowing.

Beginning with the debates surrounding the Flight 93 National Memorial design, chapter 2 engages struggles over remembering 9/11 as cultural landscape. Grounded within practices of place-making and the communal stakes engendered within these emotionally-charged landscapes of memory, this chapter seeks to understand the relational manifestation of collective and cultural memory as different groups compete to imbue these sites with meaning. Embedded within these battles are not only concerns over *how* to remember the events and lives lost on 9/11, but also *who* is allowed to remember. Parts of this chapter, therefore, also assess issues of access to collective modes of grief and mourning.

Chapter 3 offers a detailed account of WTC redevelopment and the creation of the NS11MM. Addressing the social, cultural, and political processes that underpin the memorialization of 9/11 at the World Trade Center, the chapter theorizes the site's aesthetic and architectural redevelopment through visceral and affective modes of traumatic memory. Drawing on feminist geographies of embodiment and viscosity, this chapter critically engages the mind-body mechanism of trauma in order to account for the



mundane, or insidious presence of trauma within the individual and collective body.

Chapter 3 focuses on the emotional impact of the destruction and rebuilding of the New York City skyline as a traumatized city recovers (from) its ‘wounds’ (See Harvey, 2003; Till, 2012a, on wounded cities).

Building on the affective diffusion of traumatic memory, and the emotional responses generated at the World Trade Center, chapter 4 focuses on redirecting geographies of memory towards a transnational framing of collective memory, cultural trauma, and national identity. Through discourse analysis of media reports and empirical data, this chapter engages the temporal and spatial delay of 9/11 memory as it is remembered in relationship to other times and spaces of cultural trauma. Building on the work of Edward Said (1993) and Rupal Oza (2007), I argue for a contrapuntal theory of memory-time-space to account for the non-linear and polymorphous production of 9/11 memory at the NS11MM as it is affectively diffused across national borders through the U.S.-led ‘War on Terror.’

Drawing on the work of scholars such as Giorgio Agamben (1998), Michel Foucault (1994), Judith Butler (2004), and Jennifer Hyndman (2003; 2007), chapter 5 engages the relational construction of bare life, ‘life unworthy of sacrifice,’ within emerging memorial discourses throughout the war on terror. Addressing the relational production of 9/11 memory and cultural forgetting, this penultimate chapter articulates the inability of ‘subaltern’ memories (See Spivak, 1988; Cvetkovich, 2011; Legg, 2007; Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013) to speak amidst emerging economies of trauma, post-9/11. Here, death is unevenly mobilized along geopolitical axes of victim-perpetrator to conceal U.S. acts of violence throughout the war on terror. I argue that as

governmentality shifts post-9/11 from biopolitics to thanapolitics, geographies of trauma, memory, and death continue to emerge as a result of transnational paradigms of cultural trauma.

Chapter 6 addresses the transnational implications of traumatic time and space to offer counter-narratives of memory. Articulating traumatic temporality and spatiality as non-linear and polymorphous, this chapter *queers* the emerging archive of 9/11 memory underway at the World Trade Center as it intersects with my own experiences of trauma. Overall, this chapter concludes the dissertation by imagining a *queer* counter-narrative of remembering traumatic pasts in order to reshape emerging futures.

## Chapter 2. From a Place of Wreckage to a Place of Memory: Struggles over Loss, and the Meaning of Death, at “Ground Zero”

Whatever might be said about the past is immediately contested and undone by the changes perpetually at work in the landscape of disaster. As a landscape of wreckage and debris, a field of ruin and decay, a place of loss and mourning, history is...a ground zero (Stamelman, qtd in Greenberg, 2003, p. 12).

In 2008, media outlets reported ongoing debates concerning the memorial design plan for United Airlines Flight 93 in Somerset, Pennsylvania (see Hamill, 2008).

Relatives of those killed aboard the hijacked aircraft in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks spearheaded the opposition to the original memorial. According to media outlets, victims’ family members argued that the memorial design signified “Islamic iconography” (see Figure 1), because its shape resembled an Islamic crescent (Ingle, 2008, p. 1).

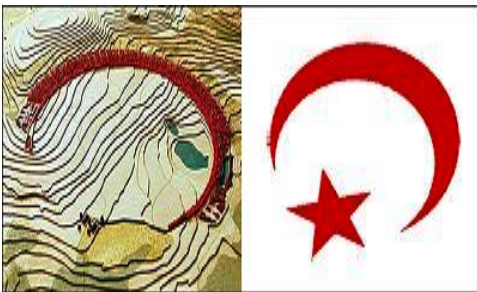


Figure 1. Flight 93 National Memorial design (l) and an Islamic crescent on (r). (last accessed 26 January 2014) <http://newdefender.wordpress.com/>.

An international design competition held from 2004 to 2005 selected the “Field of Honor” design, which was envisioned by memorial architect Paul Murdoch in partnership with landscape architects Nelson Byrd Woltz. Murdoch had originally intended to place a perimeter of maple trees encircling the outskirts of the crash site, thus giving the design its red hues and crescent-like inferences (Ingle, 2008, p. 1). As a result of resistance to

the proposed design by Murdoch, memorial organizers modified the physical layout of the memorial to present a more enclosed circle, and changed the original title of the design from “Crescent of Embrace” to “Field of Honor” (Ingle, 2008, p. 1).

The Flight 93 National Memorial controversy illustrates the struggles over memory that ensue as various social groups compete to remember the dead and imbue the afflicted landscape with meaning. As authors Simpson and de Alwis concur (2008, p. 6–12), processes of memorialization are often contested and produce highly uneven outcomes for all parties involved. For instance, the authors’ investigation into two separate memorials—one concerning the 2001 earthquake that struck in Gujarat, the other, a memorial to the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka—revealed that competing agendas often underscore the memorialization process and its manifestation as cultural landscape (Simpson and de Alwis, 2008, p. 6). As the authors expand,

The literature makes it very clear that memorials are social objects, products of particular times and places, and open to constant reinterpretation. Memorials have histories, and...one person’s memorial is perhaps a symbol of another’s oppression, defeat, or loss. Thus the memorial may be a public representation of the diverse and perhaps contradictory experiences of many individuals (Simpson and de Alwis, 2008, p. 6–7).

Memorials thus work relationally with individual and collective memories and access to power. As such, memorials—and their corresponding memories—remain partial and incomplete.

Grounded within practices of “place-making” (see Cresswell, 2004) and the communal stakes engendered within these grief-stricken, emotionally-charged memorial landscapes, this chapter seeks to understand the collective manifestation of 9/11 memories as they are mapped onto, and extracted from, the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum (NS11MM) at the World Trade Center (WTC). Specifically, this

essay analyzes the emotional investments underscoring the WTC's repurposing into a *place* of memory. Documenting the shifting and contested terrain of remembering 9/11 as various constituencies compete to instill their version—and vision—of events at this historic site, the arguments that follow map the affective dimensions of place-making at the WTC. As one research informant describes, “With the opening of a memorial [at the WTC], memory becomes a public good in a way it hasn't been before because it has a locus, it has a *place*.... [it] will draw all of the interactions that people want to have, like a magnet” (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, August 11, 2010, original italics).

### **Geographies of Memory: An Introduction**

Over the past two decades, scholars across several disciplines have increasingly engaged individual, collective, and cultural constructions of memory in a variety of contexts (See Till, 2006, for a review). Scholarship on memory ranges from analyzing the affective and performative aspects of memory to cultural processes of remembering and forgetting. As a result of this interdisciplinary attention to memory, geographers have also been theorizing memory in its relationship to place (See Johnson, 2005; Legg, 2007; Dwyer and Alderman, 2008; Till, 2005; Azaryahu and Foote, 2008; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2008; Hoskins, 2007; Hoelscher, 2008; Stangl, 2008; Foote and Azaryahu, 2007).

Returning often to Steven Hoelscher and Derek Alderman's influential work on memory and place (2004, also see Introduction), geographers reflect on the symbiotic relationship between memory, space, and time. For these authors, processes of memory-making are enabled through the individual and collective ability to instill meaning upon

the physical landscape (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004). Conceiving of the social production of memory in and through memory's materialization *in place*, the authors draw on broader geographies of memory scholarship in addressing the spatial and temporal unfolding of memories as they are reaffixed across space, place, and time (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004).

For example, Stephen Legg's work on geographies of memory and forgetting addresses the fragile relationship between memory and place as a kind of socio-political and spatial-temporal unraveling. In the author's words, "memory changes through both space and time" (Legg, 2007, p. 457). Processes of remembering and forgetting are neither determined nor fixed, despite their proprietors' (or propagators') attempts to map their meaning onto the built environment. For Legg then, processes of place-making are contested through discursive and, at times, physical battles for memory as multiple stakeholders attempt to narrate or re-narrate place and its (dis-)inherent meanings. This natural scaling of memory--the idea that memory-making occurs in and across multiple spaces at multiple times--underscores the point that memories, and their corresponding landscapes, are mutable entities.

Recreations of past events within sites of memory has led to the emergence of museums and memorials as premiere spaces for conveying national histories and social identities (see Bennett, 1995; Doss, 2010). These 'places of memory' have often been viewed as extensions of national and communal geographies, espousing boundaries between insider and outsider (see Till, 2006; Johnson, 2005; Legg, 2007; Edkins, 2003). In the case of the Flight 93 National Memorial, for instance, adversaries of Murdoch's original design plan comprehended the proposed memorial features within a post-9/11,

islamophobic framework. Critics interpreted the architect's usage of figures, colors, patterns, object placement, and juxtaposition as incorporating Islamic symbols, and labeled the proposed memorial design as 'un-American' and anti-patriotic in the context of the war on terror. The Flight 93 example highlights how struggles to re-present the events of 9/11 are mediated by questions of cultural and national identity.

In this chapter, I focus on the manifestation of cultural and personal loss as it is discursively (and logistically) maintained in relation to World Trade Center remains. I outline the social transformation of the World Trade Center from a place of wreckage to a place of memory and address the aesthetic, logistical, programmatic, and design decisions for displaying, interpreting, and caring for 'authentic objects of wreckage.' Debates over these decisions highlight the social production of memory as it is curated *of place* and codified *as place*. The WTC's repurposing into a *place* of memory is a process underpinned by intense emotional investments. The process of place-making at the WTC has affective dimensions and is continuously imbued and overlaid with public and private sentiment. This chapter thus builds the overall argument throughout the dissertation that the memorialization of 9/11 triggers traumatic memory, thus shaping individual and collective subjectivity.

### **Unclaimed Remains: Mediating Death, Narrating Place**

We might say that as soon as the question "What is lost?" is posed, it invariably slips into the question "*What remains?*" That is, loss is inseparable from what remains, for what is lost is known only by what remains of it, by how these remains are produced, read, and sustained (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 2, italics added).



Figure 2. 'the Composite,' Hanger 17, JFK International Airport. Images taken by the author, June 2009.

In their introduction to *Loss: the Politics of Mourning* (2003), David Eng and David Kazanjian reflect on socio-cultural grief in relation to the Freudian concepts of mourning and melancholia (See Freud, 1917). Here, the authors distinguish the two terms—mourning and melancholia—by their temporal propensity to shape spaces and places beyond the present. The authors argue that mourning, a psychosomatic response that eases with the passing of time, is an outward expression of individual or collective grief. Mourning is temporally and spatially bound by the past, as past events, or *those* passed, are laid to rest (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003). This is not to say that mourning cannot be prolonged over time and space; rather, mourning is concerned with attaining acceptance for one's loss (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 3).

In demarcating mourning as an emotional response and state of being tied to past attachments, the authors foreclose the persistence of chronic, or manic grief into the future. Instead, grief eventually resolves with acceptance. In melancholia, on the other hand, “the past remains steadfastly alive in the present”, and its emotional attachments are timeless and enduring (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 4). As the authors continue,

Melancholia's persistent struggle with its lost objects...[is] a *continuous* engagement with loss and its remains. This engagement generates sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as the reimagining of the



future. While mourning abandons lost objects by laying their histories to rest, melancholia's continued and open relation to the past finally allows us to gain new perspectives on and new understandings of lost objects (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 4, emphasis mine).

As such, melancholic loss endures both spatially and temporally into the future as the question of 'what is loss' is consistently rediscovered and reassessed in relation to what, or who, remains.

In July 2009, I attended a panel discussion with the architects of the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum (NS11MM): Michael Arad, Peter Walker, Davis Brody Bond Aedas, and Snøhetta (*A Space Within*, 2009). During the question and answer portion of the panel, several audience members who had lost family on 9/11 voiced their concerns about the current phase of the memorial design at the WTC. For instance, a mother of a deceased first-responder criticized the memorial for placing the majority of its didactic information in the museum's memorial exhibition, which is located in the footprint of the South Tower, below ground. According to this woman's concerns, the memorial design should be adjusted to incorporate didactic information *above* ground for those who choose not to enter the museum and its memorial exhibition for political or emotional reasons.

The inclusion to display controversial objects as part of exhibitions in the NS11MM has contributed to some families refusing to enter the museum. One such object in question, which can only be described as a galactic-looking 'rock', or meteorite (see figure 2), is, in actuality, five unidentified floors of the twin tower stacked on top of itself and compressed together as the building collapsed. Showing the 'Composite,' as the museum has dubbed it, for educational purposes is understandable for those invested in communicating the destructive force of the attacks—a decision supported by many

9/11 families. However, displaying this particular archeological remnant may also conjure emotional responses from museum-goers as it preserves the presence of human remains, perhaps unceremoniously, at the site. As a result, some 9/11 families have unsuccessfully pressed for the object's burial (see NS11MM, Museum Planning Conservation Series Report, 2006-2008), arguing the object's potential to re-traumatize victims' families upon entering the museum space.

The exchange above between the woman and architectural team underscores the delicate interplay between multiple communities and their, at times, conflicting need to mourn and remember events, people, and places. In particular, the concerns of grieving families over the placement of objects and information pertinent to their loved ones, exemplifies how places of memory are partially entrusted to those remaining to speak on behalf of the departed and aid in narrating the meaning of human loss. The interplay between objects and grieving families illustrates how the links between the dead and the living are repeatedly forged throughout the memorialization process as those invested in the site debate its meaning.

Throughout their study of geographies of death and mourning, Maddrell and Sidaway reflect on the ability of *deathscapes* to operate as “‘third emotional space[s]’ between home and cemetery/crematorium”, connecting the dead to the living (2010, p. 4). Deathscapes, according to the authors, are “place[s] where ongoing negotiation of absence-presence can happen and expressions of mourning and remembrance...[are] negotiated” (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010, p. 4; also see Maddrell 2009; Pitte, 2004; Gibson, 2011). Marked by the overwhelming absence of bodies, the WTC constitutes a

“third-space” (Soja, 1996), a graveyard, a place where the spectral and the material, the living and the dead, are forced to engage and the meaning of loss is negotiated.

According to the NS11MM statistics, nearly 22,000 bone fragments and pieces of organic matter were collected during recovery and clean up efforts at the World Trade Center following the attacks (see Blais and Rasic, 2011). Of those 22,000 remains, approximately 13,000 (1,600 victims) have been positively identified and returned to victims’ family members (Blais and Rasic, 2011, p. 80-86). The NS11MM not only serves as a public space of cultural memory, but as a private place of mourning and loss for many 9/11 families, particularly those whose loved one’s remains were never found. The precarious presence of nearly 9,000 unidentified human remains at the memorial site continues to be a source of tension and distress, logistically and emotionally, for family members and memorial museum staff alike.

For example, the placement of a repository housing unclaimed remains in the below grade museum, which anticipates annual visitorship in the millions, has unleashed additional controversy among family groups. In 2011, for instance, a lawsuit was filed against the City of New York as 17 families sought to relocate the final placement of their loved one’s remains to an above ground tomb located on the WTC memorial plaza (see Hartocollis, 2011a; 2011b; Cohen, 2012). As the plaintiffs charged, “If [the current] plan is implemented, to visit the remains, you will need to enter the 9/11 museum and pass the 9/11 souvenir store and snack bar on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor...” (Cohen, 2012, p. 1).

The underground repository was initially requested and approved by the majority of victims’ kin, motivated by the potential for identifying *and returning* remains to family

members in the future with improving DNA technologies.<sup>16</sup> Situated at bedrock behind a concrete wall marked only by the Virgil inscription: “No day shall erase you from the memory of time”, the repository—operated by the City’s Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)--will remain inaccessible to all except family members despite its public profile in the heart of the underground museum. As a final resting place for the 9,000 unclaimed remains, whether temporarily or permanently, the NS11MM is, as a result, considered “sacred ground.” Emotional investment in the placement and safekeeping of these remains stays strong amongst 9/11 families and their supporters.

Although the families’ lawsuit was defeated (an appeal is in process), the example highlights how practices of place-making underway at the WTC are deeply imbued with human loss.<sup>17</sup> In particular, the commodification of death vis-à-vis its proximity to spaces of consumption (e.g. the museum’s souvenir shop and café), compromises, in the plaintiffs’ views, the course of grief for those still in mourning, and diminishes the sanctity of the site itself through the sacrilegious treatment of human remains.<sup>18</sup> Denied the ability to process the loss of a loved one privately and intimately, the sacredness of the remains, both human and archeological, are, in this view, tarnished by their unceremonious and highly public consumption.

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<sup>16</sup> The below grade repository fulfills a promise established in partnership with family groups in 2004 to return unidentified remains to the site (Cohen, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> In an interesting development, flooding of the World Trade Center site and the NS11MM during super storm Hurricane Sandy added a new factor for the appellate court to consider when deciding the fate of the WTC remains. Given the repository’s proposed underground location, if the remains were in the museum when the storm hit, as one plaintiff suggested, “body parts would be floating all over Manhattan” (Dobnik, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that coalitions of 9/11 family members have regularly sued over the issue of remains throughout the last decade. In 2005, for example, a group of families threatened to file a lawsuit against the city if human remains collected during WTC debris removal were left in the Staten Island landfill known as “Fresh Kills” (as a compromise, a park is now being erected over the once toxic, garbage-filled landscape) (see O’Donnel, 2005). Also, in 2006, families sued to stop construction at the 9/11 memorial arguing that the pouring concrete slabs at bedrock impedes families from accessing the ‘true’ final resting place of loved ones (Unknown, “9/11 families file lawsuit”, 2006).

These examples highlight the constant and contentious engagement with loss, of *what remains* at the WTC. Struggles over death and the meaning of loss continue to be negotiated throughout the memorialization process, yet represent only part of the memorialization process. Emotional investments also underscore cultural memory at a site that persists as an archive of blood, skin, and bone.<sup>19</sup> In the following section, I contemplate how public sentiment is also archived within places of memory while collective meaning is negotiated in relation to the dead. Places of death become imbued with the emotional sentiments attached to the departed. This section explores how those deaths are narrated as cultural identity in the present and future, and how emotions themselves function *in places* of history and memory.

### **Manic Places: Archives of Emotion**

Throughout her analysis of U.S. memoryscapes, Erika Doss (2010) documents a recent memorial upsurge as part of a larger cultural shift to curtail historical amnesia. In her text, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (2010), Doss defines mania as “an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts” (p. 2). Doss’ theorizations of memorialization as a compulsive cultural response are twofold. First, in highlighting the fragility of memory in relation to time, space, and place, Doss underscores what memory scholar Andreas Huyssen termed the “twilight of memory” (1995). In Huyssen’s words:

As generational memory begins to fade... such looking back and remembering has to confront some difficult problems of representation in its relationship to temporality and memory. The twilight of memory, then, is not just the result of a somehow natural generational forgetting that could be counteracted through some

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<sup>19</sup> Similar to cultural trauma, cultural memory is the transformation of collective memories (of cultural trauma) into cultural history (see Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995).

form of a more reliable representation. Rather, it is given in the very structures of representation itself (Huyssen, 1995, p. 2-3).

The farther removed we become, therefore, from memory's "ground zero", the less frequent memory functions as lived experience (e.g. collective memory), but instead as historical archive (see Stoler, 2009; Merewether, 2006; Enwezor, 2008; Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995). Such intergenerational, or cultural memory becomes secured by its temporal and spatial proximity to an original source or site (also see Hirsch, 1997 on post-memory).

The second, perhaps more compelling, trajectory of Doss' analysis highlights the precarious emotional shelf life of memory prior to its emplacement at sites of memory. In Doss' words, "Memorials...are archives of public affect...that are embodied in their material form and narrative content" (Doss, 2010, p. 13). Memorial landscapes function throughout Doss' text as repositories, or places, of collective emotion.

A growing body of literature within geography addresses the relationship between emotions, space, and place, bolstering Doss' analysis. According to authors Davidson, Bondi, and Smith in their seminal collection, *Emotional Geographies* (2005), the discipline has been reluctant to address questions of emotion despite the knowledge that emotions affect our understandings of spatiality and temporality—past, present, and future (p. 1). Developing in relation to geographies of health and feminist theories of embodiment, geographies of emotion are attuned to the ways emotions are spatialized, thus "illuminat[ing] *where* emotions are felt to reside, [most] notably in both bodies and places" (Davidson, Bondi, and Smith, 2005, 3, original italics).

For instance, as part of commemorative efforts documenting the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks, the *New York Times* created an online portal, *9/11: The*

*Reckoning*, focusing on collective remembrance, as well as various themes and issues emerging throughout the post-9/11 decade, such as WTC reconstruction, security and civil rights, and U.S.-foreign relations. An interactive map under the heading “That Day” prompts website visitors to remember where they were, and to share how they felt about the events (The Reckoning). The resulting Google earth map contains the responses of 38,000 readers, pinpointing their exact geographic location, as well as their emotional sentiment (The Reckoning).

For example, the map features ‘emotional filters’ allowing respondents to select the emotion that best characterized their feelings of the attacks, and, if desired, a short expository comment. Of the five emotional filters provided for selection, including Angry, Fearful, Unmoved, Secure, and Hopeful, readers selected fear, anger, and hope most frequently. One person comments, “It was my first week at Newfield. We sat in our classes, not knowing what was happening. Anxiously waiting to find out if my dad was safe” (The Reckoning). Another person describes, “I was in 6th grade, trying to figure out why half of the cafeteria was dismissed early. Students and teachers crying in the hallways” (The Reckoning). This ‘emotional map’ highlights how memories of the event are deeply connected to both physical and emotional senses of place.

Although the cultural impetus to enplace memory at the World Trade Center is partially concerned with mediating the direct experience of memory, or ‘working through’ the past within the present, securing memory *within* place ensures that past events are not forgotten with the passage of time. As one research respondent concurs: “It’s not really about what we do here [at NS11MM]. It’s really about how the memory, and the collective sense of the event, evolves over time” (Personal communication,

NS11MM staff member, August 11, 2010). Establishing a place of memory at the WTC encapsulates public sentiment of the events and lives lost on September 11<sup>th</sup>, as well as history itself, within a growing archive of emotion to be accessed by future generations.

### *Anxiety*

The absence of bodies at the World Trade Center complicates the healing process for many afflicted families, disrupting the temporal and spatial unfolding and recession of grief. Grief is, according to authors Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2004), “the intense emotional response to the pain of loss,” both the individual emotions we carry surrounding loss and how we feel about it (p. 115 and 227). One respondent describes his own response to grief,

I have always felt, and I’m not alone, but I’ll use myself as an example- that we were never really able to do enough for the families during the recovery effort. We felt that we were failures because we couldn’t find all of the remains, and all of their loved ones could not be brought home. And I believe that the healing has not begun, that... the grief will reinvent itself once the names are touched [on the memorial]. Once the families see that the names panel is finished and read it, and it is readied for presentation to the world, then they can begin to grieve properly (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, January 14, 2011).<sup>20</sup>

‘Failure’ to prevent and circumvent death, or, in this case, to recover the dead, is, according to Kübler-Ross and Kessler, a natural component of processing loss (2004). As a result, processes of emplacing memory at the WTC are saturated with sensitivities to lingering familial (and collective) grief and a desire to redefine the site as a place of healing, goals that have motivated public and institutional efforts to expedite memorial construction and permit closure.

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<sup>20</sup> In a tragic and unjust twist of fate, this charismatic individual is now dying from respiratory complications contracted during rescue and recovery. Very vocal and very public with his diagnosis, he has even testified in court in hopes of ensuring medical and financial support for others dying of 9/11 related illnesses.



Anxieties over the passing of time resonated throughout my conversations with NS11MM staff members as they worked tirelessly to fulfill the institution's mandate: to provide the public with both a place to remember and record history, and, for the affected families, a place to mourn. One research informant commented on the urgency of time with regard to the memorial project's completion:

The proximity of time is really about the constituents who need a place to mourn. Those who need a place to mourn need a very specific kind of place; those who are left behind, they need something now; they needed something sooner. And those who want to learn about the events need another kind of place. All those sorts of losses that people have lumped together are very different kinds of losses. And the latter need a very different kind of place than those who need a place to mourn their loved ones... ..it's about mourning the loss of their loved ones, or those mourning the more metaphoric loss of the United States and its supremacy in the world. Or the loss of the sense of safety... So it's their needs [victims' families] versus the needs of the people who are at a slight distance (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, September 20, 2010).

The impetus to establish a physical memorial at the WTC, according to this staff member, builds in part on the need for a place to mourn and reflect upon loss, as well as to maintain the historical record *in place* for future consumption. As an additional research participant affirms:

It's definitely a challenge creating an exhibition experience—an educational experience that can speak both to people who have their own memories of this event... But for a lot of people, they don't have that direct memory. Our job [at NS11MM is]...to teach people both when the museum opens, but also 20 years, 50 years into the future... (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, January 21, 2011).

As the aforementioned remarks suggest, social anxieties to memorialize the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> are twofold. First, the WTC memorial and museum provides families with a place to mourn in lieu of remains to bury (also see McGinty, 2011; Feiden, 2012). It also establishes historical accuracy as the events of 9/11 become farther

removed from everyday memory. Establishing a place of memory at the WTC both aims to ensure collective healing and preserve cultural memory.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, makeshift and spontaneous memorials sprung up all over the city, region, and country in an effort to pay tribute to those who perished (see Kaplan, 2005). As popular memorial responses continued to crop up in the aftermath of the attacks (see Blais and Rasic, 2011), federal and state authorities mobilized to establish an ‘official’ site of memory at the WTC.

After nearly two years of consulting with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency dedicated to the preservation of resources of historical and national significance, the WTC was awarded Section 106 status in 2004 (ACHP). Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act stipulates whether a site, or relic of a former object, are eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a designation that secures federal grants (ACHP). The Section 106 process guaranteed the successful transformation and cultivation of the WTC site—and its relics—into an official place of cultural memory and national history.

Efforts to preserve relics from the decimated 16-acre site overlapped somewhat with initial rescue and recovery efforts (September 2001-June 2002). Visions of a cultural institution at the WTC, however, remained precarious over the next three years as funding continued to be a source of frustration. Accordingly, public and municipal pressure to expedite memorial construction at the NS11MM builds (2007-2008) as the events became farther removed and the first decade after the attacks came to a close.

Lacking a state-backed entity to promote a unified narrative of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, organizers contended with unchallenged alternative accounts of recent

history available for public consumption. The World Trade Center Memorial Foundation, established in 2003 and renamed the NS11MM in 2005, worked to challenge narratives popular amongst conspiracy theorists, particularly those highlighting governmental complacency and undermining U.S. victimization.<sup>21</sup>

One such conspiracy group was “The 9/11 Truth Movement,” or “Truthers,” as memorial staffers often dub them. This group believes that the government had prior knowledge of the attacks, and covered up U.S. insider involvement.<sup>22</sup> As part of its move to counteract the influence of popular conspiracy theories, the NS11MM partnered with National Geographic to produce a four-part documentary, *9/11: Science and Conspiracy* (August 2009), debunking the credibility of conspiracy theories with the use of computer-generated visuals and scientific data. The formation of a 9/11 Commission (2002), a joint civil and governmental undertaking that addressed governmental failure in preventing the attacks, was also part of efforts to hush alternative narratives posited by groups like the Truthers. Here, the Commission authorized a locus for collective blame beyond Washington. These steps, along with tightly monitored memorial images and a larger social aversion to engage in public dialogue over the meaning of 9/11 in relation to histories of U.S. imperialism and global economic disparity, all but silenced the voices critical of the government’s role in the attacks.

Efforts to monitor the formation of cultural memory at the WTC quickly shifted to also include the surrounding real estate slated for more commercial projects within the

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<sup>21</sup> To counteract the influence of popular conspiracy theories, the NS11MM partnered with National Geographic to produce a four-part documentary, *9/11: Science and Conspiracy* (August 2009), debunking the credibility of conspiracy theories with the use of computer generated visuals and scientific data.

<sup>22</sup> In an interesting aside the 9/11 Truth Moment (<http://www.911truth.org/>) is also responsible for launching a pseudo-academic online journal dedicated to publishing ‘scholarly’ articles related to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. To date, it is the only journal—academic or otherwise—of its kind.

site's redevelopment. For example, the WTC memorial site had initially proposed to include the International Freedom Center (IFC), a major cultural institution dedicated to exploring intolerance, hatred, and ignorance across various social struggles (e.g. Native American Genocide, U.S. Slavery, Jim Crow, Nazi Germany, the Cold War, etc). The IFC was proposed to cover topics from racism and anti-Semitism to colonialism and post-9/11 xenophobia, but was defeated when opponents claimed that its programming would dilute the sacred nature of the NS11MM, which also shared real-estate on the site (see Burlingame, 2005). Here, opponents of the IFC argued that the organization's programming could potentially criticize historical or present-day U.S. foreign policy, thus problematically locating responsibility for the attacks internally.

Spearheading the opposition to the IFC was co-founder of "9/11 Families for a Safe & Strong America," and World Trade Center Memorial Foundation board member, Debra Burlingame, who argued:

Rather than a respectful tribute to our individual and collective loss, they [the visiting public] will get a slanted history lesson, a didactic lecture on the meaning of liberty in a post-9/11 world. [T]hey will be served up a heaping foreign policy discussion over the greater meaning of Abu Ghraib and what it portends for the country and the rest of the world (2005, p.1).

In waging "take back the memorial", an online and public protest campaign against the IFC, Burlingame and her supporters oppose not the IFC per se, but rather its potential to challenge or usurp nationalist narratives of security, racial tolerance, and international human rights circulating post-9/11.

Citing America as a global "beacon for freedom" in his address to the nation following the terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush depicts the terror attacks as acts of aggression against American (read: western) values (Presidential address, September

11, 2001). Similar post-9/11 characterizations of terrorism as an affront to western-style democracy are also on display throughout the WTC memorial design competition process, albeit in reverse logic. According to the memorial's provisional mission statement, the selected memorial design will "preserve freedom, and inspire an end to hatred, ignorance and intolerance" (LMDC, Memorial Competition Guidelines, 2003, p. 18). Here, memorialization itself constitutes an act of retaliation. Preserving democratic values, such as personal freedom, tolerance, and human rights, at the WTC becomes synonymous to serving on the front lines in the global war on terrorism. Burlingame and her supporters' opposition to the proposal to locate the IFC at the WTC characterizes the IFC as anti-patriotic and anti-American.<sup>23</sup> Such views not only reaffirm American exceptionalism, but also illuminate social anxieties over critiquing U.S. *post-9/11* foreign policy. Anxieties inhibit critical debate over the meaning of place at the WTC, and its unfolding legacy domestically and abroad.

### *Fear*

Ongoing narratives at the 9/11 memorial sites in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Somerset, Pennsylvania construct an emerging official 9/11 story, which posits these government-sanctioned memorials as symbols of collective defiance in the face of terrorism. Memorials and their accompanying narratives also ease public fears of a subsequent attack (see Doss 2010; Linenthal, 2003). As extensions of the state, these

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<sup>23</sup> Originally, four cultural institutions were proposed to inhabit the redesigned WTC complex: the International Freedom Center (discussed above), the Joyce, an international dance theater company, the Signature Theatre Company featuring off-broadway productions, and the Drawing Center, a fine arts institution with a focus on contemporary and historical drawing (Hirschhorn, 2005). By 2007, however, all of the other cultural organizations, with the exception of the Joyce, had either been pushed out of the leasing agreement, or self-selected to relocate in order to evade further public scrutiny of alleged "anti-American" programming (see Edwards, 2006; Pogrebin, 2007).

memorials assist in reestablishing social order and military confidence in the aftermath of the attacks.

During a visit to the Pentagon in 2010 for instance, a National 9/11 Pentagon 9/11 memorial staff member informed me that the Pentagon building was rebuilt in just 13 months following the attacks. The memorial staff member went on to describe the renovation efforts, or the “Phoenix Project” as it was called: “We wanted to get rid of any lasting sign of the attacks... The mentality was: We’re strong; you can hit us but you can’t knock us down” (Fieldnotes, National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, April 19, 2010).

Here, the Pentagon’s metaphorical ‘rise from the ashes’ functions first to counter the terrorist attack’s symbolic weakening of U.S. military power. Secondly, by stressing the speed of the Pentagon’s restoration, the staff member conflates the pace of rebuilding with national strength, resilience, and re-securitization. Accelerated rebuilding efforts reestablish military prowess in the aftermath of the attacks, and symbolically prevent the “hallowed grounds” from further destruction. Narratives of retribution through rebuilding not only reinforce hegemonic histories of U.S. nationalism, but also confront post-9/11 fears of a subsequent attack.

In addition to highlighting national security concerns, the staff member’s characterization of the Pentagon restoration process suggests the conundrum of cultural forgetting once the building’s facade was put ‘back to normal’ through reconstruction. Without a visual reminder of the attacks on the Pentagon’s exterior, the memories associated with 9/11 become omitted from the landscape. Lived memory fades as the recent past is forgotten and the landscape re-presented anew. The impetus to dedicate a 9/11 memorial at the Pentagon, or to represent the memory of 9/11 visually, is fueled by

social anxieties to remember that which was no longer tangible in the built environment.<sup>24</sup> The Pentagon's 9/11 memorial thus serves to remind and inform the public of the terror attacks, as well as bolstering public confidence in reestablished U.S. military supremacy and maintaining social vigilance post-9/11.

### *Anger*

Post-9/11 fears of a subsequent terrorist attack have contributed to a culture of hypervigilance and flaring racial tensions. Following the attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., for example, anti-Islamic sentiment raged across the country, resulting in an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes and inter-group violence (see Hassan, 2002; Cainkar, 2002; Kwan, 2008).<sup>25</sup> Sensationalist images long associated with Hollywood and media portrayals of Arab cultures (see Said, 1979; Lockman, 2004) now served as a hyper-real backdrop for the burgeoning war on terror as fears of an internal or external Islamic threat reached an all time high. The post-9/11 security apparatus continues to both demonize and criminalize Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities living within and outside U.S. borders.<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, a reaffirmed sense of multiculturalism also flourished in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks (See Grewal, 2005). As one NS11MM staff member recalls, "You

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<sup>24</sup> The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial was opened to the public in 2008, on the seventh anniversary of the attacks.

<sup>25</sup> According to FBI statistics, anti-Muslim biased incidents rose by 1600% after 9/11 (See Muslim Public Affairs Council, Hate Crime Statistics).

<sup>26</sup> As examples of this, please refer to the National Security Entry/Exit Registration System, or 'Special Registration Program' for Muslim and Arab immigrants, officially enacted from 2002-2011, as well as recent undercover policing efforts by the NYPD and NJSP at regional mosques, Muslim owned businesses, and other community institutions (see Sacirby, 2013; "Mapping Muslims", Muslims American Civil Liberties Coalition, et al., 2013).

know, they say that after 9/11 a lot of the racial tension in New York [City] disappeared. After 9/11, there was this feeling that people were going to be more gentle with each other and appreciate what they had” (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, November 5, 2010). However, as cultural and racial tensions continued to flare across the country, a divided emotional landscape persisted as a newfound American multiculturalism grew in tandem with ongoing reports of anti-Muslim violence.

Conflicting racial and cultural sentiments were also negotiated throughout the NS11MM’s exhibition design process exhibit. The NS11MM’s 2009-2010 Conversation Series Report, for example, demonstrated persistent internal debate over the design and presentation of portions of the museum’s primary historical exhibition containing images of the 19 hijackers.<sup>27</sup> Here, the question for museum staff members was *how* to present the 19 hijackers to the visiting public without further inciting racial tensions.

Located below-grade in the North Tower footprint, the historical exhibition (HE) is thematically comprised of three main components: HE1, the story of 9/11; HE2, a history of the WTC and the events leading up to the attacks; and, HE3, 9/12, the day after and beyond. The section of the historical exhibition under review is HE2, which covers topics ranging from the symbolic meaning of the twin towers, the 1993 attacks on the WTC, the rise of al Qaeda, and the 9/11 plot (NS11MM, Conversation Series Report, 2009-2010, p. 5). As one NS11MM staff member describes these exhibition-planning conversations:

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<sup>27</sup> The specific make up of the conversation series changes slightly each year depending on the agenda, but the general consensus consists of: family members, NS11MM staff members, building survivors, rescue personnel, lower Manhattan residents and business owners, heritage industry professionals, landmark preservationists, historians, museum and art educators, interfaith clergy, government and municipal leaders, historians, and trauma professionals.



We [at NS11MM] are pretty clear on what we want to say and how we want to say it. What is still a little open-ended is how that [information] is actually delivered in a design sense within the museum, how you lay that out. For example, we have always been very firm in the fact that this event was not a natural disaster; it wasn't a tsunami, it wasn't a hurricane. These were 19 hijackers who made a decision and they weren't alone. So there is human agency involved and to whitewash history, to not have it included as part of the story, just did not make sense to us, did not ring true... So it's really much more of a design challenge than a content challenge at this point (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff, January 21, 2011).

Alluded to in the above remarks as a “design challenge,” the portion of HE2 under scrutiny is comprised of FBI-style mug shots of the 19 hijackers. Although the proposed images evoked concern from some Conversation Series participants, particularly the proposed size of the images, participant objections did not express concern that the images could further incite racial tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim visitors. Rather, Conversation Series participants opposed the display of the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks within the same space that memorializes its victims (Museum Planning Conversation Series Report, 2009-2010, p. 5).<sup>28</sup> In anticipation of such concerns, exhibition planners strategically placed the ‘Memorial Exhibition’, an exhibition dedicated solely to the victims, in the South Tower footprint, thus physically removed from the historical exhibition and its content.

Although the spatial separation of life and death is a common function of memorial landscapes (see Pitte, 2004), the affective intention is to bring the visitor and the deceased closer together. When engaging with sites of atrocity, however, additional steps are required by memorial planners to emotionally differentiate perpetrators of

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<sup>28</sup> Although the layout of the entire historical exhibition (HE1, HE2, and HE3) was under review during the 2009-2010 Conversation Series, none received the same reaction as HE2. It should also be noted that in 2010 an additional design firm, Layman Design, Inc., was brought on the project to “enhance and complete” the historical exhibition, which up until that point had been in the hands of Thinc Design with Local Projects (Meeting Minutes, NS11MM, October 27, 2010).

crimes from their victims (see Till, 2003). In the example of the historical exhibition, delineating victimhood and assigning blame is central to the politics of affect on display as exhibitions seek to both narrate death and manage its collective meaning (see Till, 2003). The concerns over HE2 demonstrate the cultural institution's difficulties in addressing the intersection of political ideology and religious extremism, without demonizing religion, or affectively equating its proponents to terrorists. The HE2 example highlights the ethical and emotional dilemma of capturing historical accuracy without further fanning xenophobia, a process exacerbated by the museum's location at the site of death.

According to Doss (2010), visitors are drawn to places of death in order to process "the reality of the impossible" by "interacting with the authentic milieu of death" (p. 94). The 9/11 memorial museum, like its above ground memorial counterpart, will draw people to it "like a magnet". As one research respondent offers: "The site itself is not only the physical place that you're at... it is our primary artifact" (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, January 21, 2011). The NS11MM Conversation Series, therefore, brings into question the effectiveness of museum exhibitions to move visitors emotionally throughout their encounters with and within the site, and its subsequent ability to manage those emotions. As one memorial museum staff member recognizes,

Once we've got more of the exhibition pieces finalized, we are actually going to do some focus groups with people. We'll be able to do focus groups with people looking at five or six different aspects of the museum itself, and ask them when they look at these pieces all together, is it too much? Or, no, they can handle this—this is fine (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, March 15, 2011)?

As the needs for focus groups on visitor emotions suggests, places of memory and their exhibitions function as archives and conduits of public sentiment, particularly anger and grief, in and of themselves.

### *Grief*



Figure 3. Ground Zero Mosque Protest, Zuccotti Park, NYC. Images taken by the author, September 2010.

In the summer of 2010, tensions flared once again at ‘ground zero’ as news broke of plans for the construction of an Islamic Community Center (ICC) at the site of an existing mosque two blocks north of the WTC. The proposed Cordoba House, later called Park 51, would be an Islamic community center with program offerings similar to the YMCA and Jewish Community Center. Public spotlight and criticism focused largely on the center’s active mosque, which right-wing media outlets and politicians (e.g. Fox News, Lou Dobbs, Newt Gingrich, Michele Bachmann, and Sarah Palin) quickly dubbed the “Ground Zero mosque” to rouse their conservative political base and garner voter support amidst midterm elections. Meanwhile, proponents of the organization’s building plans attempted to quell public outrage about the community center and dispel emerging

conspiracy theories that alleged connections between the center's funding and founders to "Jihadist" governments (See Green, 2010; Montopoli, 2010).

The Cordoba House was co-founded by Daisy Khan and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. The couple envisioned Cordoba House as a multi-faith community space that would propel healing within and amongst the afflicted communities of lower Manhattan by giving a face and voice to moderate Islam amidst local redevelopment efforts (see Peyser, 2010). According to Feisal Adbul Rauf,

We've approached the community [of lower Manhattan] because we want this to be an example of how we are cooperating with the members of the community, not only to provide services but also to build a new discourse on how Muslims and non-Muslims can cooperate together to push back against the voices of extremism (Green, 2010).

Despite Feisal Adbul Rauf's intentions for the Cordoba House, whose name pays homage to an interfaith community of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim residents that lived together peacefully throughout medieval Spain (Stanton, 2010), opponents received Park 51 in a less-than-conciliatory manner. Many regarded the presence of Park 51 as an affront to grieving victims' families because it would reopen wounds that had only begun to heal (see Peyser, 2010).

The physical manifestation of memorials to mark traumatic events simulates what Doss (2010) codifies as 'grief management.' Memorial practices "help mediate the psychic crisis of sudden and often inexplicable loss", permanently or ephemerally (Doss 2010, p. 68). The Park 51 debates outlined above exemplify how *places* of memory are regarded as direct paths to healing. Indeed, even as proponents of the cultural institution argued that the placement of the ICC near the "sacred ground" of the WTC is essential to

inter-group healing, opponents of the project stress just the opposite, citing the placement of the ICC as a deterrent to cultural and familial grief.

The attempt by ICC opponents to delineate victims and perpetrators along ethno-religious lines is a process that substitutes discourses of cultural and familial grief for xenophobia and fear-mongering. The ICC debates raise questions regarding the ownership and provenance of places of memory, as well as the effectiveness of national memorials in mediating grief management when the healing of some is prioritized over others. For example, an NS11MM staff member describes a similar political dilemma in relation to the museum's historical exhibition:

I think what is being struggled with in the [historical] exhibition is... the reconciliation in the people who decided, "I don't want this place to be about teaching hatred." The people who channeled their anger, their sadness, their fear, their grief into something where they reached out. The story in the *Times*, two weeks ago, about the two women who were widowed and then realized that there are so many widows in Afghanistan whose lives have been disrupted [by 9/11] and who didn't get settlements to help them live a comfortable life and help their children survive. That kind of story, the stories that are really more complicated, and more complicated for the museum to be dealing with. It's not that they won't deal with them, but that's the harder thing (Personal Communication, NS11MM staff member, September 20, 2010).

Struggles for and about places of memory are, therefore, not only concerns over *how* to remember the past, but also *who* can grieve publicly.

### **Conclusion: Memory, Melancholy, and Mourning**

The competition between social groups for ownership of and access to the WTC site, as well as the legitimacy to critique it, allows divergent emotional geographies to come into play. Even as planners of the memorial and museum intend to use the site as a place of healing, debates at and over "Ground Zero" keep the site a fresh wound for many still in mourning. Memorialization thus brings on new losses. For example, continuous

repatriation of WTC remains to victims' families as new technologies become available acts, for some families, as a compulsive reminder of their loss and trauma. One mother recalled her experiences of being notified shortly after the attacks that her son's remains had been found, and holding a public memorial service and funeral for him. Five years later, her family had to make a decision as to what to do with new remains (McGinty, 2011, p. 2). She remembered, "Nobody gets it. They don't understand why I'm stuck in such an awful place" (McGinty, 2011, p. 1). Families like hers are left reliving their losses again and again as loved ones are returned to them from the WTC site in pieces.

Moments such as these connect Eng and Kazanjian's conceptions of mourning and melancholy with Doss' mania. As Eng and Kazanjian explain melancholia in their summary of Freud's (1917) "Mourning and Melancholia":

'Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, and ideal, and so on' ...eventually the mourner is able to declare the object dead and to move on to invest in new objects. In contrast...melancholia [i]s an enduring devotion on the part of the ego to the lost object. A mourning without end, ...the inability to resolve the grief and ambivalence precipitated by the loss of the loved object, place, or ideal (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 3).

Through its attempt to both resolve the trauma of 9/11 and to make sense of collective loss, the NS11MM memorial paradoxically results in greater cultural "devotion" to death and the compulsive return to trauma and loss. As such, the WTC memorial and museum takes on a melancholic function that secures cultural memory both spatially and temporally through an enduring ethos of PTSD, a conclusion I examine in greater detail in chapter 5.

The eruption of 9/11 memorial landscapes in recent decades underscores the ongoing need to comprehend loss individually and collectively. The WTC, through its

association with the memory of September 11<sup>th</sup>, has been transformed into a cultural landscape where the violence of the attacks is continually being negotiated through memorialization. Underpinned by the violence of the terrorist attacks, WTC memorialization is framed through an ethos of traumatic loss and the absences it recalls. Here, the events of 9/11 continue to haunt the present through the maintenance of grief and ongoing encounters with the dead.

In this chapter, I have argued that trauma is central to both the production and maintenance of collective grief and cultural memory at the World Trade Center. Next, I turn to the questions that result: What does it mean to foster endless or enduring grief at the site of traumatic memory? How is community imagined and generated in relationship to such expressions of grief? As Doss eloquently posits: “Is grief a successful or productive public affect? Or are there psychic and political dangers for a nation seemingly ‘too attached’ to public expressions of grief” (Doss, 2010, p. 64)? In the next chapter, I address these questions and continue to theorize the traumatic nature of 9/11 loss at the World Trade Center as it manifests viscerally within the site’s redevelopment.

### Chapter 3. An Absent Presence: Visceral Geographies of the World Trade Center

My main approach to... memorials is to look at both what happened, always to remember what happened, and then to look at how what happened gets passed down to the next generation, how these events live in our minds [and bodies]. And I have found in all of these cases [referring to his career as a WWII memorial scholar and now 9/11 memorial judge] that the survivors of the events and the families of the events often, in fact, have the most *visceral*...the most informed connection to the events and to the memory of them. And these are the kinds of memories that often get *codified* or *put into place* for eternity (James E. Young qtd in “Joint meeting of Memorial Jury...”, 2003: 8, italics mine).<sup>29</sup>

In her text, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Jill Bennett theorizes “sense-memory” as an aesthetic practice emerging from the artworks of trauma survivors (Bennett, 2006). For Bennett, sense memories are both conjured and exuded through visceral exchanges, or ‘encounters’, between artworks and gallery-goers as the viewer feels the emotional impact of the art. As the author explains,

The imagery of traumatic memory deals not simply with a past event, or with the objects of memory, but the present *experience* of memory. It therefore calls for a theorization of the dynamic in which the [art]work is both produced and received --a theory, in other words, of affect. ...As the source of a poetics or an art, then, sense memory operates *through* the body to produce a kind of [‘feeling’] truth’ rather than a ‘thinking truth’, registering the pain of memory as it is directly experienced, and communicating a level of bodily affect (Bennett, 2006, p. 28-29, italics mine).

Sense memory functions through our emotional encounters with others to register the persistence of trauma that has remained dormant within the body. Sense memories become affectively recalled in relation to other moments and histories of trauma. Sense

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<sup>29</sup> A memorial juror is usually a person regarded with high esteem for their scholarly, artistic, educational, or political contributions to society. In a memorial design competition, such expertise is called upon to help select the winning memorial entry. With regard to 9/11, the memorial jury consisted of several public arts figures, heritage industry professionals, municipal leaders, and one family member.



memory produces an emotional experience of remembering trauma as it is embodied in relation to present-day temporal and spatial contexts.

### **What the Body Remembers: Trauma and Somatic Memory**

Bennett is not arguing for the viewer's re-traumatization vis-à-vis the consumption of trauma-inspired art. Rather, she posits that the object-consumer exchange, when successful, attempts to conjure *new* emotional responses within the spectator as his or her own body is incited to 'emphatically feel' the embodied sensations and emotions captured within this artistic medium (Bennett, 2006). Conventional wisdom on traumatic affect theorizes trauma as the *re*-narration of past events. Sense memory, on the other hand, according to Bennett, captures the *present experience* of trauma encoded within visual cultures (2006, p. 28-29; also see Bennett, T. 2006; Lauzon, 2008; Huyssen, 2003).

Although Bennett's conceptualization of sense memory is largely confined to artistic engagements with trauma, specifically the consumption of visual artworks by gallery and museum-goers, her idea of trauma as an aesthetic process both felt and received across time and space is central to this chapter, as well as emerging scholarship at the intersection of geographies of trauma and geography's 'emotional turn' (See Burk, 2006; Perera, 2010; Walker, 2010; Blum and Secor, 2011; and Till 2012a; 2012b). This chapter maps what I term 'visceral memory,' which conceptualizes sense memory in relation to feminist geographies of emotion and embodiment (Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Bondi, 2005; Anderson and Smith, 2001; Dick, 2007; Grosz, 1994; Probyn, 2000; Nast and Pile, 1998; Longhurst, 2001). I argue that visceral memories, traumatic ones in

particular, are stored within the body and can be remembered or felt again through bodily triggers or sensations, affecting present-day and future emotional landscapes.

As articulated in the previous two chapters, geographies of emotion emphasize the psychic experiences of embodiment. The recent ‘emotional turn’ within feminist geographies offers a framework to investigate the co-constitutional production of emotions and their visceral reception in relation to other bodies and places. Drawing on qualitative research conducted in New York City from 2009 to 2013, this chapter traces the viscosity of 9/11 memory as it corresponds to the physical construction and aesthetic design of “Reflecting Absence,” the heart of the NS11MM. I ask: how are memories embodied within the memorial site? How is 9/11 re-membered, or felt, through encounters with the memorial?

As the opening quote by 9/11 memorial juror James E. Young stresses, visceral memories are those “that often get codified or put into place[s of memory] for eternity” (LMDC, Joint Meeting, 2003, p. 8). Viscerality, feminist geographers Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy argue, offers imaginative possibility for theorizing memory as it is simultaneously discursive and material, cognitive and embodied, collective and individual (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Advancing previous theorizations of virtual and bodily memory (Young, 1996; T. Bennett, 2006; Trezise, 2011; Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2004; Connolly, 2002), visceral memory invokes the *emotional presence* of traumatic memory beyond mere repetition of trauma, in the embodied present. As Bennett similarly attests in her own work,

If emotions are not retrievable from memory, they are *revivable*; hence, we don’t remember grief or ecstasy, but by recalling a situation that produces those sensations we can produce a *new bout of emotion*. ... Affect, properly conjured, produces a real-time somatic experience, no longer framed as representation [but

as feeling] (Bennett, 2006, summarizing William James (1890), p. 27, original italics).

In this chapter, I theorize the growing repository of emotion at the World Trade Center as it materializes in and through visceral memory, which I define as an affective form of cultural memory-making that transmits and engages memories of trauma through bodily sensations.

### **Visceral Memory, a field observation**



Figure 1. Family Room, National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum. Image taken by the author, October 22, 2010.

I walked through your room...  
with prying eyes and mind, I traced your essence, which wasn't mine to trace.  
Cluttered walls adorned with old memories and broken promises;  
overwhelmed by the faces and flowers frozen in carbonite looking down upon me,  
reminding me of your presence—an occupying vacancy forcing me to engage.  
But the sun shining through the surrounding windows—  
enveloped by a clear blue sky as the building swayed beneath me,  
guiding me as I moved through your space.  
Subtle reminders that I was not trespassing alone (Fieldnotes, Family room,  
NS11MM, October 22, 2010).

The above recollection was recorded after field observation in the current office space of the NS11MM, the 20<sup>th</sup> floor of an office building located across the street from “Ground Zero.” The poetic response marks my first and only visit to a small, locked and secluded room, deemed ‘out-of-bounds’ to non-family members and researchers such as

myself, known as the “family room” (see figure 1). I first learned of this room—a separate space of remembrance and viewing platform for those whose loved ones died in the attack—relatively early during my three-year courtship with the NS11MM (2009-2012). I only gained access to the family room after a year and a half into the research project as a result of stubborn persistence. When I was finally granted permission by the memorial museum staff to view the room—an ambition largely driven by curiosity—it did not occur to me that I would not be able to ‘stomach’ the otherwise off-limits space.

The context for my visit to the family room was that I had just flown back into New York’s JFK airport after a very turbulent flight the previous day. I experienced symptoms of vertigo in the family room, and later realized that these experiences were connected to the flight. I use the term vertigo to describe this somatic experience and not motion sickness because the latter term implies that a movement must be present, whereas the former focuses on the *feeling* of movement when one is stationary. Although I had been inside the NS11MM offices numerous times, and for lengthy visits, for whatever reason, this time I could distinctly feel the building’s quivers. I literally could not stand to be in the family room at that moment; my knees were buckling beneath me, and I had little control over my balance. Given that I had been in the building conducting research on windy afternoons prior to this, and had even felt some of these building tremors, what was it specifically about my time in the family room that I could not handle on this particular day?

Throughout the process of data collection, I listened repeatedly to those who worked inside the Twin Towers describe how they could feel the building “sway” on a windy day. My father, who worked sporadically out of the Twin Towers as an employee

of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, shared similar recollections on multiple occasions. These normal building movements, as described by former Tower workers, are typical of tall skyscrapers. Likewise, the scale at which such ‘movements’ are registered and felt is so insignificant that a building’s inhabitants are largely undisturbed by it throughout their workday.

In addition to these memories, I have also listened to numerous recollections during the course of my interviews with NS11MM staff members of the weather report for the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>: “a sunny, clear blue sky of an otherwise perfect late summer day.” As a result of these recollections, the nature of *what* I study, and *where* I was at this particular moment, fashioned a kind of ‘simulated memory’ where popular motifs of the Twin Towers and September 11, 2001 materialized in the family room. These recollections, combined with the visual and ephemeral overload of the family room and the lingering somatic memory of my recent air travel, conjured a kind of “sensory memory” within me as my body affectively recalled the conditions of impending trauma described by my project participants.

In the field observation above, the temporal and spatial distinctions required to separate past memories of the Twin Towers from my present engagement with the buildings’ remains became muddled in the space of the family room. Here, the lingering effects of turbulence combined with the building tremors simulated memories of the Towers and September 11<sup>th</sup> as described by research participants. Additionally, every square inch of the family room, with the exception of the viewing platform, was plastered with photographs and memorabilia of the 2,753 victims of the World Trade Center. As a result, the room took on an eerie, claustrophobic quality. Lastly, the weather conditions

visible from the room's only window overlooking the NS11MM construction site, revealed a perfect, clear-blue sky, and a strong afternoon sun filtering into the room.

All of these conditions: vertigo, weather, location, and research focus, exacerbated the ghostly presence of such memories to produce a kind of perfect storm (see Gordon, 1997; Holloway and Kneale, 2008; Maddern and Adey, 2008; Turner, 2009). The temporality of the past mapped itself onto the present and became momentarily indistinguishable. I reacted both emotionally and physiologically to the experiences and memories of those I interviewed and their remembrances of the towers, of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as I attempted to capture my own sense of the family room and document its ephemeral contents. Despite my best efforts to exert 'mind over matter' throughout this data collection, I struggled to keep my composure, and, shortly thereafter, I left the family room and the building altogether as *feelings* of the past drew nearer with each gust of wind.

### **Theoretical Context: Conceptualizing Visceral Geographies**

What does it mean to 'go with your gut?' 'Feel it in your bones?' or react to something 'viscerally' (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010, p. 1273)?

According to feminist geographers, Jessica Hayes-Conroy and Allison Hayes-Conroy, the visceral is the realm in which bodies register affects in relationship to others:

Visceral refers to the realm of internally-felt sensations, moods and states of being, which are born from sensory engagement with the material world. We include in visceral experience the role of the cognitive mind; visceral refers to a fully *minded-body* that is capable of judgment (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008, p. 462, original italics).

The visceral realm enables the conscious awareness and comprehension of place and the absences that occupy it. Acting as a bio-social 'processing station' for affective

knowledges, the visceral allows us to *feel* time and space in order to help us sense and ‘make sense’—individually and collectively—of the social, political, and economic world around us.

Although the authors ground their mobilization of the visceral in relation to food politics, namely the individual and cultural procurement of tastes, their theoretical and political conceptualization of viscosity goes well beyond geographies of food. As the authors acknowledge, “examining the visceral experience of food has the potential to inform geography about more general (non-food) ways in which internal bodily processes affect the formation of political subjectivities” (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008, p. 462; also see J. Hayes-Conroy, 2009). In this chapter, I aim to harness the potential of the visceral to enable our understanding of political subjectivities as informed by their material, affective, and emotive environments in relationship to 9/11 and its subsequent remembrance at the World Trade Center.

By engaging with feminist geographic approaches to the body and its ability to affect and be affected (see Grosz, 1994; Longhurst et al., 2009; Sharp, 2009; Thrift, 2004; Thien, 2005; Davidson and Bondi, 2004), Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy offer a framework for analyzing embodied emotions and their physiological manifestation in relation to socially produced feelings, reactions, and perceptions. In their study of the educational efforts of the Slow Food Movement to unlearn previously encoded food-based preferences molecularly imprinted within the body, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy position the five senses as central to understanding how representational knowledge is translated into biological ‘hard-wiring’ (2008). “Sensory organs,” according to the authors, “capturing textures, aromas, flavors—provide mechanisms for

visceral arousal through affective relations with the material world” (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008, p. 463).

Summarizing key disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship on the “bio-sociality” of food production and consumption, the academic duo arrive at issues of cultural memory and its impact on the body’s propensity for certain foods and flavors (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). In the authors’ words, “Previous work on the senses in anthropology, geography, and multi-disciplinary scholarship, has detailed the role of food tastes and aromas in creating and triggering *cultural memory*” (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008, p. 463, emphasis added). Here, the authors relay how processes of food consumption and enjoyment largely depend on individual and cultural sensibilities and subjectivities. As they continue,

The sweet taste of ice cream is not decidedly uplifting for all minded bodies; rather, *memory*, perception, cognitive thinking, historical experience, and other material relations and immaterial forces all intersect with individuals’ sensory grasp of the world, complicating one’s visceral [read: bio-social] experience of the ice cream” (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008, p. 465, emphasis added).

Thus as Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy bring to light, our senses play an integral role in the psychological and physiological processes that re-constitute our memories and inform our subjectivities, foodie or otherwise. A certain smell, for instance, might transport us back in time to our grandmother’s kitchen, or childhood home, reminding us of *feelings* associated with said people and places. Likewise, sound and taste compel us to recall other moments, events, and places in our lives. As such, our memories themselves play an integral role in the manipulation of our senses and sensory experiences of the material world.



For example, rather than remain inside their office buildings to avoid potential falling debris from surrounding skyscrapers, workers across New York City evacuated their places of employment when an earthquake shook the East Coast in August 2011. Although the building tremors were the direct result of the earthquake's aftershocks, city residents physiologically and psychologically processed the quake vis-à-vis terrorism, as evident by this counter-intuitive evacuation (also see Seelye, 2011). The city's emotional reactivity to this seismic movement can be understood through the visceral framework posited by Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy: bio-social 'triggers' became exacerbated by old memories of 9/11 accrued through 'virtual' and 'actual' experience (see Deleuze, 2002). As Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy likewise attest in their summary of the development of food tastes in a group of school-aged children,

Obviously developing a taste for something does not happen in a vacuum, but in a lived context of social representation. In the visceral realm, representations join and become part of *old memories*, new intensities, triggers, aches, tempers, commotions, tranquilities. In the visceral realm, representations affect materiality (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008: 467, emphasis added).

Consequently, memories must also be understood as possessing their own affective registries with the potential to unhinge linear notions of time and space. Theorizing the viscosity of memory offers a palpable path for imagining present-day geographies of emotion and affect. In the case of 9/11, these contemporary geographies of emotion and affect intersect with past memories of 9/11 to procure new emotional landscapes and modes of embodiment post-9/11.

### **Re-membering 9/11: Witnessing Trauma**

We will never forget those we lost at the World Trade Center. But this memorial is not for us—although we have been entrusted with its creation. It is for our

children and grandchildren. It is so those who visit that sacred ground know what happened there and why so many people died to protect our freedoms (Bloomberg qtd in LMDC Press Release, 14 Jan. 2004).

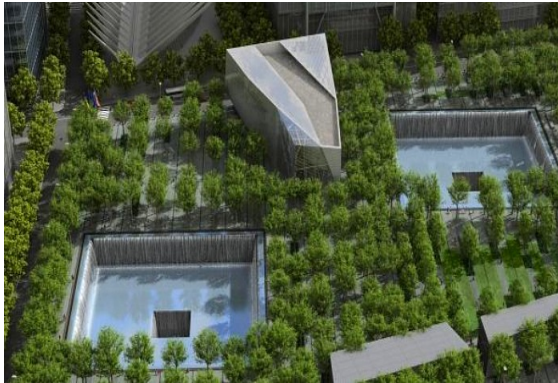


Figure 2. *Remembering Absence*. Rendering of the winning design for the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial in New York City. © Michael Arad and Peter Walker. Rendering by Squared Design Lab. (last accessed 20 November 2009).  
<[http://www.national911memorial.org/site/PageServer?pagename=New\\_Memorial\\_About](http://www.national911memorial.org/site/PageServer?pagename=New_Memorial_About)>.

Marked by the burden of witnessing trauma, Jenny Edkins posits that first generation survivors pass on memories of traumatic experiences to subsequent generations through visceral registries (2003, p. 178). As Edkins remarks, “The misery that passes down the generations in this way is an uncomprehending, visceral grief” (2003: 178). For subsequent generations, traumatic pasts are marked by the physiological and psychological responses our bodies undergo when we are called to re-member. Through acts of bearing witness and remembrance, we re-live memories of the traumatic past in the present, thus establishing their place in the future.

The visceral, as Edkins describes, marks the affective transmission of traumatic memory across time and space in order for such memories to carry on into the future. Edkins’ use of the visceral as a mode of remembrance is based on the events of the Holocaust and its subsequent remembrances and theorizations by future generations. What does it mean for those who lived through the recent trauma of 9/11 to bear witness?

How, for instance, will the lack of temporal distance between the traumatic experiences and its memorialization--between lived memory and history--shape individual and collective memory?

In a six-part documentary dedicated to the reconstruction efforts of lower Manhattan, *Rising: Rebuilding Ground Zero* (Spielberg, 2011), a clear intergenerational investment in the physical and psychological rebuilding of the World Trade Center site--and particularly the Twin Towers--emerges. Many of those working as part of the rebuilding efforts, such as iron and construction workers, are the children of retired workers whose labor some 30 years prior helped create the iconic New York skyline and its symbolic centerpiece, the Twin Towers. Even my own investment in the site's memorialization is intergenerational, as my father spent his adult life working at the Port Authority of NY and NJ (PANYNJ), the bi-state organization in charge of maintaining and operating the World Trade Center (WTC) as well as overseeing post-9/11 reconstruction.

When New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the winning 9/11 memorial design, quoted at the beginning of this section, he noted that memorials transmit knowledge to future generations. Past Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) Chairman, John C. Whitehead, echoes this sentiment: "Remember that these designs are not only for our time, but for *all* time" (LMDC Press Release, 18 Dec. 2002, emphasis added). The historical memory of 9/11, according to these memorial spokesmen, is made possible because of the preservation of lived memory in the newly constructed World Trade Center site and memorial: *Reflecting Absence* (Figure

2).<sup>30</sup> As those with first-hand knowledge of 9/11 either forget or die, the temporal encapsulation and enshrinement of past memories within this architectural and cultural landscape hold these historical memories for the future.

### **Reconstructing Lower Manhattan: A Place to Remember**

From its inception in October 2001, the LMDC (in partnership with the PANYNJ, the City of New York, and the State of New York) has been central to the now decade-long efforts to memorialize the events and lives lost on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.<sup>31</sup> Created in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks by then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor George E. Pataki, the LMDC has been entrusted with the task of rebuilding the areas of lower Manhattan decimated by the collapse of the Twin Towers into a lively business and cultural district.<sup>32</sup> According to the LMDC:

LMDC is charged with ensuring that Lower Manhattan recovers from the attacks and emerges as a strong and vibrant 24-hour community. The centerpiece of LMDC's efforts is the creation of a permanent memorial honoring those lost, while affirming the democratic values that came under attack on September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993 (Memorial Competition Guidelines, 2003, p. 2).

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<sup>30</sup> Historical memory refers to the formation of collective consensus, or cultural memory-making, through which individual memories are refashioned and repurposed into generalized narratives for future consumption; in other words, memory's representation as historical accuracy. Lived memory, on the other hand, is mainly associated with the individual, those who experienced 'history,' or historical events first-hand (although the term can be more generally applied to cultural or societal experiences as well).

<sup>31</sup> LMDC was initially granted approximately \$3 billion in redevelopment funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Design (HUD). Since 2001, LMDC projects have garnered financial support from private and public entities, including those accrued by its partners, the City of New York, State of New York, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (<http://www.renewnyc.com/FundingInitiatives/>).

<sup>32</sup> As a point of clarification, the LMDC, and later, the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, have been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing all memorial-related components of the WTC during its redevelopment. LMDC partner, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is, on the other hand, responsible for the overarching WTC site redevelopment as the original owners of the property (see LMDC, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation World Trade Center Memorial and Cultural Program General Project Plan, 2 June, 2004, amended 14 Feb. 2007). As a result, the two organizations work in tandem in producing and realizing a redevelopment vision for the WTC and its logistical implementation.

As a result of this designation, the city-based, federally-funded organization proposed six designs for WTC redevelopment in an internally-decided process. Once word of the designs reached the public at large, the organization was inundated with public feedback critical of its proposals.<sup>33</sup> In the end, all six of the LMDC-backed plans were publicly rejected, and the organization was urged to hold an open international design competition (Listening to the City, Report of Proceedings, Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, 2002).

In hopes of eventually arriving at a master plan for the site, the LMDC held public forums to garner support and solicit public feedback for the unpopular LMDC designs, retroactively. One of the larger public input programs, “Listening to the City”, was held between July and August 2002, and consisted of a two-part open forum and additional online dialogue, drawing nearly 5,300 participants (Listening to the City, Report of Proceedings, 2002). Additional LMDC outreach included public meetings in each of the neighboring boroughs, numerous advisory council meetings, a Federal Hall exhibition with comments brochures, mailings to and feedback from victims’ family members, as well as thousands of emails and written comments directed to the organization (Listening to the City, Report of Proceedings, 2002). Overall, more than 200 public meetings were held by the LMDC for this first phase of public solicitation, making the project the largest public urban planning project in U.S. history (Listening to the City, Report of Proceedings, 2002). Two major themes dominated the public’s recommendations: one,

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<sup>33</sup> Feedback opposing the proposed WTC designs came from local residents, business owners, victims’ family members, survivors, and otherwise interested individuals from the surrounding boroughs, tri-state area, and national and international community. Critics of the LMDC-backed proposals attacked both the designs “unimaginative” utilization of the space as well as the closed design process.

filling the void in the city's skyline, and two, preserving the remnants of the tower footprints.<sup>34</sup>

*"The Void"*

Our skyline was affected tremendously on 9/11. I believe Tower 1, when it's complete, will fill a *void*. We'll have our skyline intact (Michael Pinelli, Vice President and General Superintendent of field operations for Tower 1, qtd in Spielberg, 2011, emphasis added).

On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, New York City, and by extension, the nation, suffered a loss of identity when its skyline was destroyed in the terror attacks. Almost immediately following the collapse of the Twin Towers, the general public began to re-imagine the WTC site. Images began to circulate on the Internet in an attempt to represent the massive "void" now present in the city's skyline.

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<sup>34</sup> To be fair, the designation to preserve the footprints of the Twin Towers as part of an on-site memorial was largely pre-determined by Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Process (2002-2004), and carried out by the organizations and municipal entities involved in articulating a vision for the WTC's redevelopment; namely, the LMDC, PANYNJ, and the City of New York. However, the public response to preserve the footprints as sacred ground resonated strongly throughout the public feedback campaigns, phases 1 and 2, thus foreclosing the possibility of constructing commercial space where the towers once stood (see LMDC, *A Vision for Lower Manhattan*, 11, Oct. 2002; *Listening to the City*, Report of Proceedings, 2002).



Figure 3. *Missing*. © Peter Kuper, 2001. In *Witness and Response: September 11 Acquisitions at the Library of Congress*, 2002. Prints and photographs Division, Comic Book Art/Political Cartoons. (last accessed on 20 May 2009) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/911/911-comics.html>.

The above image by comic artist, Peter Kuper (see figure 3) is on display in an online collection entitled, *Witness and Response: September 11 Acquisitions at the Library of Congress, 2002*. The title of Kuper's piece, *Missing*, evokes the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> through the corporeal metaphor of missing limbs. The lower Manhattan subway map and skyline are reimagined here as a digit-less hand that, according to Kuper's title, still remembers, or *feels*, the places where its fingers once existed as buildings.

The (geo)political attractiveness of the Twin Towers as a terrorist target should not be discounted in Kuper's depiction of what is now 'missing.' The Towers served as an icon and marker of both regional and national identity for the global imagination for nearly 30 years. As LMDC interim President, Kevin Rampe, remarked, the World Trade Center served as a "living symbol of man's dedication to world peace' through world commerce" (Memorial Competition Guidelines, 2003). For others in the international

community, however, the buildings evoked narratives of U.S. economic and political domination (see Smith, 2001; Achar, 2002). The “target attractiveness” of the WTC site, particularly the Twin Towers, was constructed globally through U.S.-backed neoliberal agendas and their resulting economic, social, and political destabilizations.<sup>35</sup> When comic artist Peter Kuper re-imagines this post-9/11 landscape as a physically deformed body-scape, his image represents not only a rupture from narratives of U.S. global dominance and its assumed invincibility, but also depicts a severing of U.S. capitalism—the very embodiment of the Towers—at its veins (see the subway maps lines in figure 3; also see, Puar and Rai, 2002; Grewal, 2003; Puar, 2007 on U.S. exceptionalism).<sup>36</sup>

The traumatic nature of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks shook most Americans to the core. The attacks contributed to overall sentiments of insecurity and paranoia, and a nostalgic desire to return to ‘safer times’ no longer discernable through the dust of the fallen buildings. For the second time in the nation’s history, U.S. vulnerability had been exposed for the world to see, thus turning the city into a ‘wounded landscape’ (See Harvey, 2003; Till 2012). Rebuilding the New York City skyline was a symbolic gesture aimed to restore some sense of normalcy lost in the attacks, according to the public sentiments expressed in the LMDC-hosted dialogues.

Tower 1, or “Freedom Tower” as it is more commonly known, is the tallest of four new buildings proposed to occupy the newly redesigned WTC.<sup>37</sup> Physically

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<sup>35</sup> Target attractiveness is a security, or counter-terrorism term used to designate certain buildings, sites, and landmarks as high-risk for a terrorist attack as a result of their symbolic caché (qtd in Spielberg, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> I would like to thank Giorgio Curti for his insights into this point at the 2009 AAG meeting in Las Vegas.

<sup>37</sup> The original winning design plan proposed two options: the initial plan called for five new buildings to be constructed at the WTC site, including an additional building that would serve as performing arts center. The second design plan, on the other hand, called for four new buildings to be constructed on the WTC site.



reinstating New York City's skyline to its former glory through construction of this tower entails addressing both physical and emotional wounds, which Michael Pinelli alludes to with his description of restoration efforts at the onset of this subsection.

*"The Wound"*

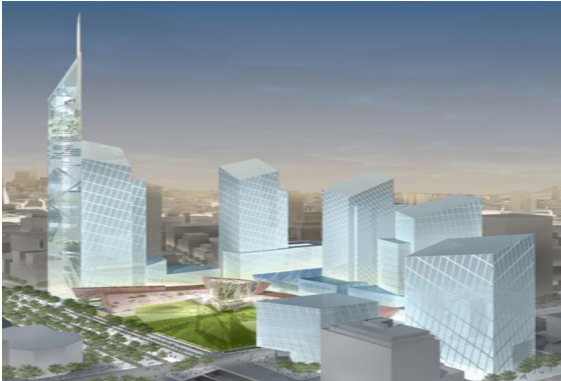


Figure 4. *Memory Foundations*. Rendering of the winning site design plan for the World Trade Center. © Studio Libeskind, 2003. (last accessed on 8 March 2012).  
<[http://www.renewnyc.com/plan\\_des\\_dev/wtc\\_site/new\\_design\\_plans/selected\\_libeskind/indv\\_4.asp](http://www.renewnyc.com/plan_des_dev/wtc_site/new_design_plans/selected_libeskind/indv_4.asp)>.

From December 2002 through February 2003, the LMDC conducted public campaigns to select the finalists of the international design competition to rebuild the WTC. “Plans in Progress”, the second phase of public solicitation, repeated the methods from the first phase of the design project: public forums and exhibitions, mailings, feedback cards, etc. (LMDC, *The Public Dialogue: Innovative Design Study*, 2003). A strong concern for the restoration of the skyline and the preservation of the Tower footprints were again public priorities. This public feedback for phase two mirrored that

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This plan kept the performing arts center, but relocated the fifth building off-site. The rendering, Figure 4, shows the first design plan with all five buildings. However, due to rising costs, the final design scheme for the WTC only includes four new buildings, the tallest of which has undergone several facelifts from its original depiction by Libeskind studios in the above image (See LMDC, *Summary Report on the Selected Design for the World Trade Center Site*, found at: [http://www.renewnyc.com/plan\\_des\\_dev/wtc\\_site/new\\_design\\_plans/selected\\_design.asp](http://www.renewnyc.com/plan_des_dev/wtc_site/new_design_plans/selected_design.asp)).

of the “Listening to the City” reports, including restoring the skyline and preserving the footprints (see LMDC, *The Public Dialogue: Innovative Design Study*, 2003). In the end, architect Daniel Libeskind’s master plan, “Memory Foundations”, was selected in February 2003 out of 406 entries and seven finalists (LMDC Press Release, 18 Dec. 2002).<sup>38</sup>

The son of Holocaust survivors, Daniel Libeskind immigrated to the U.S. in his early teens (Hirschhorn, 2003). As Libeskind recalls the experience:

I arrived by ship to New York as a teenager, an immigrant, and like millions of others before me, my first sight was the Statue of Liberty and the amazing skyline of Manhattan. I have never forgotten that sight or what it stands for. This is what this project is all about. When I first began this project, New Yorkers were divided as to whether to keep the site of the World Trade Center empty or to fill the site completely and build upon it. I meditated many days on this seemingly impossible dichotomy... So, I went to look at the site, to stand within it, to see people walking around it, to *feel* its power and to *listen* to its voices. And this is what I *heard*, *felt*, and *saw* (Memorial Competition Guidelines, 2003, p. 10, emphasis added).

According to the above description, Libeskind’s aestheticization of the World Trade Center site into a visually consumable landscape was mediated in part by the site’s abilities to communicate to him viscerally. Articulating his vision for the WTC site eight years later in *Rising: Rebuilding Ground Zero*, Libeskind had this to say about his initial interaction with the site:

As I descended [into the footprints of the trade towers] some 75 feet down to the bedrock...I suddenly had a revelation. When I went down there, I suddenly saw this was not just a site to be rebuilt... Almost 3000 people perished. This site is such a great, passionate *wound*. That’s why people care that there’s a *void* in New York... that it cease to be a void—that it is filled with something

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<sup>38</sup> To clarify, seven architectural ‘teams’ were originally selected as finalist by the LMDC and Port Authority. Amongst those seven teams, which included “27 different firms, individual architects and artists”, nine design proposals were under final consideration (LMDC Press Release, 18 Dec. 2002; also see Sorkin, 2003). Shortly thereafter, one of the design teams withdrew from consideration, although one of the team’s firms now partners with Libeskind Studios on the Freedom Tower (See Kay, 2011).

memorable, something that will *heal* that space. But you have to create a balance between tragedy and hope (qtd in Spielberg, 2011, emphasis added).

Creating a “balance between tragedy and hope,” Libeskind’s design plan stayed true to the two main concerns raised throughout both phases of public opinion gathering conducted by the LMDC, *Listening to the City* and *Plans in Progress*. It established a strong skyline for the city, and retained the shape of the devastated towers.

As its namesake conveys, the Libeskind studio design, “Memory Foundations”, centralizes memory as one of its founding principles to aid in ‘healing’ the otherwise wounded site-city-nation. The first part of this ‘healing process’ was answering public calls to restore the city’s skyline. With regard to this task, the Libeskind plan envisioned a 1,776-foot tower. The tower would—in concert with four other buildings—spiral around the WTC site, thus replacing the disorienting void left by the absence of towers, and protectively encircling the afflicted site, metaphorically and visually.<sup>39</sup> The proposed “Freedom Tower,” which is slated to be 400 feet taller than the original Trade Towers, is saturated with its own symbolism and visual rhetoric. In the master planner’s words:

1776 is not just a clever number, it’s a date that is the most important to me--the Declaration of Independence. That is the date that declared that all people have full human rights, not just Americans. Everybody in the world deserves rights, justice. It [referring to the significant height of the build] says something about our country; says something about what it really means, democracy (Libeskind qtd in Spielberg, 2011).

When complete, Tower 1 (a.k.a. Freedom Tower), will stand at exactly the same height of the original trade towers, 1,368feet, but include an additional 408-foot antenna stretching into the air, thus giving the building a total height of 1,776 feet and the title of being the tallest building in the western hemisphere (Spielberg, 2011).

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<sup>39</sup> Libeskind has repeatedly credited his conceptual inspiration for the new ‘spiraling skyline’ at the WTC to the torch held by Lady Liberty (Spielberg, 2001).

Designed to evoke the façade of the trade towers, Tower 1 has a “visual relationship to the *memory* of the original buildings” (David Childs, building co-designer and chief architect for Tower 1, qtd in Spielberg, 2011, emphasis added). The emotional weight attached to rebuilding Tower 1 is in many ways an evocation of American resilience and an act of symbolic retaliation.

In a memorial service to the 189 victims killed at the Pentagon, for example, President George W. Bush expressed similar sentiments towards rebuilding. As Mr. Bush expressed, “The *wound* to this building will not be forgotten, but it will be repaired. Brick by brick, we will quickly rebuild the Pentagon” (Garamone, 2001, italics mine). Comparing the Pentagon’s rebuilding efforts to that of healing a national wound, Bush’s remarks express the cultural significance attributed to the restoration of these afflicted 9/11 landscapes as a show of U.S. resilience. Additionally, the President’s comments highlight public sentiments of insecurity, which are thwarted here by Mr. Bush’s commitment to reestablish headquarters for the Department of Defense as soon as possible.

### *The Prosthetic*



Figure 5. *A big New-York-style Fuck You...* Unknown. (last accessed 20 May 2009). <<http://www.neitherland.com/hyperballad/gallery/misc/towers.shtml>>.

According to Diane Nelson's essay, "Phantom Limbs and Invisible Hands: Bodies, Prosthetics, and Late Capitalist Identifications", prostheses aid in "overcoming a lack of presence" (2001a: 303). Unable to fully process the traumatic loss of losing a limb, the body re-members what is missing through the prosthetic in order to reassert a normative sense of self (Nelson, 2001b). Building upon the work of Elizabeth Grosz (1994), Nelson goes on to use the metaphor of the prosthetic "to understand the relation between the body and the body politic" (Nelson, 2001a: 304). Prosthetics, according to the author, are mobilized during times of crisis and social restructuring to reassert a sense of national security and cultural stability.

Unlike the previous image that commemorates sentiments of loss (see Figure 3), Figure 5 expresses a healing-over, a covering-up of New York's visual identity, its recognizable skyline, with a 'newly improved,' quasi-World Trade Center design. Here, a hand-like row of buildings replaces the vacated plots of the WTC site and morphs into a "big New-York-style fuck you to whoever dared to attack this great country."<sup>40</sup> The image becomes a prosthetic, with the embedded sentiments creating what Nelson calls a "stumped national identity" (2001a, p. 314). This image asks us to contemplate how the aesthetic project of rebuilding the WTC site post-9/11 is deeply rooted within a series of collective emotional responses.

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<sup>40</sup> I first saw this image displayed on one of my professor's doors. After inquiring with him as to how he acquired this image, he re-directed me to another student who had emailed him the image. According to this student, she also received the image via email en masse. I relocated the image on Google Image and found it posted on an anti-Muslim blog (<http://www.neitherland.com/hyperballad/gallery/misc/towers.shtml>). Similar images were also found in a public, online call for WTC designs hosted by CNN in 2003. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2002/wtc.ideas/designs/>.

News coverage of the Freedom Tower, or Tower 1, seven months after the tenth anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, for instance, elaborates that the new WTC height surpasses that of the Empire State Building, thus re-claiming the building's symbolic role as the vertical centerpiece of the city skyline (see Higgs, 2012). According to Mike Mennella, who oversees construction of Tower 1 as he did the original Twin Towers, "Seeing this building from all over the region...it's just a statement for the region that we've reached a real milestone" (Simon, 2012). Interestingly, the symbolic and logistical goal of making Tower 1 a visible presence in the city's skyline was originally slated for the ten-year anniversary of attacks, 9/11/11 (Spielberg, 2011). However, when the previous winter's high snow levels thwarted that goal, achieving the building's symbolic height coincided instead with the one-year anniversary of Osama Bin Laden's death. The redemptive and rhetorical presence of Tower 1 in the skyline cannot, therefore, be reduced to that of geographic location; it does not simply reorient and restore the 'sense of place' lost to residents and visitors when the towers collapsed. Rather, the symbolic gesture of rebuilding in the aftermath of such violence is deeply connected to national sentiments of grief, anger, and retaliation, and the broader social desire to memorialize the dead and comprehend the events that took place.

### **Reflecting Absence**

In keeping with the sentiments garnered through the LMDC public feedback campaigns, Libeskind's master plan for the WTC site preserved the remaining tower footprints as sacred space and utilized their shape as part of an on-site memorial for which a separate design competition was conducted in 2003 (LMDC Press Release, 18 Dec. 2002; Listening to the City, Report of Proceedings, 2002). Similar to the WTC site

design competition, a series of eight designs were selected as finalists and provided a budget to further develop their vision. In early 2004, largely unknown New York City-based architect Michael Arad's design, *Reflecting Absence*, emerged as the winning selection out of 5,201 entries submitted from 63 different countries and 49 states (<http://www.wtcsitememorial.com>, 13 Jan. 2004).

More than five years after the winning design by Arad was unveiled, I attended a panel discussion featuring key architects from the four design firms involved in the construction of the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center (2009). The panel was called "A Space Within: The National September 11 Memorial and Museum." Walking around the exhibit that accompanied the panel discussion, I overheard a man say to a woman nearby, as he eyed Arad's memorial model, that the design reminded him of a drain. Reacting almost identically to the two memorial pools sitting in the footprints of the original Trade Towers, I was stirred by this man's reactions to the model.

Throughout the panel, Mr. Arad spoke about his design plan for the memorial pools and described the empty space at the WTC site as spiritual. As he commented, "it's hard to define [the memorial site], it's evasive... You *feel it in your gut*, in your heart" (A Space Within, 2009, italics mine). During the question and answer session of the program, I asked Mr. Arad to describe his design process and how he came to the decision to envision the space in the way he did. In doing so, I referenced his aesthetic choice to utilize the negative space around the site as a kind of architectural wound.

After 9/11 there was intense debate over whether or not to rebuild the Twin Towers, or even the WTC site itself (see page 21). The significance of Mr. Arad's

decision to build something that is in essence nothing, such as a drain, empty or negative space, is not without consequence. Responding to my query, Mr. Arad offered that he wanted to create a space of remembrance. As he elaborated,

There's no intent to make this place feel like a wound. In fact, one of the things that was important to me was to bring it [the height of the memorial pools] up to grade [street level]--to not have it removed from the street, to make it a live part of the city. But neither to erase the scar altogether and make it an invisible memory (A Space Within, 2009).

Mr. Arad would certainly be displeased by my and this anonymous man's likening of his design to a drain, or even a hole in the ground. I do not make this analogy here in disrespect for Mr. Arad's design or the lives his memorial represents. Rather, I make this connection as an attempt to understand the affective responses that such a space produces, and will produce, for its current and future onlookers. What, for instance, would it mean to have a scar that does not heal, or a wound that keeps on leaking, as a site of private, public, and national memory and grief? Mr. Arad clearly has gauged the visiting public's emotional reactivity to the site given his response to my question with reference to scarring, as well as his architectural attempt to thwart the site's ability to feel like a wound 'cut into the ground.'

In a subsequent public speaking engagement, "Building the 9/11 Memorial: A Site of Memory and Remembrance," Mr. Arad recalled his initial inspiration for the memorial pools days after the terror attacks. He lamented the two massive voids where the towers once stood while staring out to the Hudson River from the roof of his apartment (2012). Here, Arad described his conceptualization for *Reflecting Absence* as "voids never filling up where the surface of the water was torn open"; where a "secondary void yawns forever, remains forever empty... you cannot see the bottom"



(Building the 9/11 Memorial, 2012). As Mr. Arad continued to illustrate his vision for the memorial within its encompassing site, stating that “you can’t understand the importance of [such a] public space, until you viscerally feel it” (Building the 9/11 Memorial, 2012). The emotional responses and visceral pulls evoked by and encoded within the memorial design is key to understanding its role in preserving and projecting memories of 9/11 into the future.

## **Visceral Geographies of the NS11MM**

### *The Memorial*

In an online statement, the 9/11 Memorial Jury<sup>41</sup> offered the following rationale for selecting *Reflecting Absence* as the winning design in January 2004:

In its powerful, yet simple articulation of the footprints of the Twin Towers, ‘Reflecting Absence’ has made the voids left by the destruction the primary symbol of our *loss*. By allowing *absence to speak for itself*, the designers [Arad in partnership with landscape architect, Peter Walker] have made the power of these *empty* footprints the memorial (<http://www.wtcsitememorial.com>, 13 Jan. 2004, emphasis added).

Echoing the affective qualities of Arad’s vision, the Jury’s description of *Reflecting Absence* as a design that ‘speaks for itself’ captures the physical and emotional loss contained in the winning memorial design. Here, loss, emptiness, and absence serve as the affective and aesthetic power behind Arad’s design.<sup>42</sup> The context, therefore, of

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<sup>41</sup> The memorial jury consisted of 13 expert and non-expert judges, although the majority would be considered “expert”. For example, several jurors had previous career experience in the arts, public design, and architecture, and well-known jurors include, Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam War Memorial, Washington, D.C, and James E. Young, prominent Holocaust scholar and professor ([http://www.wtcsitememorial.com/about\\_jury\\_txt.html](http://www.wtcsitememorial.com/about_jury_txt.html)), 13 Jan. 2004).

<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that the Arad design underwent several changes before finalization. For example, after family members learned of the proposed placement of their loved ones’ names below grade, Arad and the Memorial Foundation received severe pushback until they adhered to relocate this information to the outer

procuring feelings, or sustaining affective interactions between the memorial pools and the visitor, is central to the design's overall likeability and appeal.

Establishing a memorial at "Ground Zero" is of course an emotional undertaking.

As one research informant describes,

Before the [9/11 memorial jury] competition even kicked off, before people submitted their entries to it, we [those involved in the memorial selection process] went around the country to look at all different memorials and talk to the folks who were involved in the planning of them to get their advice. And I think that what we learned from it was that you can never predict what's gonna happen next, because it's such a *visceral* experience going through a memorial. ... There is something about the voids that Arad envisioned from the very beginning. These voids in the Hudson river, these *cuts* into what was there before that did evoke that *visceral* response, but whether or not people will *feel* it when it [the memorial] is actually complete is anyone's guess (Personal interview, NS11MM staff member, July 27, 2011, emphasis added).

This description of the memorial competition selection process resonates with the role of emotion and emotional affect in the memorial selection process. As this upper-level administration staff member continues,

I guess what the jury kept hearing and kept talking about throughout the competition, was how do you get beyond the fact that it really is unknowable what the final design is going to *pull* from people? So how then do you choose a design that is not so overblown that people are overwhelmed by the details of the design, rather than the experience of it, but also not too simple that it is not evoking any emotion at all (Personal interview, NS11MM staff member, July, 27 2011, original italics).

The kinds of emotions and visceral responses evoked by future 9/11 memorial visitors, therefore, will be hard to gauge given their unpredictably.

### *The Memorial Museum*

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walls of the above grade memorial pools. Also, various prototypes of victims' names were etched into bronze in order to determine how the names on the memorial pools would look aesthetically and function materially once the waterfalls were in operation. Two of these prototypes, for example, tested the name panels with water from the congruent falls trickling over the sides, or water submerging the names. Both produced the undesired effect of the names appearing as though they were either crying or drowning, and were therefore discarded (*Building the 9/11 Memorial*, AAG, New York, 27 Feb. 2012).

Within the last two years or so, employees of the NS11MM have been preparing for such emotional variability amongst their patrons. For example, there have been talks by memorial museum staff members about hiring qualified mental health professionals to address the diverse emotional responses that visiting the site may elicit from the public. In an interview with one museum staff member in 2010, I inquired as to whether the institution had plans to have mental health professionals on call to address visitor distress should their experiences at the site lead them to become overwhelmed. At the time, I was informed that no such arrangements had been made. However, in a follow-up interview with this particular staff member one year later, I was told that the museum is now planning to have trained mental health professionals available on-site, such as grief counselors.<sup>43</sup> As another memorial museum staff member concurs, “it’s a great advantage of the museum opening after the memorial...we get a kind of learning experience to really see what is the *visceral* response to the memorial and what kind of support they [the visitors] might need” (Personal interview, NS11MM staff member, June 2, 2011, italics mine).<sup>44</sup>

The underground Memorial Museum, which is now slated to open in spring 2014, has designed “emotional egresses” into its exhibition spaces as part of its visitor management protocol. In the words of a different NS11MM employee working on exhibition development:

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<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately this particular staff member is no longer employed at NS11MM, therefore, I am unable to ascertain the status of this particular staffing issue at the current juncture.

<sup>44</sup> The memorial museum was slated to open one year after the memorial, 9/11/12; however, due to unresolved bookkeeping issues between the NS11MM and the Port Authority over construction costs, the museum’s opening has been pushed back to Spring 2014 (See Agovino, 2012).

When in the historical exhibition [which addresses the events of 9/11], for example, we...also have what we are internally calling ‘emotional exits,’ or emotional egress. Although we haven’t figured out what the signs would say in the museum--they are just at different points within the exhibition that if you as a visitor have had enough, you need to leave this space, that you can get out of the exhibition (Personal interview, NS11MM staff member, January 21, 2011).

The affective qualities of the NS11MM are archived within and mediated by the physical space of the museum itself at ‘ground zero.’ As another museum staff member puts it,

We wanted the museum to give people that sense that: “You are *here in this space*, remembering these people.” The memorial pools are reflecting absence, the memorial exhibition, in some ways, reflects presence. We wanted to sort of return the people, the individual people [who perished] to the consciousness of the visitors (Personal Interview, NS11MM staff member, October 14, 2010, italics mine).

The emotional strength of this particular museological undertaking, as the above comments reflect, is derived in part from its location at the ‘authentic site of trauma.’ Accordingly, the museum-goer’s engagement with remains of the original World Trade Towers throughout the site fosters opportunities for the visitor to ‘encounter’ what and who is missing and to, in the words of this staff member, *feel* their presence.

### **(Without) Conclusion: Re-membering Absence, An Absent Presence**

Despite th[e] fluidity between place and time, the emergence of a site of trauma refuses to reinforce a continuity of presence. In other words, where a site of memory ‘absorbs’ the place that existed prior to that site existing, a reversal of presence to absence occurs. In short, we are faced with a phenomenology of negative space, a location defined not only by what has ceased to exist, but also what cannot be accommodated spatially. Giving presence to a ruptured space is precisely what distinguishes site of memory from inanimate materiality (Trigg, 2009: 96-97).

In her work on post-unification Berlin, Karen Till (2005) discusses the city’s memorial landscape as a montage of past and present. Here, the ghosts of Germany’s

violent past(s) haunt present-day memorial landscapes in their quest to re-produce both urban and memorial space within the city. In the author's words,

They [referring to memorials] made places as open wounds in the city to remind them of their hauntings and to feel uncomfortable. And while these places of memory gained their authority as landscape markers from the past, they were nonetheless powerful *as* places of memory because they were also traces of the future (Till, 2005: 11, original italics).

Engaging with the work of sociologist Avery Gordon, Till underscores the role of haunting as “a constituent element of modern social life” and built environments (Gordon, 1997: 7). Just as for the case of Berlin, the social haunting of the New York cityscape is marked by the lingering presence of its violent past and the ‘unfinished business’ of its ghosts. As one museum staff member remarks about the emerging memorial landscape within lower Manhattan:

I think it's inevitable that people feel the presence of the missing in these places... That's just a very consistent pattern. I mean, you could read about people who visit concentration camp sites, or battlefields, or memoirs of those kinds of visits often...where they feel the presence of the missing. And one of the critiques of building the museum [at the WTC] below ground has been the sense of claustrophobia and the sense of [the site] pushing in on you. The general public might feel that. There are 13 emergency exits. There's one entrance (Personal Interview, NS11MM staff member, August 11, 2010).

This statement locates the crux of visceral memory at the World Trade Center: the presence of absence and the absence of presence. Here, the paradox of traumatic memory is reconstituted through the persistence of that which is absent to remain present, thus suspending linear time-space.

Given its location within the original foundation of the Twin Towers seven stories below ground, the Memorial Museum at the WTC has left many, particularly family members, uneasy about entering the cultural institution. For those planning to visit the

museum, the experience will inevitably be arbitrated by the traumatic nature of the crimes that took place at the site. As one NS11MM staffer similarly acknowledges,

We would be having perhaps a much greater freedom to dig deep interpretatively and to take some creative risks with [the 9/11 memorial museum] if it were located anywhere else in the United States, including across the street from the World Trade Center, but it's not. It's on the 16 acres, this unintended burial ground if you will, for 2800 innocent people. It is a very emotional, complicated site and so everything we do here [at NS11MM] is balanced by this fact. On the one hand, we are setting the history as straight as it can be set, educating and hopefully stimulating many generations to come, but at the same time, we are on a site where there is blood in the ground. People physically died here and many never came--their remains were never found. And so there is this constant balance that you have to negotiate between the memorial--the kind of emotional side of what we're doing, and then the intellectual, historical side of what we are doing (Personal interview, NS11MM staff member, June 14, 2011).

Accordingly, the physical space that houses the 9/11 Memorial Museum is tainted with human blood. As this respondent continues to explain,

Visitors may be a predominant part of our planning, but we still have stake-holder audiences [family members, building survivors, local residence, etc.] that are deeply traumatized by what happened and just a little trigger--you know, the wrong *smell* in a gallery, the wrong *vibration* from a path train rumbling by--people are still on edge. For those of us who experienced the event--not directly in that we were in the building, but directly because we were in the places, like New York City. I mean for so many of us a gorgeous, crystal-clear blue sky, morning sky, has a very double meaning to us now. It's beautiful and sad at the same time, and it will never, unfortunately, not have that sadness as a part of it. *Memory and trauma are experienced in all five senses*, and maybe it is a visual sense or the oral sense that are most profound in terms of the intake of this event. But there are people that still--they'll smell something and they're right back in the day or the aftermath of 9/11, or they'll touch something, or taste something, and it's--we just have to be really mindful of that [at NS11MM] (Personal interview, June 14, 2011, emphasis added).

As this staff members warns, the recollection of violent pasts through visceral registries risks rendering the boundaries separating here and there, past and present, self and other, indistinguishable to the visitor. Consequently, the ability of NS11MM to both elicit and contain the visceral responses of those with first-hand or lived memory of the September

11<sup>th</sup> attacks, and those for whom a historical memory is being constructed, is negotiated through the body. As the above research respondents remarks suggest, the site itself is so affectively charged by the events that took place there and the sense of ongoing threat, that any emerging sensory responses from visitors may be too overwhelming to experience. How, therefore, can we understand the production of “minded bodies” through the (re)circulation of certain visceral memory emerging at the WTC? Can viscosity be mobilized to aid in the production of modes of biopower?

As we have already witnessed with regard to 9/11, visceral responses are key to collective processes of remembering September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, particularly in relation to the war on terror. As Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy similarly posit regarding the (geo)political power of the visceral:

The visceral realm enhances the politics of... [social] networks by engaging with the catalytic potential of diverse intensities of embodiment and the moral knowledges that are embedded in bodily judgments. Bodily sensations—has the potential to increase political understanding of how people can be *moved* or *mobilized* either as individuals or as groups of social actors (2008, 469, emphasis in the original).

After the announcement of Osama Bin Laden’s death in May of 2011, for example, crowds of strangers spontaneously gathered in the streets of New York and elsewhere across the country chanting, “USA, USA!” The emotional responses conjured through word of Bin Laden’s death mobilized individuals to collectively organize their visceral responses. They harnessed a mutually affective realm of 9/11 memory through their collective grief. Discourses of ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ have become inextricably linked to the memorialization of 9/11 (see quotes on pages 11, 13, and 20). As these linkages become cemented, the geopolitical salience of emerging 9/11 memory scripts of

good and evil, and victim-perpetrator, are critical to growing 9/11 memory in the U.S. and abroad.

I argued in this chapter that exacerbated by processes of traumatic remembering, 9/11 possesses its own affective and visceral qualities with the power to unhinge linear notions of time and space. The following chapter connects the visceral memories emerging in the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks—embodied memories of loss, grief and vulnerability—to the formation of political subjectivities under the Bush and Obama administrations, sustained throughout the war on terror.



## **Chapter 4. Contrapuntal Memories? Remembering the Holocaust Post-9/11**

As Nazi tanks crossed into Poland in 1939, an American senator declared: ‘Lord, if only I could have talked to Hitler, all of this might have been avoided.’ We have an obligation to call this what it is—the false comfort of appeasement, which has been repeatedly discredited by history.

—President George W. Bush, May 15, 2008

During the 2008 U.S. presidential campaigns, comments made by President George W. Bush (above) equated Barack Obama’s advocacy for communications between the U.S. and Iranian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to the appeasement of Hitler at the onset of WWII (See Holland, 2008; Levison and Wolf, 2008; Doyle, 2008; Sidoti, 2008 as samples of this news coverage).<sup>45</sup> In the early months of the 2012 presidential campaign season, Republican Presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich similarly likened the incumbent President’s handling of Iran to appeasement, and characterized Iran’s nuclear ambitions as a threat against Judaism on a global scale (Gingrich and Huntsman, 2011).

For scholars of memory, the (geo)political importance of these exchanges should not be taken lightly. Given that President Bush made the above remarks in his address to the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israel’s statehood, and Gingrich spoke to would-be supporters in hopes of securing his Presidential-bid, underscore the significance of past collective memories in shaping present-day global affairs and political attitudes. Central to this discourse is the summoning of the Jewish Holocaust, which has played a definitive role in the fields of Trauma and Memory Studies in the West for the past half century (See Agamben, 1999; Edkins, 2003;

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<sup>45</sup> Additional comments were also made by Senator John McCain, May 16, 2008.

Huyssen, 1995, 2003; Till, 2005, 2006; Young, 1988, 1994; Felman and Laub, 1992; Caruth, 1996).

Although references to the Holocaust, Nazism, and Hitler have been pervasive in U.S. popular and political discourse since WWII (see Novick, 1999), the former President's and Presidential hopeful's comments highlight the shifting trajectory of cultural trauma, collective memory, and national security following the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in September 2001. Specifically, these political exchanges mobilize a new wave of Holocaust memory in a post-9/11 world.<sup>46</sup>

According to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, collective memory frameworks are products of present-day social structures and their corresponding concerns (see Halbwachs, 1992). Collective memories are shaped by and reproduced through the societies and social relations from which they arise. As collective memory scholar, Paul Connerton, suggests:

We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. ...present factors tend to influence—some might say distort—our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experiences of the present (Connerton, 1989, p. 2).

Memory carries with it traces of past temporal and spatial relations that manifest themselves in present times through such things as material artifacts or emotional tracings (See Gordon, 1997, on sociological haunting).

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<sup>46</sup> The characterization of the above political exchanges as a new wave of Holocaust “memory” is not an attempt to equate the rhetorical evocation of the Holocaust—and its inherent symbolism—with that of lived or experiential knowledge of the Holocaust. Rather, my aim is to show how articulations of the Holocaust *as* symbolic are ultimately tied to larger frameworks of lived and historic memory from which said rhetoric derive.

According to Halbwachs' and Connerton's frameworks, collective memory is an inherently social—and thus by extension—political animal; it is embedded in our institutions and social structures, created and recreated through performances, rituals, and the mundane acts of everyday life. In this chapter, I trace the post-9/11 rhetorical and discursive mobilization of Holocaust memory in the U.S. in order to understand its relevance in shaping politics, international policy, and cultures of commemoration since the 2001 terrorist attacks.

Building upon the work of Edward Said (1935-2003), Derek Gregory describes the *contrapuntal* as “networks through which people and events in different places around the world are connected in a complex, dynamic and uneven web that *both* maintains their specificity *and* mobilizes their interactions (Gregory et. al, 2009, original italics; also see Gregory, 2004).<sup>47</sup> My conceptualization of contrapuntal memory throughout this chapter highlights the distinctiveness of Holocaust and 9/11 memory cultures, while simultaneously suggesting that their creative blending in the contexts of the post-9/11 war on terror must be understood as a distinct creation.

This chapter addresses the decade-long spatial and temporal mapping of Holocaust memory throughout the United States as it converges with both the U.S.-led war on terror and the memorialization of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks at the World Trade Center. I have two goals. First, by drawing on key ideas within the geographies of memory literature as well as recent works in Memory Studies, this chapter traces the current mobilization of Holocaust rhetoric in U.S. political discourses as a yardstick for

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<sup>47</sup> In my own experiences within musical communities, contrapuntal is understood as the simultaneous movement of independent melodies to create a single sound. Unlike a musical round, where one melody is repeated at different times, contrapuntal movements are based on the ability of two distinct melodic lines to blend together in creating a unique musical expression.

measuring western values and morals domestically and in the war on terror.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, this chapter analyzes the revitalization of Holocaust memory-scripts by NS11MM staff members. I argue that holocaust memory serves as both a framework and point of reference for the formation of 9/11 memory underway at the World Trade Center.<sup>49</sup>

The connections between Holocaust memory frameworks and the memorialization of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks occurred in nearly every interview with senior staff members at the NS11MM.<sup>50</sup> As one senior staff member working on the museological portion of the institution commented:

I think they're very different events [the Holocaust and 9/11], and I would hesitate to analogize between them as historic events. But I think that they—both of the events were not tsunamis, they were not natural disasters, they were humanly perpetuated mass murders, although in different historical contexts and certainly at a different scale in terms of the Holocaust. But the fact is: human beings are capable of doing this. And so both [memorial institutions] ask a fundamental question, which is: Why? (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, December 8, 2011)

Another senior NS11MM staffer working on the memorial side of the project similarly brought up the Holocaust:

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<sup>48</sup> By western, I am referring mainly to Western and Central Europe and North America; however, the term also loosely encompasses other so called 'developed' or 1<sup>st</sup> world nations. In postcolonial studies, the term western (read: "Occident") connotes an amalgamation of states viewed as cultural and political opposites of the "Orient", namely Asia and the Middle East, Israel being a key exception (See Said, 1979, for more on this). I also posit values to encompass ideas such as freedom, individuality, democracy, etc, while morals are indicative to socially accepted behaviors and actions.

<sup>49</sup> As a sample of talks and lectures attended pertinent to this chapter: "A Space Within: The National September 11 Memorial and Museum," Panel Discussion. *The Center for Architecture*, New York, NY, 1 July 2009; "Memorial and Museum Program," Panel Discussion. *The Center for Architecture*, New York, NY, 13 September 2009; Charles Marmar and Adam Brown, "Constructing Memory and the Self after Trauma: A Cognitive-Neuroscience Perspective", Commenting: Alice Greenwald, Executive Vice President for Programs, Director of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. *CNRS NYU*, Memory and Memorialization Seminar, 18 February 2011. Also see Museum Planning Conversation Series Report, 2006-20011, *National September Memorial Museum at the World Trade Center*, now available online.

<sup>50</sup> Please note that Holocaust themes were only pursued if a research respondent mentioned it during our interview. These references often arose in response to interview question #8: In your time at NS11MM, have you partnered with any local or national organizations or Memorial Museums? If so, can you tell me about these partnerships and the kinds of collaborations they entailed?

I almost feel like they [the Holocaust and 9/11] are tied by tragedy. ...It is because of the senselessness of the deaths of these innocent victims. And there is a need to understand how one goes forward from such a tragedy, how does one—as a city, as a community—not only survive, but move forward in a positive way and yet not forget what took place (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, January 14, 2011).

References to past times and events are reproduced and mapped onto present-day memorial contexts in these and other similar statements. Respondents evoke Nazi-like levels of violence and Jewish-like suffering, mobilizing particular scripts of Holocaust memory throughout the commemoration of 9/11.

There are three nationally-dedicated September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial sites (in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Somerset, Pennsylvania). At each one, museum staff indicated that they have collaborated with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum during their initial planning stages.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, the museum site located in lower Manhattan employs several high-ranking staff members with previous work experience at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), or as Holocaust scholars. In addition, one of the exhibition design firms working on the museum's historical exhibition recently opened a museum in Skokie, Illinois devoted to the Holocaust. Even the World Trade Center master planner, architect Daniel Libeskind, claims credit for designing several memorials dedicated to the Jewish Holocaust, including the high profile Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany.

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<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that each of the September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial institutions has engaged with a variety of memorial museums and museological institutions throughout their initial planning stages. However, with that being said, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum--and the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum--are the only two memorial institutions that have been consulted with by all three of the 9/11 memorial sites. Given the theoretical limitations of this chapter, however, only the Holocaust connections will be addressed in detail at this time.

These examples suggest that the aforementioned memorial institutions have brought together the historical memory of Jewish annihilation in their aesthetic, logistical, and discursive framing of a national 9/11 memory. Likewise, the immediate circulation of Holocaust language in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, i.e., ‘Never Again’, and ‘We will Never Forget’, clearly conflates the temporal and spatial boundaries separating past trauma from present. Emotional and rhetorical associations between the Holocaust and the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> are thus continuously forged in the minds and psyche of the American public. In this chapter, rather than detail every singular memory convergence, I ask: why does 9/11 memory converge with Holocaust memory in particular?

As many Holocaust scholars have noted, the prevalence of Holocaust rhetoric within social and political circles is made possible through the creation and circulation of Holocaust meta-narratives and myths where past events of atrocity are used to explain or make sense of the present (see Novick, 1999; and Finkelstein, 2000 as samples of this scholarship). I do not attempt, by comparing 9/11 and the Holocaust, to equate the scales of these historically specific occurrences. Rather, placing the memories of these events side-by-side allows me to address the spatial and temporal re-mapping of these two distinct traumatic memories as they shape and are shaped by one another in the post-9/11, war on terror landscape. By proposing to study these traumatic memories as they map themselves over each other’s wounds—as the above framing begins to suggest—what kinds of emotional and political work would such a map do? Our ability to trace the trajectory of traumatic memories, and the spaces and temporalities they evoke and

reproduce, is imperative to understanding how certain acts of remembrance function (geo)politically in the present.

### **The Holocaust's 'Transnational Turn'**

Over the past decade, geographers have been increasingly theorizing the intimate relationship between memory, space, and place (see Johnson, 2005; Legg, 2007; Dwyer and Alderman, 2008; Till, 2005; Azaryahu and Foote, 2008; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2008; Hoskins, 2007; Hoelscher, 2008; Stangl, 2008). As shown in the introductory chapter, the presence of multiple temporal and spatial realms is a consistent theme within much of this literature. Geography has a stronghold in the theorization of the spatial and temporal traces of past memories in the re-production of present-day memory cultures and their commemorative topographies. Yet scholarship within the field has overwhelmingly relied on the national scale to ground its conceptualizations of collective memory.<sup>52</sup> Now, a significant body of literature emerging from the intersections of Memory and Holocaust Studies is shifting the scale of memory's 'spatial turn' from the nation-state to the transnational (see Assmann 2010; Bennett and Kennedy, 2003; Hebel, 2009; Gutman, Brown, and Sodaro, 2010; Assmann and Conrad, 2010; Hirsch and Miller, 2011; Phillips and Reyes, 2011; Creet and Kitzmann, 2011; Crownshaw et al., 2011).

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<sup>52</sup> This is not to say that geographers have limited their engagements with memory to that of the domestic or national scale. Although numerous texts detail various cultural sites and moments of memory-making in a variety of transnational contexts, the field, like Memory Studies in general, is slowly moving towards theorizing memory itself as an inherently transnational, or transversal process (important exceptions include: Legg, 2007; Till, 2005; ÓTuathail, 1996; and Hyndman, 2007).

In their groundbreaking study of cosmopolitan memory, authors Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2006) conceptualize the formulation of collective memories in relation to global flows of peoples, information, and ideas across space. They write:

Memories are shaped by national imperatives... While this [resulting] focus on national sites [read: places of memory] and commemoration is important, it remains confined to territorial conceptions of memory. It does not sufficiently take into account how global topoi are inscribed into local and national discourse (Levy and Sznaider, 2006, p. 9).

Refocusing studies of memory to “glocal” processes, the authors challenge traditional framings of memory that confine collective and cultural memory-making to the temporal and spatial boundaries and borders of the nation-state. The authors dispel nationally bound narratives of memory that depict past events, and their corresponding memories, as tied to certain topographies and their afflicted communities.

In thinking through constructions of collective memory as transversal processes, Levy and Sznaider mobilize Holocaust memory to reframe the scales of memory—individual, collective, and national—as being in flux. In the authors’ words:

We are studying not the historical event called the Holocaust but how changing representations of this event have become a central political and cultural symbol facilitating the emergence of cosmopolitan memories (Levy and Sznaider, 2006, p. 4).

The Holocaust is now a concept that has been dislocated from space and time, resulting in its inscription into other acts of injustice and other traumatic national memories across the globe (Levy and Sznaider, 2006, p. 5).

Here, Levy and Sznaider theorize collective memory itself as a *transnational* cultural product and project to conduct an analysis of Holocaust memory as it emerges throughout and across Europe, Israel, and the United States from the postwar years to the present-day.



As the past is re-membered in relation to contemporary happenings, Levy and Sznajder's formulations of Holocaust memory—historical and contemporary—are characterized by ongoing struggles over national sovereignty and human rights played out in the aftermath of war. Postmodernist political geographers John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gerard Toal (2003) similarly argue that present-day territorial conflicts are largely narrated through the circulation of past memories and their resulting subjectivities. They write,

In th[e] postmodern approach, international conflicts are understood in terms of the competing narratives or stories around popular memories that need repeated commemoration and celebration at sites of ritual or 'places of memory,' and groups invent or maintain identities by associating with particular places and the images such places communicate to larger audiences (Agnew et al., 2003, p. 4).

For example, in his influential text, *Critical Geopolitics* (1996), Gearóid Ó Tuathail (a.k.a. Gerard Toal) dedicates a portion of his analysis to the transnational circulation of memory discourses, particularly the deployment of Holocaust memory in relation to more contemporary acts of genocide. Interestingly, Ó Tuathail's theorizations of critical geopolitics lead him to reconstruct a genealogy of Holocaust memory during the 1990s as it is mobilized throughout the West.

In his chapter, "Between a Holocaust and a Quagmire," Ó Tuathail focuses on the violence in Bosnia. He attempts to understand the resistance by the U.S. government to categorize this geopolitical crisis as genocide, despite the efforts of some residing in the Jewish Diaspora. Ó Tuathail traces the deployment of the terms genocide and "ethnic-cleansing" to argue that scripts of Holocaust memory underscore the mobilization (or immobilization) of genocide to mark this particular geopolitical context (see also Assmann, 2010). Despite the mythical rescue narrative associated with U.S. intervention

in WWII (i.e., the U.S. as ‘saviors of the Jews’), Ó Tuathail concludes that the U.S. government mobilizes scripts of Holocaust memory when geopolitically useful. As historian Peter Novick similarly concludes regarding the Rwandan situation, “To acknowledge that it was a genocide would, in principle, oblige the United States, along with other signers of the UN Genocide Convention, to take action” (1999, p. 250). Therefore, in the case of Bosnia, the U.S. had to delineate Jewish genocide from Bosnian ethnic-cleansing in order to escape (geo)political involvement based on its own morally constructed grounds.<sup>53</sup> As Ó Tuathail concludes, “an ‘emotional’ Holocaust reading...had to be contained” (1996, p. 209).

The circulation and appropriation of Holocaust memory during times of geopolitical turmoil is made possible in part through the event’s representation as a universal narrative of easy-to-reduce, good versus evil binary politics. As political lines are drawn and redrawn in relation to more contemporary global occurrences, the rhetorical mobilization of Holocaust memory alleviates the potential for moral ambiguity (see Dean, 2010). Consequently, the universalization of Holocaust memory by other social groups has contributed to its polarizing effect in political and social debates. As Levy and Sznajder comment:

The current suffering of others must be made comprehensible, however; it must be integrated into a cognitive structure that is connected to the ‘memory’ of other people’s suffering (2006, p. 28-29).

For some, this [decontextualization/universalization] signals a trivialization of the Holocaust [and Jewish suffering]; for others, it opens the possibility of using its moral force to contend with contemporary political crises (2006, p. 53).

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<sup>53</sup> As Novick’s argument acknowledges, a similar logic can also be applied to the case of Rwanda where a linguistic distinction was made by the U.S. government demarcating ‘acts of genocide’ from genocide to evade involvement. Also see Levy and Sznajder p. 156-176, for their related analysis of Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo.

Representations of the Holocaust as an unprecedented display of violence aimed at a particular people are routinely challenged by the efforts of other social actors to expand the term to include other forms of cultural suffering and affect social change (again see Reich, 2005).

In his groundbreaking text, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009), Michael Rothberg addresses Holocaust universalization in the wake of the collapsing British and French Empires after WWII. Rothberg challenges a competitive model of collective memory, instead arguing for the *relational* production of collective memories, traumatic ones in particular. Here, Rothberg de-centers particularist interpretations of the Holocaust as exceptional to include other histories and cultural traumas in places such as North Africa and the Caribbean.

Reconceptualizing the rise of Holocaust memory in relation to global anti-colonial resistance movements and the rise of transnational social justice and rights-based discourses, the author reflects on the relationality of Holocaust memory to other cultural traumas rooted in global north/south dynamics.<sup>54</sup> As Rothberg notes, "...the Holocaust has enabled the articulation of other histories of victimization at the same time that it has been declared 'unique' among human-perpetrated horrors" (2009, p. 6). Rothberg's theory of 'multidirectionality,' much like Levy and Sznajder's 'glocalization,' redirects the formulation of Holocaust memory to its spatial and temporal convergences with other spaces and places of memory resulting in their mutual changing. "Multidirectional memory", according to Rothberg, "posits collective memory as partially disengaged from

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<sup>54</sup> See Levy and Sznajder 2010 for an analysis of the global proliferation of Holocaust discourse and its subsequent role in shaping other historical contexts and human rights abuses.

exclusive versions of cultural identity and acknowledges how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites” (2009, p. 11). Emerging efforts to reframe memory cultures as multidirectional and transnational within academic and activist settings are predicated on the basis of the Holocaust serving as a global moral compass in the wake of territorial and ethnic struggle.

I largely agree with Levy and Sznajder and Rothberg’s theorization of Holocaust memory as a global icon for negotiating other memory cultures and their corresponding traumas, particularly their foundational assessment of a transnational spatial shift within studies of collective memory vis-à-vis globalization. Yet I remain cautious about the authors’ theorizations of Holocaust memory as a rubric for navigating social justice in transnational contexts. My caution is due in part to their reliance on Holocaust ‘lessons’ as unquestioned, *a priori* models of virtue in the post-9/11 landscape. For instance, although Levy and Sznajder’s and Rothberg’s texts were published after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, their examples of a universal Holocaust memory and its global epistemic and political reach are largely directed at past events. That is not to say, however, that the authors remain ignorant of the limitations of transnational memory cultures as vehicles for creating ‘communities of justice.’ Indeed, when they do question the ability of memory to positively affect material and social change in both the present and future, all cite the post-9/11, war on terror context as a counterexample for its human and civil rights abuses in the name of inter/national security (See Levy and Sznajder, 174-176 and 207; Rothberg, 221-224 and 309-313). My analysis therefore both builds on and departs from these authors and their investigations.

Given the decontextualization of Holocaust memory across time and space in times of international uncertainty, the ability of traumatic memory to move and operate across borders, both material and psychic, in the post-9/11, war on terror context, requires careful evaluation. I now, therefore, turn to specific moments of Holocaust revival in recent U.S. history in order to trace the influential abilities of such collective memories in the transnational war on terror and its ensuing occupations.

### **Remembering the Holocaust post-9/11**

As Ó Tuathail's Bosnian and Novick's Rwandan analyses demonstrate, the mobilization, or immobilization, of Holocaust memory during the 1990s worked to justify geopolitical action and inaction by the U.S. However, in the years immediately following WWII, western states held a general disregard for the events of the Holocaust and its victims (see Levy and Sznaider, 2006; Novick, 1999; and Finkelstein, 2000). Over the next four decades Holocaust remembrance took on new meaning throughout Europe, Israel, and the United States as it was produced in relation to contemporary happenings.

The nationalization of Holocaust memory in Israel, for instance, was mediated by several historical events: the Eichmann trial (1961-1962), and the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 (See Zertal, 2005; Segev, 1991). These events shifted the role of the Israeli state in mediating Holocaust memory from avoidance to a 'victim-witness-protectorate' paradigm. As victims came forward to detail their experiences of atrocity during the trial of Nazi organizer Eichmann, for example, the state became an extension of collective witness and procured its role as cultural protector against future enemy threat.

The amalgamation of Holocaust memory throughout Europe and the U.S. was largely mitigated through Cold War geopolitics and post-war discourses of communist threat (See Levy and Sznaider, 2006, p. 112-115 and 124-125; Novick, 1999). As past discourses of Holocaust memory were mapped over discourses of geopolitical threat, issues of state sovereignty and security were transformed through the global impetus to remember, or forget, this traumatic memory.

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks, mobilizations of Holocaust rhetoric in U.S. political and public cultures have been pervasive (see Scott, 2008; Vognar, 2003; Freedman, 2002; “Nazi Atrocities”, 2005; Gosh and Dearborn, 2010; Zakaria, 2010; and Miller, 2010, as examples). In 2009, for instance, the political right compared the Obama Administration’s “nationalization” of health care to Nazi policies (See Grady, 2009; Thompson, 2009). Similarly, throughout the 2010 mid-term election campaign, conservatives and members of the Tea-Party movement circulated images of the U.S. President with a Hitler-like mustache to convey their disapproval for the Administration’s tax and health care policies (See Alter, 2010; Milbank, 2010).

The politicization of Holocaust rhetoric by elected officials is not reserved to the political right (See Eichler, 2008; Karpf, 2008). For example, Jewish Democratic Congressman Steve Cohen, equated the Republican characterization of the president’s health care law as a ‘governmental takeover’ to neo-Nazi propaganda (See “Democratic Senator”, 2011). In the Congressman’s words:

They [Republicans] say it’s a government takeover of health care, [which is] a big lie just like Goebbels [fabricated]. You say it enough, you repeat the lie, you repeat the lie, and eventually, people believe it. Like blood libel. That’s the same kind of thing. The Germans said enough about the Jews and people believed it—believed it and you have the Holocaust (qtd in Kari, 2011).

Backlash ensued from Cohen's remarks, but it did not necessarily critique his use of the Holocaust in this partisan context. Rather, people were critical of his polarizing rhetoric in the aftermath of a Tucson shooting that targeted Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. The context for his remarks also included a push for 'civility' among Washington elites. Such rhetoric, however, is commonplace: even Wisconsin's collective bargaining debates prompted Democratic protestors and union activists to liken the state's Republican Governor, Scott Walker, to Adolf Hitler (See Relative, 2011; Whitlock, 2011).

These characterizations do not necessarily aim to correlate the Holocaust with contemporary political squabbles; political rivalries are not equivalent to mass atrocities. Rather, the rhetorical mobilization of Holocaust narratives in political contexts aims to demonize whomever is targeted. These debates highlight the centrality of Holocaust memory in the U.S., and its ability to vilify political opposition and silence competing ideological viewpoints. This resurgence of Holocaust rhetoric in American political discourse also signals the event's continued salience in contemporary political life and public imagination (Also see Reich, 2005). Popularly understood as an American paradigm and symbol from which to understand human rights, the dangers of modernity, and the cruelty of humanity, the Holocaust is a powerfully evocative form of knowledge readily deployed across time and space.

Following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, U.S. and allied suspicion of Islamic and Arab governments has increased dramatically. In this post-9/11 context, the term Muslim has transitioned in popular/populist discourse from a religious identity category to a cultural pathology (read: Islam = terrorism). This transition must be contextualized within larger frameworks of cultural trauma and collective memory that incorporate both

the Holocaust and World Trade Center bombings (1993 and 2001). For instance, President George W. Bush's likening of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hitler at the onset of war, as described in the chapter introduction, can be traced to a particular set of geopolitics and policies related to the war on terror and U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East.

For example, Israel's post-9/11 border security is mediated within a contentious geopolitical environment regulated by military action against the state's Palestinian neighbors. This situation has intensified since Hamas' election in 2006. The pretext of protecting Israeli sovereignty and thwarting another genocide both preempts and justifies geopolitical action by Israel and the U.S. Here, Holocaust memory legitimates military action under the guise of protecting Israeli citizenry against (further) threat and vulnerability (for related arguments on U.S. financing, see Bhungalia, 2010; and Mohanty, 2011).

In her text, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (2005), Idith Zertal details historical shifts in the Israeli state's usage of Holocaust events and memories in both its founding and subsequent handling of border violence (also see Segev, 1991). At the onset of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, for instance, Israeli Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion, equated the Egyptian leadership to Nazis and the Egyptian state to that of a Nazi safe-haven (Zertal, 2005, p. 98-99). Contextualizing the conflict with Egypt in terms of the ongoing Eichmann trial, Ben-Gurion said:

When I listen to the speeches of the Egyptian President [Nasser] on world Jewry controlling America and the West, it seems to me that Hitler is talking. ...The Eichmann trial will help to ferret out other Nazis—for example, the connection between Nazis and some Arab rulers. From what we hear on the Egyptian radio, some Egyptian propaganda is conducted on purely Nazi lines. ...I have no doubt



that the Egyptian dictatorship is being instructed by the large number of Nazis who are there (Ben-Gurion, 1960, qtd in Zertal, 2005, p. 98).

The political remapping of Holocaust memory onto burgeoning Middle East tensions by the Israeli leader established a historical precedent for equating Israel's Arab neighbors to an external Nazi threat. This linkage, in turn, enabled Israeli nuclearification and geopolitical intervention in the region under the pretense of preventing a 'second Holocaust', and subsequently recast border agitation as neo-Nazi activity (see Segev, 1991; and Novick, 1999, for similar arguments).

The mobilization of Arab-Nazi comparisons during times of geopolitical conflict is neither a new phenomenon nor strictly a post-9/11 development. For example, during the first Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush equated Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait to the Nazi invasion of Poland.<sup>55</sup> Post-9/11, Holocaust discourses circulated once again as the Western press covered the 2003 capture of the former Iraqi leader Hussein's lawyer, Jacques Vergès (See "Nazi's lawyer", 2004; Paris, 2004; Gordon, 2005).

Hussein's lawyer was known throughout Europe for his role in defending Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie, and, as a result, the western media coverage of Hussein's trial made connections with Nazi criminal trials, including the infamous Adolf Eichmann trial (See Burns, 2005).

As past Nazi war crimes are temporally and spatially mapped onto present-day human rights violations, Hussein's conviction and eventual execution allowed familiar Holocaust scripts of good and evil, victim and savior to be played out and reproduced in the context of the war on terror. For example, as the threat of a nuclear Iraq and evidence of its weapons of mass destruction proved false, the discourse justifying American

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<sup>55</sup> As samples of this news coverage please see: McGovern, 1991; Katz, 1992; DiBacco, 1990; Schachter, 1991; Apple Jr., 1991.

intervention went from the defensive: “Shock and Awe”, to the humanitarian: “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (See Bruce, 2003; Coorey, 2003; Ullman, 2002; Hutcheson, Rubin, and Merzer, 2003; “A chastened end”, 2011; Keller, 2011; and “Operation Iraqi”, 2003). Thus, the rhetorical framing of the U.S.’s role in Iraq since March 2003 has shifted from that of inter/national security (read: anti-terrorism) to that of humanitarian intervention (read: anti-totalitarianism) and ‘democracy-building’—a change we continue to see in the post-withdrawal phase (See “Iraqi premier”, 2011).

Throughout his term in office (2005-2013), the former Iranian President also reproduced neo-Nazi memory-scripts post-9/11. Ahmadinejad was particularly vocal in the western media with his criticisms of Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands and peoples. However, the Iranian leader’s criticisms were regularly employed together with comments denying the extent of the Holocaust (see Marlowe, 2006; Lynch, 2009; “Iran’s Holocaust”, 2006). Western media frequently compares Ahmadinejad to Hitler, a trend exacerbated by his frequent nuclear threats against the Israeli state, i.e., Israel ‘should be wiped off the map’, or ‘Israel is a stinking corpse’ (For Ahmadinejad’s statements, please see Yoong, 2006; “Ahmadinejad: Israel”, 2008).

Without exonerating Ahmadinejad, or claiming that his statements are not antagonistic, I am interested in understanding how the rhetorical circulation of Holocaust memory in response to Ahmadinejad’s actions function as a screen-memory for global terrorism. The characterization of Ahmadinejad’s statement as a direct threat to the Israeli state becomes a justification for a preemptive military response to safeguard against another ‘terrorist-holocaust.’ As such, the exchange between Israel and Iran acts to solidify both traumatic memories, the Holocaust, and 9/11, in the global war on

terror.<sup>56</sup> How then does the Nazi-themed criminal conviction of Saddam Hussein, and the ‘Hitlerification’ of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and by extension, Iran, risk conflating particular trans/national scripts of the Holocaust with 9/11 memory through the U.S.-led war on terror, fostering discourses of right and wrong, good and bad, safety and insecurity in a post-9/11 world?<sup>57</sup>

As the literature on social memory demonstrates, memory-links forged across time and space are by no means coincidental or without geo-political significance. Mapping past histories of Jewish annihilation onto present-day, war on terror contexts centralizes discourses of Muslim and Arab threat and geopolitical in/security for both the U.S. and Israel. As a result, the re-narration of Arab-Nazi and Muslim-Nazi comparisons and connections can no longer be understood through a singular Holocaust memory framework in the post-9/11 world. Rather, in the war on terror ethos, discourses of geopolitical conflict, cultural trauma, and human rights must be understood through the dual framework of traumatic collective memory that has emerged between the Holocaust and 9/11 following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

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<sup>56</sup> It should be noted that my deployment of the term screen-memory is not limited to its Freudian sensibilities, i.e., the swapping of one traumatic memory for another in instances where the former—given its unreality—can only be accessed through its suppression vis-à-vis the latter, or the real. Rather, my deployment of screen-memory mirrors that posited by Rothberg (2009). According to Rothberg’s theorization, screen-memories move beyond the Freudian paradigm of conflicting memory where one traumatic event dominates, or wins out over the other. Screen-memory then is about relatedness and un/conscious remapping of memories throughout “network[s] of association” (Rothberg, 16). Consequently, my articulation of the term here is to conjure the *relationality* between these two memory cultures, the Holocaust and 9/11, in order to trace the conscious and unconscious re/mapping of the two throughout the global war on terror.

<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the Iranian state continues to be painted as anti-Jewish despite the succession of Ahmadinejad by Hassan Rouhani—a moderate with strong connections to the west and a supposed willingness to engage the U.S. and Israel on its alleged nuclear program. More so, post-9/11 tensions with Iran continue to be exacerbated by ongoing regional violence and border struggles, most recently in Syria—the Iranian regional ally accused of violating the Geneva Convention’s prohibition against chemical warfare. Talks of a possible U.S. military intervention in Syria are inundated with Holocaust scripts as they evoke the ‘U.S. as savior’ trope through the reestablishment of American authority to intervene in global human rights violations, and to shield Israel once again from threat.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the discursive framing of U.S. involvement in Iraq pivoted back and forth between anti-terrorism and establishing a democratic Iraq—one with respect for human rights and ‘individual freedoms.’ In the wake of massive political unrest following the questionable re-election of Ahmadinejad in 2009, discourses of democratic aspiration and human rights violations similarly moved center stage alongside those of national security as opponents called for geopolitical action against the Iranian regime (See Ostrovsky and Farzan, 2011; Gladstone, 2011; Fletcher, 2011). In 2012, however, escalating tensions between Israel and Iran reached a new high, reverting discourses of Iranian-threat to previous war on terror rhetoric as rumors surfaced in the global media connecting the regime to a Hezbollah-linked attack that killed five Israeli citizens in Bulgaria (see Kulish and Rudoren, 2012).

Given that both the U.S. and Israel classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization (see Goldirova, 2008), geopolitical action by the states is predicated on the conflation of past and present enemy threat. Here, Iranian aggression is dually narrated by the events of the Holocaust and 9/11, thus fortifying a military and emotional allegiance between the two states against anti-Semitic and pro-terrorism forces (similar logics are also deployed in Hamas-controlled Gaza, justifying embargoes and military aggression in response to mishandlings of Palestinian displacement). Therefore, given the direct implication of Iraq and Iran to both U.S. and Israeli security interests post-9/11, the mobilization of these particular Holocaust-derived memory-scripts risk further conflating Nazism, Islam, and terrorism, and thus mandating, or—more alarmingly—justifying geopolitical action against a ‘common enemy’ (read: Nazi = Terrorist; Terrorist = Nazi) (See Oza, 2007).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Please note that Oza’s essay also serves as inspiration for the title of this chapter.

Throughout this section, I have outlined the cross-border circulation of Holocaust memory within post-9/11 rhetoric. Here, the crosspollination of the two traumas serves to solidify a new trans-national memory culture between Israel and the U.S., and their ‘imagined communities’ (see Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; and Anderson, 1991). I now turn to the specific case of the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center (NS11MM) to understand its discursive framing of 9/11 memory in relation to the Holocaust. To make this argument, I employ qualitative data gathered at the NS11MM between 2009 and 2012, as well as participant observation conducted in lower Manhattan. As the memorialization of September 11, 2001 continues to unfold, it is imperative to understand how formulations of Holocaust memory are integral to framing institutional and public acts of remembrance at this historic cultural site.

### **Contrapuntal Memories?**

In an article in the *Buffalo News*, reporter David B. Caruso (2011) detailed architectural progress at the World Trade Center on the tenth anniversary of the attacks. The NS11MM was preparing to open the site to the public for the first time since the attacks with the dedication of its Memorial Plaza. According to the author, the opening of the memorial plaza marks the site’s reintegration into the city’s fabric, thus enabling the public to “close one chapter marked by mourning” (Caruso, 2011).

In his description of the Memorial Museum, which sits beneath the Memorial Plaza, Caruso likens the museum’s slurry wall to the Wailing Wall (2011): “The 60-foot-high slurry wall of reinforced concrete on the western edge of the site, meant to hold back the Hudson River, bears similarities in size and appearance to the Western Wall in

Jerusalem” (2011). The memorial museum’s slurry wall is one of the site’s pre-existing architectural structures that has been preserved for exhibition in the museum (see figure 1). The wall withstood the force of the Hudson from flooding downtown Manhattan despite being structurally compromised during the attacks. Since 2001, the story of the wall’s endurance has become a kind of 9/11 folklore, an analogy for the enduring American spirit and its ability to prevail amidst unspeakable violence and destruction.



Figure 1. Reinforced concrete slurry wall. Image taken by the author from inside the halls of the 9/11 Memorial Museum while under construction, February 18, 2011.

Although Caruso’s aesthetic comparison of the WTC slurry wall and Western Wall offers only an indirect evocation of Holocaust memory, it places the reader within the geography of the Middle East (Jerusalem in particular), connected to a site that is central to Jewish cultural and religious identity, amongst others—a major point of contention in the region. What, if anything, enables this reporter’s geographical and emotional connections across these two disparate places and times?

In discussing the emerging relationality between the Holocaust and 9/11 in my conversations with memorial museum staff members, overall responses can be categorized into three thematic areas: 1) relevance of past traumatic memories for the present; 2) constructing a memorial museum at the site of an atrocity; and 3) logistical

and operational issues, such as anticipated number of annual visitors and institutional size.<sup>59</sup> Given the theoretical interests outlined in the chapter, I will focus on the first two themes.

According to one staff member, the manifestation of the Holocaust in relation to present-day commemorative cultures occurs through a kind of spatial diffusion. In the staff members words:

I do think that as sort of a general principal, Holocaust memory has sort of set the playing field for contemporary collective memory studies and for the ways in which it is expressed. ...Somehow the way in which we even pay attention to mass trauma dates back to the moment of awareness of the Holocaust... ...And that's really the critical point in the social collective, where the Holocaust impact *begins to spread* (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, August 11, 2010, emphasis added).

As suggested by this staff member, the spatial and temporal diffusion of Holocaust memory has enabled it to become attached to contemporary places and memory cultures.

As the staff member continues:

In a certain sense, we live in a post-Holocaust world, and my sense is that—for better or for worse—everything else has largely been subsumed into this post-

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<sup>59</sup> For the record, the people with whom I have spoken with at NS11MM have been nothing less than gratuitous in sharing their experiences and thoughts regarding this project with me. This is not to say, however, that attaining this information was met without trepidation and garnered without difficulty, nor that information was always readily given. In fact, in some instances it was purposefully withheld and guarded; for example, my frequent requests to attend staff meetings were regularly denied. It should also be noted that it took over a year of phone calls and emailing (2008-2009) to procure initial contact with NS11MM, which included a visit to their offices in lower Manhattan, access to on-site collections, informal conversations with staff members, and a view of the site, which at that point was largely a construction zone. Additionally, it took securing two separate residency opportunities at NS11MM (2009-2010) to gain access to the site as a researcher and the eventual trust of staff members in order to begin conducting interviews in the summer of 2010—an opportunity that was only made possible by my fortune in impressing the institution's Chief of Staff while working on the Names Arrangement project in the winter of 2009. I owe much gratitude to those who allowed me access to their time and experiences, especially the staff members whom made my initial contact at NS11MM feasible and secured it in subsequent years. The aim of this research is not to point fingers at those entrusted to implement the difficult conceptual and logistical task of memorializing the dead and remembering the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, particularly given the violent, spectacular, and controversial nature of these events. Rather, my aim is to understand how 9/11 memory, like other collective memories, has a life of its own. Accordingly, this chapter aims to establish a critical snapshot of that life for the time being; however, what the 'life' of this memory will look like several years after NS11MM is fully operational is beyond the current reach of this chapter.

Holocaust construct. That doesn't mean there aren't differences, but it means that certain of the basic tropes of memory are connected to Holocaust memory (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, August 11, 2010).

Holocaust memory, according to this staff member, is a key template by which the memorialization of September 11<sup>th</sup> will derive. How this 'Holocaust-spread' will specifically be felt and implemented at NS11MM, however, is still largely being determined.

Over the course of my research at NS11MM, it came to my attention that several museum projects were inspired by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. For example, there was talk of an "age-appropriate" exhibition at NS11MM that would be modeled off of USHMM's "Daniel's Story."<sup>60</sup> There was also talk of possibly giving NS11MM visitors a 'take-away' item modeled off of USHMM's identification cards for those taken into custody by the Nazi regime. Such an item would be less about uncovering the fate of an individual at the WTC, but more about reflecting on life in general. More recently, NS11MM has been in the process of establishing a database of survivors. As one staffer describes this process:

One of the things that we are trying to work on right now is to create a survivors registry. How this event [9/11] defined survivors is obviously very different than how the Holocaust Memorial Museum defines survivors. But in terms of how they have reached out and worked with survivors groups, how they decided to create and facilitate a registry... There are some things and lessons learned from them [USHMM] that are parallel to how we would like to organize a survivors registry here (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, January 14, 2011).

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<sup>60</sup> 'Daniels Story' is an age-appropriate exhibition, narrated through the experiences of an unidentified child, only known as 'Daniel.' The exhibition, on permanent display at the USHMM, is geared towards young visitors with the intent of conveying the events and the history of the Holocaust without overwhelming, or traumatizing young museum visitors. As of 2010, the NS11MM's age-appropriate exhibition has been shelved, I am told, for financial reasons.



Similar to USHMM, survivors' stories will play an important role in shaping the visitor's emotional experience as they navigate the exhibition spaces at NS11MM. As a different staff member elaborates:

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which there are umpteen million lessons attached to—I think we all take our own lessons from it. The way they use their large artifacts is something we look at. The way they use their didactic materials...those are the things that we look at. For me, something that is very, very powerful is the survivor video at the end of your journey [at USHMM]. It offers an opportunity for the visitor to be kind of, um, uplifted in a way, but also to have the comfort of knowing that life goes on—even though some of the stories are pretty terrible. That's very, very powerful for me and we are also using a lot of survivor testimony here (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, June 2, 2011).

The above examples outline how USHMM models of commemoration and motifs of remembrance are being mobilized to affectively harness the emotional and, at times, aesthetic journey of NS11MM visitors. Further evidence of this can be seen in the latter part of the institution's mission statement, which reads as follows:

Demonstrating the consequences of terrorism on individual lives and its impact on communities at the local, national, and international levels, the Museum attests to the triumph of human dignity over human depravity and affirms an unwavering commitment to the fundamental value of human life (<http://www.911memorial.org/mission>).

Here, the visitor's experiential understanding of the memorial museum, at the site of the 'atrocities,' is grounded within a post-Holocaust, humanist ethos that reduces geopolitics to those who affirm life and those who do not. As one staff member offers in explanation of this uneasy reduction:

I think that the Holocaust is the closest thing anyone has seen to dealing with relatively recent traumatic loss. I think in some ways, on some level, it may be how the Holocaust ended. ... 'the Nazis were the bad guys.' And I don't mean for that to sound as trite as it does, but it was very clear, there was an enemy and the enemy was defeated (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, September 20, 2010).

This geopolitical nature of traumatic memory risks homogenizing multiple histories, geographies, and collective memories as the geographies of threat continuously shift throughout the war on terror.

Connecting the Holocaust to 9/11 creates a framework that conflates disparate histories of traumatic death and geopolitical ‘triumphs over evil’ across time and space. Mapping the Holocaust’s traumatic past onto the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, for example, recalls the deaths of 6 million Jews through the act of mourning 2,983 lives (See Freedman, 2002; and “Nazi Atrocities”, 2005, as examples). The simultaneous articulation of these memories equates the historical geography of Nazi Germany to that of the contemporary Middle East, thus analogizing the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks to Nazis, as in the remarks of the last respondent.

As the museum’s mission statement suggests, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 were felt broadly despite having occurred in very specific local and national contexts. Places of 9/11 memory are, as a result, no longer defined by their geographies, but rather their “affective affiliations” (see Gopinath, 2010; and Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013). As this fledgling ‘9/11 memory’ continues to take shape and move beyond U.S. borders, its effects remain uncertain.

## **Without Conclusion**

Part of what we’re telling when we tell this story is that 9/11 is everyone’s story— we’re making a museum that is very much coming out of the fact that it is all of our history. It’s not a story that happened 50 years ago in some other place. It happened at this site and it happened to all of us. And when we say all of us, we mean that globally. People are continuing to reconcile 9/11 with their everyday lives. ...9/11 is not over; the questions remain (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, June 2, 2011).

In some ways its [the Holocaust's] dual impact on individuals and on a larger culture that we are struggling with, or looking at here [at NS11MM]. The Holocaust happened to the world and it also happened to over 6 million individual people and their families, and I think that 9/11 has something of that kind of impact. It's hard because a lot of arguments can be made that terrorism happens everywhere all the time, and it's not that we want to say that *this* terrorism was more important, or more significant than other terrorism, but it certainly was felt incredibly broadly. I think that this allows 9/11 to rise into a role of being a forum for understanding what it is that people can do to each other. The Holocaust museum [USHMM] has taken that kind of turn in recent years, looking at genocide more broadly, and I think that this is something we may end up doing in the future (Personal communication, NS11MM staff member, October 15, 2010, emphasis in the original).

According to the respondents, 9/11 may become the next local-gone-global memory culture. Operating as the 'gold standard' by which future acts of terrorism are measured and mapped, 9/11 memory reveals the emerging hegemony and exceptionalism of U.S. trauma—something we have already seen in the Indian context after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which is now referred to as 'India's 9/11.'

The contrapuntal nature of global remembrances reveals that collective memories are not delineated by geographic boundaries. As such, our memories never act alone. As scholar Cathy Caruth characterizes trauma, "[it] is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another *place*, and in another *time*" (Caruth, 1995, p. 8-9, emphasis mine). 9/11 memory is vital to the geopolitical management and organization of traumatic histories—past, present, and future—in the post-9/11 decade.

The next chapter locates itself within a the post-9/11 'trauma economy.' Here, 9/11 memory operates as a dominant framework of trauma that conceals subaltern memories of violence, past and present, in the war on terror. This affective mobilization of traumatic memory is vital to the post-9/11 global order.



## **Chapter 5. Trauma Economies and the Biopolitical Amassing of Grievable Life: Towards an Arpeggio of Cultural Suffering**

In *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Naomi Klein (2007) outlines a form of economic liberalism bred in the aftermath of global crises. Opening her text with the auctioning off of post-Katrina New Orleans, Klein reveals the state's role in profiting from the exploits of human suffering to accumulate public-private capital investments and new market shares. As she describes, “orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disasters as exciting market opportunities [for redevelopment]” produces a political economy of “disaster capitalism” (Klein, 2007, p. 6).

Klein's conceptualization of disaster capitalism is grounded in what she terms “the shock doctrine”, or the “selling off [of] pieces of the state [read: public sphere] to private players while citizens were still reeling from the shock, then quickly making th[ose] ‘reforms’ permanent” (2007, p. 7). Designed to confound the economy and beat the bewildered population further into submission, this psychologically driven neoliberal mode of governance is the brainchild of Chicago school economist Milton Friedman (Klein, 2007). In Friedman's words, the role of the state is “to protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow-citizens: to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, to foster competitive markets” (Friedman, 1982, p. 2, qtd in Klein, 2007, p. 6). Here, state sovereignty and laissez-fair reasoning are linked in establishing both economic and political dominance vis-à-vis global capitalism.

Building upon Klein's conceptualization of shock, this chapter analyzes the rise of a post-9/11 trauma economy in relation to transnational frameworks of collective and

cultural memory circulating throughout the war on terror. Throughout the “War on Terrorism” for instance, the cultural trauma known as “9/11” has been mobilized by the U.S. state to conceal the amalgamation of state and market interests in waging military operations, buttressing the surveillance state, and demolishing civil and human rights, domestically and abroad. Here, disaster capitalism seizes upon moments of cultural trauma, or in Klein’s words ‘shock,’ to rapidly generate private profit and reestablish sovereign authority through inscription of the post-disaster social order.

In this chapter, I argue that the usurpation of American suffering and the mobilization of cultural trauma institute a post-9/11 emotional regime that allows for particular configurations of disaster capitalism. The social experience and subsequent management of 9/11 trauma is vital to both the reestablishment of the U.S. and economy following the attacks. As such, this chapter theorizes the affective mobilization of post-traumatic shock domestically—feelings of powerlessness, numbness, and vulnerability—to reestablish U.S. authority internationally throughout the global war on terror.

### *Post-traumatic shock*

At the end of WWI, medical and military practitioners identified in many soldiers returning from the battlefields what was then referred to as “shell shock” (Edkins, 2003, p. 1). Now formally referred to as the medical diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, shock is the body’s primary neurological and physiological response to externally traumatic events and experiences. Formally recognized by the American Psychology Association and introduced into the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1980, the emergence of PTSD signals the presence of past trauma within the psyche (Caruth, 1995). When directly exposed to the “threat of injury

or death”, or indirectly exposed to the horrific suffering of others, a person suffering from PTSD is likely to experience extreme feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, numbness, and vulnerability, resurfacing his or her ‘old wounds’ (Yehuda, 2002, p.108).

According to memory scholar Jenny Edkins (2003), trauma constitutes a rupture within the state’s otherwise ‘business as usual’ politics; it disrupts normative scripts of order and control conferred through sovereign rule, such as political rights, security, and safety. These moments of traumatic rupture, or “shock disorientation” as Klein characterizes them (Klein qtd in Smith, 2008, p. 583), produce fertile conditions for both social revolution and regeneration. The management of trauma is, as a result, essential to reestablishing sovereign power and neoliberal state control in the wake of disasters, albeit natural or man-made (Edkins, 2003, p. xiv; also see Perera, 2010). As Friedman himself confirms, “only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change” (Friedman, 1982, p. ix, qtd in Klein, 2007, p. 7).

According to Friedman’s logic, the ability of the neoliberal state to shift public perception, or enact major societal, economic, and political reform, is rooted in its ability to capitalize on trauma. As Klein echoes, “[I]t was clear that this was now the preferred method of advancing corporate [and state] goals: using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering” (2007, p.9). The deployment of trauma and its ensuing state of shock is imperative for imposing and maintaining disaster economies. As Klein puts it, “fear and disorder” are mobilized in crises as “catalysts for each new leap forward” (2007, p. 10).

Klein’s analysis of shock highlights trauma’s relationship to disaster capitalism. *Aftershocks* of trauma inform social consciousness under disaster capitalism. States

utilize post-traumatic stress to organize social, political, and economic reforms. The ascendance of these ‘trauma economies’ can be traced to states of emergency and coexisting neoliberal reforms spanning the past three and a half decades (see Klein, 2007). Importantly, this historical development also coincides with renewed interest in theories of collective memory and cultural trauma, and the appearance of transdisciplinary bodies of scholarship now formally known as Memory and Trauma Studies (see Caruth, 1995; Edkins, 2003; Greenberg, 2003).

Disaster capitalism exercises the transformative power of 9/11 and its ruin in two ways. Forged in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks as creative destruction’s conjoined twin, disaster capitalism regenerates the wounded economic and geopolitical reach of the neoliberal state through foreign contracts, transnational aid, and security markets. Disaster capitalism merges the neoliberal and imperial tendencies of the U.S. state by securing its role as the premiere benefactor of global terrorism through budding economies of war and disaster recovery. The post-9/11 disaster market also capitalizes upon ruin by the erection of causal economies of suffering and victimization.

In the post-WWII trauma economy, for example, collective memories of cultural suffering become forms of social cache. In the wake of massive geopolitical restructuring, states compete for global empathy and victimhood status (see Levy and Sznajder, 2009 and Rothberg, 2009). In these conjoined emotional economies, multiple histories of trauma—past and present—are recycled through Cold War and postcolonial discourses alike. These narratives become global commodities for states to ‘cash in on’ in hopes of setting the rate of exchange on cultural suffering.



As the previous chapter discussed, the transnational circulation of Holocaust memory has instilled the state of Israel with near-permanent victim status. Any geopolitical action taken against the Jewish state is reduced to a post-Holocaust rubric of anti-Semitism and cultural annihilation (see Finkelstein, 2000). Post-Holocaust frameworks of cultural suffering bolster Israeli military campaigns and dictate international aid—the lion’s share of which comes from the U.S. Simultaneously, collective memory justifies Palestinian occupation and rationalizes the ‘border conflict’ to the international community. As Holocaust scholar Peter Novick similarly concluded, “After the Holocaust, the international community had lost the right to demand that Israel answer for its actions” (Novick, 2001, qtd in Lim, 2010, p. 148). Collective memories of cultural suffering are powerful mobilizers of global power, empathy, and reckoning.

Following the attacks in New York City and Washington D.C. on September 11<sup>th</sup>, for instance, spontaneous vigils were organized across the country and throughout much of the world in a show of support for the afflicted communities and to pay tribute to the missing. It seemed as though a powerful moment for national reflection had presented itself to address questions of global inequality and U.S. foreign relations. As the world waited for America’s response, this moment was lost to figureheads and media pundits who instead chose to disseminate fear, anger, and retaliation.

In his address to the United Nations following the terror attacks, for example, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani expressed the following sentiments to an international audience:

The determination, resolve, and leadership of President George W. Bush has unified America and all decent men and women around the world. And the response of many of your nations, your leaders and people, spontaneously demonstrating in the days after the attack, your support for New York and

America, and your understanding of what needs to be done to remove the threat of terrorism, gives us great, great hope that we will prevail (October 1, 2001).

Guiliani mobilized the international support and empathy directed at the U. S. to cement the state's political alliances and dictate the conditions of its unfolding military agenda. The former mayor's comments both sanction U.S. military action in the looming war on terror, as well as undermine critical dissent domestically and abroad. These trends continue in the post-9/11 decade.<sup>61</sup>

Since the neoliberal and imperialist nature of the war on terror has been theorized substantially over the past decade (see Smith, 2001; Grewal, 2005; Kaplan, 2005; Roy, 2003; Gregory, 2004; Chomsky and Barsamian, 2005), this chapter concerns itself with what I argue is the second tenet of trauma economies: the relational formation of casual economies of suffering and victimization. In these "affective economies" (Ahmed, 2004), the value of trauma is established through its ability to structure how human beings are moved to act—or not—in the aftermath of catastrophe in relation to transnational narratives of suffering and victimization.

According to memory scholar Jie-Hyun Lim, victim nationalism is "a specific form of nationalism that rests on the *memory* of collective suffering" to establish national histories and identities along geopolitical axes of victim-perpetrator (2010, p. 139, emphasis added). As I have argued in previous chapters (see chapter 3, for example), the trauma of 9/11 is encoded in the visceral responses our bodies undergo as we are affectively moved by the remnants of ruin. In the post-9/11 trauma economy, for instance, the neoliberal state both generates and utilizes collective emotional responses to

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<sup>61</sup> Further evidence of this can be seen in the conflation of anti-war activists and whistle blowers with political traitors and terrorists (e.g. Manning, Snowden, etc).

underwrite both its capital and imperial ventures in the burgeoning economy of global terror. The affective nature of traumatic memory is vital to sustain trauma economies.

Since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, the synthesis of Holocaust and 9/11 memory secures an affective economy of cultural suffering whereby both allied states operate against a common geopolitical threat (see chapter 4). In this transnational economy of trauma, a geopolitical hierarchy of death is established in favor of western-dominated sites of trauma and memory (also see Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013). Within such logics, violence enacted against American or Israeli lives is conceived as inhumane and intolerable. Conversely, the deaths of Afghan, Iraqi, and Palestinian civilians, allies, or combatants, are neither mourned as are their first world counterparts, nor constituted as crimes against humanity. Third world deaths are morally and politically constructed as acceptable forms of retaliatory and preemptive violence, or, at best, the unfortunate cost of war. They become ‘collateral damage’ within the post-9/11 trauma economy (see Butler, 2004; and Hyndman, 2003; 2007).

As the two-state example demonstrates, self-referential anecdotes of victimization are propagated by both states to elide subaltern claims of U.S. and Israeli aggression. Here, the geopolitical stakes of collective memory and cultural trauma are concealed—or revealed—through Israeli and American state efforts to remember and forget violent pasts. As Cvetkovich echoes “...the amnesiac powers of national culture, which is adept at using one trauma story to suppress another. ...can be used to reinforce nationalism when [trauma is] constructed as a wound that must be healed in the name of unity” (2003, p. 16). Dominant discourses of cultural trauma and collective memory thus frame geopolitical actions and shape global attitudes in emerging disaster economies.

Klein argues that disaster capitalism works alongside declarations of emergency to produce a post-crisis “philosophy of power” (2008, p. 582):

I am talking about...using a crisis to limit democracy, to declare a democracy-free zone because it's a state of emergency [read: state of trauma]. ... The feeding-off of crisis and shock disorientation in these democracy-free zones and states of emergency challenges th[e] narrative [“that free peoples and free markets go hand in hand”] head on (2008, p. 583).

The *modus operandi* of the trauma economy is, as this quote suggests, more insidious than economic, political, social, or even legal control over traumatized populations. In the trauma economy, the jurisdiction of the state extends to post-traumatic shock and the management of collective emotion. I argue that this creates a ‘traumatic turn’ in governmentality.

I now employ political philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2005), and his theories of the state of emergency. Here, the biopolitical apparatus of the neoliberal state is rendered visible in the declaration of emergency following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, an act that simultaneously sustains and denies the initial injury and ascendance of a post-traumatic carceral regime, and its accompanying material and psychic realities. I theorize the amalgamation of sovereign, state, and market power, locating them at the creative intersection of emergency and exception in the post-9/11 trauma economy.

## **Trauma as Exception**

### *State of Exception*

In *State of Exception*, Giorgio Agamben (2005) defines his object of analysis as “a permanent state of emergency” with a “close relationship to civil war, insurrection, and resistance” (p. 2). Noted for their suspension of constitutional law, declarations of emergency are designated to protect the territorial state, its governing body, and

executive authority from further—or future—threat in times of national crisis.

Constitutional law becomes usurped by martial law as a state of siege replaces normative law and order (Agamben, 2005). The suspension of civil law produces a “state of exception”, a condition of governmentality whereby emergency rule is established as the normative function of the state and executive authority over a population (Agamben, 2005).

Agamben argues that,

The state of exception is thus not the chaos that precedes order but rather the situation that results from its suspension. ... chaos must first be included in the juridical order through the creation of a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, chaos and the normal situation—the state of exception (Agamben, 1995, p. 18-19).

To deter chaos the state subsumes crisis into its biopolitical apparatus of law and order. Sovereign power becomes wielded through the creative juncture of normative law and order and martial law. States of emergency, I posit, signify the inclusion of traumatic order at the very moment of its supposed exclusion. Changes to the state’s biopolitical structure in moments of crisis are, therefore, the consequence of this traumatic exception (also see Edkins, 2003).

### *Homo Sacer*

It is not a coincidence that Agamben’s analyses of the state of exception are grounded within the events of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks (2005) and the Jewish Holocaust (1995; 1999). In *Homo Sacer* (1995), Agamben locates the state of exception as the inclusion of the state of siege in the normative juridical order, which results in the categorization of bare life, or life outside of the rule of law, under Nazi rule. For

Agamben, bare life, or *homo sacer*, is a human life pushed outside the German law during the state of exception until it is abandoned by the state.

*Homo sacer* is “a life that may be killed but not sacrificed. His killing therefore constitutes...neither capital punishment nor a sacrifice, but simply the actualization of a mere ‘capacity to be killed’” (Agamben, 1995, p. 114). Fittingly, Agamben locates his spatial analysis of “bare life” in the Nazi death camps. Here, the biopolitical management of “life unworthy of being lived” is made tangible through the suspension of Germanic law to create “pure space[s] of exception”, otherwise known as the concentration camp (Agamben 1995, p. 138 and 134). Through such logics, Nazi death camps solidify “zone[s] of indistinction”, or spaces through which exceptional times—what I call ‘traumatic times’—and normative law and order become so integrated that emergency becomes the rule (Agamben 1995, 36-39).

The state of exception designates the inclusion of that which is to be excluded in order to maintain the territorial state and sovereign power. In the post-9/11 context, indefinite detention similarly denotes the inclusion of the state of emergency—of trauma—into the state’s normative order to create spaces beyond the jurisdiction of both constitutional and international law (also see Agamben, 2005, p. 3; and Butler, 2004, p. 50-100). When the state of exception was established in the United States in the weeks following the terror attacks, places like Abu Ghraib prison, Guantanamo Bay Cuba, and Fort Meade, Maryland are fortified to delineate the boundaries of life and bare life and to uphold the new judicial apparatus. The post-9/11 reincarnation of “bare life” may be understood here as the terrorist suspect or would-be supporter. Within the military prison or court—newly permanent fixtures of the social order—these bare lives are not only

pushed beyond state-based frameworks of civil rights, but are also abandoned by international conventions of human rights.<sup>62</sup> The state of exception reveals the present threshold of normative law and biopolitical life as governmentality passes into trauma-time, or what Agamben refers to as thanapolitics (1995, p. 122).<sup>63</sup>

According to Agamben, “the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death...[is when] biopolitics turns into thanapolitics” (1995, p. 122). Diverging from Foucauldian (1978) theorizations of biopower, thanapolitics realigns biopower with the sovereign and its authority to withhold or suspend political rights in order to enact death during states of exception. Agamben summarizes Foucault, noting that biopower occurs at the intimate intersection of birth and citizenship, or the place where bare life is transformed into political life through its inclusion into the political community (1995, p. 131). In thanapolitics, the opposite is true: biopolitical life is no longer arbitrated by the inception of citizenship alone, but by that which is excluded from it. As such, Agamben’s conception of thanapolitics is less concerned with the sovereign right to let live or let die. Rather, he is motivated by the vanishing point between the political and the apolitical, where the state attributes a life—or *death*—valuable, and where it does not.

I next explore this uneven politicization of life and death in the context of the post-9/11 trauma economy. Engaging the work of cultural producer Pritika Chowdhry and her installation *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011*, (see Figures 1-3) this section theorizes the biopolitics of cultural suffering. Here, disaster capitalism works in tandem with

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<sup>62</sup> This is even more alarming when one considers the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, 2011), which legally suspends the writ of habeas corpus for citizens and non-citizens suspected of ‘terrorist activity.’

<sup>63</sup> See Butler on “resurgent sovereignty” (2004, p. 52-56) in response to Foucault, 1978.

victim nationalism to impose hierarchies of cultural suffering that delineate biopolitical value along (unstable) geopolitical axes of victim-perpetrator.

In the post-9/11 trauma economy the biopolitical shift in governmentality from the management of life to the management of death, or thanapolitics, importantly relies on collective memory and memorialization to delineate bare life from ‘life worthy of living.’ I argue that global empathy is mobilized as a form of social capital to unevenly value life and death across disparate sites of trauma (also see Perera, 2010).<sup>64</sup> Disaster capitalism reinforces dominant “archives of trauma” (See Cvetkovich, 2003) and their corresponding narratives of victimization in the post-9/11 trauma economy.

### **Thanapolitics: the Biopolitical amassing of Grievable Life**



Figure 1. *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011*. Installation view, mixed media. © Pritika Chowdhry, 2011.

In her installation *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011*, feminist artist Pritika Chowdhry critiques the hierarchical formation of collective memory and cultural trauma as empathy is unevenly distributed across geographies of suffering. The scale pictured above holds

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<sup>64</sup> Empathy can be understood here in the following ways: first, as mode of emotional relationality; to have one’s feelings reflected within another. Second, empathy is a condition of emotional transfer, it allows the source of the initial emotion to emit that emotion onto others. Like all emotion, empathy is an affective form of knowing with the ability to both unhinge and manipulate collective sentiment (see Spellman, 1997; Code, 1995).



the 9/11 victim on one side and unknown casualties from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the other. Tilted in favor of “grievable life” (see figure 1), the scale visually affirms that experiences of suffering are not rendered equal, materially or metaphorically. Here, the weighted side of the scale favors the ‘9/11 victim’ and acts as an abstract, post-9/11 signifier of U.S. grief, global empathy, and ongoing state memorialization. Symbolized in the above image as a bar of gold, the 9/11 victim is worthy of remembrance, whereas the pile of unknown human carcass constitutes repayment for the crimes of 9/11 (see figure 2), but cannot be mourned or recognized as grievable life (see Butler, 2004).



Figure 2. “Bare life, aerial view.” *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011*. © Pritika Chowdhry, 2011.

Exhibited in Minneapolis, MN on the tenth anniversary of the terror attacks, *Ungrievable Lives* functions as a counter-memorial to September 11, 2001. Here, Chowdhry’s work is instructive in its aestheticization of Judith Butler’s thesis in her text *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004): “Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? What makes for a grievable life?” (p. 20). In the artist’s words, “the 9/11 victim has been eulogized and glorified to the point that they have become the gold standard of a grievable life... The piece in no ways tries to invalidate *any* kind of death...the piece only seeks to question that hierarchy of death” (Chowdhry,

October 2011, original emphasis). Disrupting discourses of U.S. exceptionalism that erase Iraqi and Afghan casualties from the post-9/11 trauma economy, Chowdhry's installation challenges the 'uniqueness' that codifies American victimization by reestablishing subaltern narratives of violence.

As I have argued elsewhere, subaltern memories "recover those memories...suppressed, removed, or denied entry from official national archives, or have otherwise been overshadowed by studies of memory located in the global North..." (Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013, p. 34, expanding upon Legg, 2007). In Chowdhry's installation, subaltern memory counters dominant narratives of September 11, 2001 to destabilize the largely U.S.-centric focus of the post-9/11 trauma archive. Here, subaltern memory highlights how U.S. victimization justifies the victimization of others in the so-called 'War on Terror.'

Following the terrorist attacks for instance, American grief continues to silence Afghan and Iraqi narratives of suffering, delimiting global empathy along first world-third world divides. Chowdhry's counter-memorial, on the other hand, locates subaltern narratives alongside U.S.-centric frameworks of memory and memorialization in attempts to disrupt the transnational dominance of 'American' victimization post-9/11.<sup>65</sup>

*Ungrievable Lives* also reveals the relational construction of strategic forgetting as disaster capitalism mobilizes 9/11 memory to generate an ethnocentric hierarchy of suffering that obscures competing narratives of trauma. The affective curation of cultural suffering and memory as extensions of disaster capitalism are, therefore, central to neoliberal frameworks of trauma.

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<sup>65</sup> The usurpation of non-American victims into the post-9/11 framework of cultural suffering also seeks to codify all 9/11-related deaths as an extension of the national project, despite the fact that victims were nationals of more than 80 countries.

As 9/11 memory reverberates throughout the post-9/11 trauma economy, it sets the bar for which histories of trauma constitute human suffering, and which are validated by global remorse. As Butler similarly writes,

Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable and grievable death (2004, p. xv)?

As such, Chowdhry's allegorical bar of gold, which is stamped to read: "One grievable life. 9.11.2001. Made in America, 2001. 1 of 2983" (see figure 3), denotes an emerging political economy of death and its relational exchange rate of human suffering. Thus in its commodification of traumatic loss and the labor that sustains it, such as the sewing machine and flag-making in the piece, the neoliberal state transforms death into its own biopolitical gains.

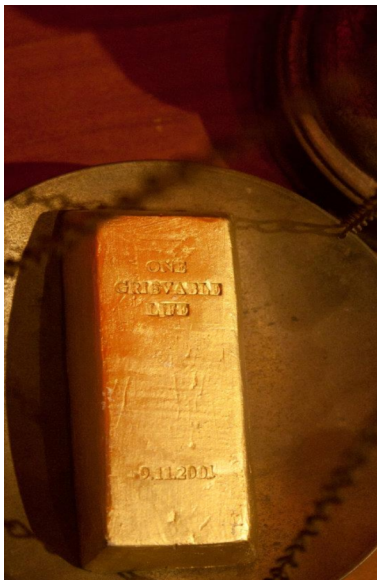


Figure 3. "One Grievable Life, 9.11.2001. 1 of 2983, Made in America, aerial view." *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011*. © Pritika Chowdhry, 2011.

The metaphorical strength of Chowdhry's installation hinges on its usage of a proverbial scale of justice to determine the value of death as it is remembered post-9/11. Following Agambennian theories of sovereign power and its ability to enact "the ban" on those excluded from political community (1999, p. 104-106), the 9/11 victim is constructed as an extension of sovereign power. Here, victims of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks experience corporeal death and immortality via their ongoing memorialization. Contrastingly, third world lives are not even granted access to the political sphere of life and citizenship, thus rendering their deaths invisible and forgotten. In this adaptation of disaster capitalism, made permanent by the declaration of exception, death becomes a commodity, more powerful than life, for acquiring global empathy and validating emergency rule. The politics of remembering and forgetting are central to the installation's critique of U.S. biopower post-9/11.

Building upon Agamben (1995), Butler addresses the biopolitics of death as certain lives are constructed as worthy, or unworthy, of social grief and political mourning, posthumously (2004). According to Butler, the production of bare life, or life unworthy of sacrifice, is mitigated through the gendered, classed, racialized, and sexualized hierarchies of global capitalism that dictate which bodies are worthy of remembrance and public grief throughout the new war economy (see Butler, 2004, p. xiii-xv). Through disaster capitalism's fabrication of first world-third world hierarchies of worth, third world deaths go unacknowledged in dominant narratives of history.

Feminist geographer Jennifer Hyndman also addresses this hierarchy of death in her analyses of body counts in the U.S.-led war on terrorism (2003; 2007). As the author states,

The deaths of militarized soldiers are officially counted, described, and remembered by the armies that send them in to fight and the families they leave behind, the deaths of civilians are not counted. Casualties might be thought of as masculinized (soldier) and feminized (civilian) sides of the body count ledger amassed by both official and unofficial sources. Although counting is an important device for remembering, it is also flawed in the way it transforms unnamed dead people into abstract figures that obfuscate the political meanings of the violence and its social and political consequences (Hyndman, 2007, p. 38).

Hyndman concludes that civilian body counts, or recording the number of non-military deaths in armed conflict, are abstracted, disembodied practices that fail to make the impact of war more tangible to unaffected populations (2007, p. 38). Furthermore, body counts fail to disrupt the geopolitical and biopolitical workings of the neoliberal state and its power to produce certain deaths—in this case Afghan and Iraqi civilians—as ungrievable in the war economy (Hyndman, 2007). Biopolitical constructions of life and death along gendered and racialized axes of value, such as American-Iraqi; first world/third world; soldier/citizen; combatant/non-combatant, remain unchallenged regardless of activist records to remember the forgotten.

The politics of remembering and forgetting maps the spatial apparatus of exception. To be forgotten is to be included through exclusion, like the figure of *homo sacer*. To be remembered is to be immortal—the realm of the sovereign (also see Agamben, 1999, p. 66-67). The ‘American’ lives memorialized and remembered by the U.S. state in places like New York City, Washington D.C., and Somerset, PA, are produced as an extension of sovereign biopower. The 9/11 dead, and their bodies, become phantom limbs necessary for collective grief and memory. In contrast, the lives of Iraqi and Afghan dead are necessarily pushed beyond the (bio)political reach of U.S. grief.

As Butler similarly postulates, “Is a Muslim life as valuable as legibly First World lives? Is our capacity to mourn in global dimensions foreclosed precisely by the failure to conceive of Muslim and Arab lives as lives?” (2004, p.12, emphasis in the original). In an effort to answer her own question, she states: “They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never ‘were,’ and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness” (Butler, 2004, p. 33). Accordingly, a life that cannot be mourned, as Butler’s comment seems to confirm, never existed. Those without access to a grievable life seem to suffer death on three accounts, physical death (death of the body), political death (to be forgotten), and ontological death (death of the person) (see Butler, 2004, p. 31-35).

As my analysis of *Ungrievable Lives 9/11/2011* demonstrates, the relational construction of memory and forgetting hinges upon the ability of traumatic memory to conceal and reveal certain geographies of suffering. In the context of the global war on terror, the post-9/11 moral compass has been calibrated to reflect dominant scripts of victimization and collective suffering generated by the American state. Here, the state mobilizes 9/11-ruin to manipulate collective emotion and enact violence elsewhere. The traumatic loss of the victims of the terror attacks and the ongoing suffering of their families is central to deployment and organization of U.S. biopower and its corresponding jurisdiction over the spaces of life and death throughout the global war on terror (see also Pain and Smith, 2008; Gregory, 2007).

According to trauma scholar Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma is relational. As the author explains, “[O]ne’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another...trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another through the very possibility and surprise of

listening to another's wound" (Caruth, 1996, p. 8). Trauma constitutes, in other words, the relational wounding of the self and other.

The collective memories of the events of September 11, 2001 are fundamentally informed by the traumatic intersection of self and other, East and West, past and present, memory and forgetting. In many ways, the terror attacks aimed to assert the 'subaltern voice' within contemporary discourses of suffering, albeit in brutal and violent ways. I conclude this chapter by turning to Jasbir Puar's text *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007) to address her engagement with what I refer to as subaltern memory as it operates within the terrorist body.

### **Conclusion: Trauma's Others and the Limits of Subaltern Memory**

According to Puar's conclusions, terrorist corporealities resonate across time and space (2007). As an assemblage the terrorist body is transformed by all that it comes into contact with. As a result, it transforms all that it touches long after it ceases to exist, biologically speaking (2007, p. 216–17). At a cellular level, Puar describes the process of the assemblage as an exchange: the intermixing of bodily parts and fluids as the terrorist's body explodes in fulfillment of its political mission (2007, p. 217). At the metaphysical level, the assemblage represents the transformation of the physical human body from an agent of life to a weapon—an agent of mass destruction—denoting the limits between life and death, blood and bone, human and machine (2007, p. 216–17). Terrorist corporealities change as they travel and reverberate across time and space, re-mapping particular sets of past events and historical conditions onto present-day and future geographies.

The terrorist assemblage extends its corporeality beyond death as a means to re-produce history (time), geography (space), and memory (time and place) in the future. Puar's theorizations of the terrorist body—in particular, the suicide bomber—suggest an analysis of subaltern memory post-9/11. Marked by the convergence of colonial and postcolonial ghosts, the suicide bomber is comprised of a desire to *re-member* past histories of trauma by inciting trauma within the present. This violent act aims to undo hegemonic forms of knowing and being, regardless of whether we agree with its methods. As Puar writes: “Suicidal resistance is a message inscribed on the body when no other means will get through” (2007, p. 218). The terrorist assemblage is, therefore, central to the transnational circulation of 9/11 memory throughout the war on terror. Specifically, the suicide bomber underscores the uneven boundaries erected between self and other, East and West, as memories of past traumas are revived, revisited, and recreated across uneven geographies of present-day trauma operating within the war on terror.

While I do not wish to conflate political acts of terrorism with the political act of self-immolation, the insertion of ‘subaltern’, which originates within Spivak’s analysis of Sati (1988), blurs this distinction. I also do not equate terrorist motivation with subalterity to justify terror and violence as a viable form of political resistance. I do, however, think that Puar’s notion of the terrorist, or queer assemblage, as a form of *political communication*—particularly when access to a political life is denied—locates a distinct starting point and springboard for future discussion of counter-memory and affect. Namely, it pushes us to re-theorize trauma and memory as biopower.



As Puar rightfully asserts, we live in queer times. The post-9/11 context demands that we understand queer times as an extension of the trauma economy. In this chapter I have argued that declarations of traumatic exceptionalism are central to the sovereign ban and its decision to let live or to let die. Here, sovereign power is no longer required to protect life as it once did. Rather, the sovereign aim is to shield from death, thus completing the metamorphosis of biopower into thanapower in times of trauma. As this defense strategy continues to be employed by the U.S. state in the post-9/11 decade, it not only procures post-traumatic stress as a normal condition of life under the threat of terrorism, but also modifies collective memory of cultural history.

Subaltern memories serve to remind how past times, spaces and places, haunt our present-day material and psychic landscapes. We must move towards a theory of traumatic memory not only as a physical assemblage of past times and places, but as a geopolitical affect that helps mediate our collective future. I locate the final chapter within the vestiges of counter-memory operating within the post-9/11 landscape. Here, counter-narratives of 9/11 memory are mobilized to cultivate non-violent archives of trauma in order to procure alternative political trajectories and landscapes of emotion.

## Chapter 6. Querying 9/11: Towards a Counter-Archive of Trauma

To speak to you, the dead of September, I must not claim false intimacy... I must be steady and I must be clear, knowing all the time that I have nothing to say—no words stronger than the steel that pressed you into itself; no scripture older or more elegant than the ancient atoms you have become. And I have nothing to give either—except this gesture, this thread thrown between your humanity and mine (Morrison, 2001, qtd in Greenberg, 2003, p. 1-2)

The self-awareness of the United States and the West changed shortly after 8:46 A.M. that clear September morning. On the one hand, the flow of time seems mechanical, as if perpetual and indefinitely divisible, a banal matter of record; on the other hand, an emotional stopwatch punctuates life with traumatic or near apocalyptic effect (Hartman, qtd in Greenberg, 2003, p. 6).

### Prelude

When news of a second plane hitting the World Trade Center flooded national media circuits, I was hundreds of miles removed from the event's epicenter and from my upbringing on the southern shores of Long Island. It was the beginning of my sophomore year of college and I had not spoken with my father, the only person I knew to be in any potential danger, in nearly four years.

*Memory: 19 years old. September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 was the six-month anniversary of my now (in 2013) twelve-year relationship with my same-sex partner. I remember watching the TV coverage in my college apartment, late for another meeting, when I jumped at the sound of the doorbell... Flowers from my girlfriend, a queer occasion indeed.*

My relationship with my father had dramatically unraveled several years prior to that sunny September morning as rumors of my same-sex attractions flooded our household, leading to the demise of our once tight-knit relationship and creating a literal division within our nuclear family.

*Memory: 14 years old. My relationship with another high school girl is the focus of my predominantly white, Catholic, suburban town. Teachers and students alike crowd us in the hallway watching, waiting to see if the two "dykes" are gonna*

*kiss before the start of class. Eventually the school administration, neighbors, and other 'concerned parents' convey news of our relationship to my parents. At first their reaction is mildly supportive despite an initial shock. This, however, would soon change.*

When I left for college at 18, I left home for good. Having spent my adolescent years devising a plan to emancipate myself, the opportunity I had prepared for had finally arrived. I embarked on the future I so desperately clung to with my sister's allegiance and my mother's fledgling blessing in hand. As for my father, although we actually never said goodbye, part of me now realizes that we already had.

*Memory: 15 years old. This house and body are prisons designed to betray me. His gaze follows everywhere... every gesture, every expression scrutinized for signs of treason. They barter with me for my freedom: your desires, your clothes, your hair, your friends... in exchange for mobility, bodily autonomy. The 24-hour surveillance is crippling, and, after a year of endurance, I cave under its weight and succumb to their demands. But the losses are real and run deep.*

The nature of this research forced me to examine a personal history of trauma that both underscores my relationship with the cultural event known as "9/11" and contributes to my understandings of queer politics post-9/11. Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, I spent four years estranged from a father who not only enabled, but also perpetuated sexual abuse as a result of my lesbian identification. Despite this intimate legacy of rejection, mistrust, and violation, when 9/11 happened, word that my father was unharmed compelled me to reach out to him via email. His response at the time, however, was more rejection. In the end, it would take another three years and his near-death motorcycle accident before we began to reconcile.<sup>66</sup>

*Memory: 27 years old. A queer professor tells me the story of a lesbian acquaintance who was sexually abused as a child. After 9/11, this acquaintance suffered from PTSD to such an extent that she socially withdrew and was barely*

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<sup>66</sup> Ironically, I learned of his accident while attending a screening of Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Strangely, when my cell phone rang that evening, I already knew.

*able to leave her apartment. “9/11”, the professor paraphrased, “brought this woman back to the space of her childhood trauma. When violence came to her own city, it was as if she was raped all over again.”*

## **Querying 9/11: Remembering Trauma in “Queer Times”**

### *Queering Traumatic Memory*

The affective mapping of traumatic memories beyond their geographies of origin is, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, a central temporal and spatial feature of trauma. As Cathy Caruth writes, “...the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance *outside the boundaries of any single place or time* (1995, p. 8-9, emphasis added). Traumatic memory is an affective form of knowing; it moves across time and space in a constant state of undoing and becoming.

My own memories of 9/11 are both comprehended in relation to and experienced through the wounds of previous trauma. Here, the traumatic experiences of collective loss associated with 9/11—losses of life, safety, world-view, and sense of self—evoke my personal experiences of trauma and loss. The metaphorical loss of my father and adolescence, and the trauma of sexual abuse have, as a result, deeply affected how I comprehend and theorize 9/11 as an affective archive of traumatic memory. By revealing the intersections of my adolescent past within the then present of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, my recollections confound the spaces of there and then, private and public, home and nation, self and other. Two traumas—one of sexual violation, the other of national violation—are mapped onto each other.

Over the past decade, feminist and queer scholars have addressed the sexual and gender politics underpinning the September 11th terror attacks and its ensuing “War on Terror” (See Gopinath, 2005a; Puar, 2004; 2005; Mohanty, Pratt, and Riley, 2008; Pettman, 2004; Eisenstein, 2004; Murdoch, 2005; Grewal, 2005). From the justification of military intervention under the guise of global ‘gender equality’, to the demonization of Muslim sexualities, the stakes for anti-racist queer and feminist interventions are high in the post-9/11 world.

After 9/11, for example, the proliferation of web images of a reconstructed World Trade Center giving ‘the finger’ to its attackers (analyzed in chapter 3), speaks directly to the gendered and sexual anxieties implicit within such acts of violence. Namely, the ability of a ‘foreign object’ to infiltrate and penetrate a nation feminizes its economic, military, and political power. Such knee-jerk responses to give the finger *back*, which came to fruition in the now notorious Iraqi prisoner “sex abuse scandal” at Abu Ghraib, mark September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 as a “trauma of national sexual violation” in the U.S. psyche (Puar, 2006, p. 69). The ‘finger’ image is entrenched within particular masculinist, queerphobic, and xenophobic responses to *forget* the sexual violation of 9/11 and reclaim it as a narrative of heteronational domination and vindication (see Micieli-Voutsinas, 2010).

This chapter seeks to *queer* the nascent archive of trauma fashioned from dominant, nationalist narratives of 9/11. By focusing on nonviolent responses to the events of September 11, 2001, this chapter advances counter-archives of memory with drastically different approaches to trauma. Within such archives, for instance, death and suffering are mobilized to promote intergroup dialogue and foster cross-cultural healing.

This chapter *queers* nationalist frameworks of 9/11 memory by using the work of 9/11 families organization Peaceful Tomorrows to posit narratives that resist post-9/11 cycles of violence.

In this chapter, queer functions as an analytical and methodological approach (Eng et al, 2005; Brown and Nash, 2010; Macke, forthcoming) for reading against heteronationalist framings of memory collected through this project.<sup>67</sup> Building upon the insights of LGBT studies and theorization of queer archives (Halberstam, 2005; 2010; Cvetkovich, 2003; Rawson, 2012; Morris and Rawson, 2013; Gopinath, 2005b; 2010; Puar, 2002; 2007), the mobilization of queer memory throughout this chapter is twofold. First, as a project of counter-memory, *queering* 9/11 engages archives of memory omitted from dominant, nationalist scripts of cultural memory.

As Halberstam (2005) argues in her text, *In a Queer Time and Place*, queer archival practices construct individual and communal memories outside heteronormative logics of reproductive life and institutions of social and national regeneration, such as marriage and family. Emerging through subcultural responses to memorialize victims of the AIDS epidemic, queer memory reclaims historical associations of queerness and those subjectivities deemed threatening to the ‘health’ of the nation through their tropes of death, disease, and brevity. Queer archives subvert conventional practices of commemoration that aim to normalize queer biographies through heteronormative frameworks of belonging, or what Halberstam calls, “paradigmatic markers of life

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<sup>67</sup> Heteronormativity refers to the compulsive societal preference for heterosexuality and a two-sex gender system to determine the range of normative sexual practices, desires, systems of kinship, gender identification, and expression. Rooted historically in Eurocentric paradigms of properly performing classed, raced, and abled bodies, heteronormativity is deeply entrenched within the politics of race, nationalism, and empire (see Mayer, 2000; Alexander, 2003).

experience—namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death,” thus erasing queer desire, relationality, and politics, posthumously (2005, p. 2).

Due to the employment of discourses of national service, sacrifice, courage, and unity, dominant accounts of 9/11 reinscribe national trauma through heteronational (and homonational) scripts of fraternity, community, and family. In his presidential commemoration speech outside the Pentagon one year after the 9/11 attacks, for example, President George W. Bush stated the following to an audience of military personnel, government officials, media representatives, and victims’ family members:

And though they died in tragedy, they did not die in vain. Their loss has moved a nation to action in a cause to defend other innocent lives across the world... At every turn of this war, we will always remember how it began and who fell first--the thousands who went to work, boarded a plane, or reported to their posts (Pentagon Memorial Ceremony, Washington, D.C., 11 Sept. 2002).

Here, familial grief is both folded into and conflated with national sentiments of loss and sacrifice, thus reducing victims’ deaths to the service of the nation as it reproduces hetero-patriarchal discourses of protectionism and militarism. As Mr. Bush explains amidst anthrax scares:

We have gained new heroes, those who ran into burning buildings to save others... Those who battle their own fears to keep children calm and safe... Those who voluntarily place themselves in harm’s way to defend our freedom... And tonight we join in thanking a whole new group of public servants who never enlisted to fight a war, but find themselves on the front lines of a battle nonetheless... How should we live in the light of what has happened? ... Above all, we will live in a spirit of courage and optimism. ... Courage and optimism led the passengers on Flight 93 to rush their murderers to save lives on the ground--led by a young man whose last known words were the Lord’s Prayer and, “Let’s roll.” He didn’t know he had signed on for heroism when he boarded the plane that day. ... We will always remember the words of that brave man expressing the spirit of a great country. We will never forget all we have lost and all we are fighting for (Atlanta, GA, 8 Nov. 2001).

The bravery exuded by everyday citizens and first responders is rhetorically mobilized

throughout the President's remarks to construct the aforementioned actions through tropes of normative paternity: self-sacrificing and protective. Here, the narration of heroism and sacrifice assists in politicizing the dead as extensions of the state's military apparatus. They become the first 'fallen soldiers' on the front lines of war.

The above criticisms are not directed at the actions of those who risked and gave their lives on 9/11 in order to save others, including those whose lives—and quality of life—have been severely impacted, even curtailed, by the events of 9/11. Nor do I wish to suggest that their actions should *not* be regarded as selfless and heroic; indeed they were both. Rather, I remain critical of the President's mobilization of their bravery, selflessness, and, for some, their sacrifice, to reinscribe and reinforce sovereign power in the aftermath of the attacks and to bolster an imperialist military agenda paraded here as collective grief. Furthermore, such attempts by the President to reestablish 'normalcy' and American political dominance continue to thwart any meaningful discussion of geopolitics, global economic disparity, and international policy that could contextualize and historicize the attacks.

The second aim of *queering* 9/11 is to unearth the biopolitical unfolding of 9/11 memory (see chapter 5) as it works to conceal (or reveal) other histories of trauma (such as colonialism and imperialism) and the role of the state—U.S. or otherwise—in producing them. In her text, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003), Jenny Edkins conceptualizes the management of trauma discourse as essential to reestablishing sovereign power and state control in the wake of disasters, whether man-made or natural. Trauma, according to Edkins (2003), constitutes a rupture within the state's otherwise 'business as usual' politics, disrupting normative scripts of order and control conferred



through sovereign rule, such as political rights, security, and safety (p. xiv). As the author explains,

Trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger (Edkins, 2003, p. 4).

Trauma occurs, in other words, when perceptions of identity are shattered.

According to Edkins' logic, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 shattered American notions of geopolitical might and the expectation of its citizenry for a life free from the violence of war.<sup>68</sup> Here, trauma reveals the biopolitical apparatus of sovereign power, rendering visible the mechanisms of the state through its *inability* to protect the citizenry from internal or external threat and vulnerability. As the author writes,

[T]he production of the self and the state...takes place at the traumatic intersection between peace and war, inside and out... Forms of statehood in contemporary society, as forms of political community, are themselves produced and reproduced through social practices, including practices of trauma and memory (Edkins, 2003, p. 10-11).

Consequently, *how* catastrophe is remembered, *if it is remembered at all*, plays a significant role in restoring faith in the nation-state and shaping national identities in the wake of traumatic events, as evidenced by Mr. Bush's usage of 9/11 to rationalize military action (also see Edkins, 2003).

The convergence of these two archives, the opening recollections of childhood sexual abuse and the correlation with sexual and cultural trauma, highlights the ability of patriarchal and national power to both inflict and thwart trauma. Here, the synthesis of both memories, the parent's ability to harm a child, and the nation's inability to protect its

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<sup>68</sup> Of course, such universal constructions of safety and of 'a life free from violence' are in and of themselves constructs designed to sustain contemporary modes of citizenship and state sovereignty. Consequently, the propensity for violence is dependent upon and mediated through multiple social factors, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, etc. to determine a body's 'risk' and proximity to violence.

populous, reproduces both archives as *queer* through a reversal of liberal logics. Trauma is already queer as it both reveals and constitutes a breach in the normative power of the state (or patriarch) to protect life and ensure safety. Queer practices of memory, therefore, thwart chronological and homogeneous narratives of cultural history that conceal the biopolitical management of traumatic histories and elude state accountability for legacies of trauma, past and present. Any project of *queering* 9/11 must account for subaltern histories and legacies of trauma because each violent archive affectively recalls another. As Caruth similarly argues, “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, ...history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (1996, p. 24). Consequently, *re-membering* 9/11 beyond the biopolitical narration of national history and cultural memory mandates traversing queer times and spaces.

### *Trauma in “Queer Times”*

“Queer uses of time and space”, according to Halberstam, “develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. They also develop according to *other logics of location, movement, and identification*” (2005, p. 1, emphasis added). As the author continues, “Queerness as an outcome of strange temporalities... [is] a place where...different histories ‘touch’ or brush up against each other, creating temporal havoc” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 1-2). As Edkins similarly posits:

The reinstallation of time as linear and the narrating of events as history are central to the process of re-inscription. However, there are forms of memory and memorialization (perhaps more aptly called ‘not forgetting’ rather than remembering) that do not produce a linear narrative, but rather retain another notion of temporality. ... Trauma time is inherent in and destabilizes any production of linearity. Trauma has to be excluded for linearity to be convincing... (2003, p. 15-16).

As both authors articulate, dominant narratives of history mandate linear frameworks of time. Here, the past is both chronologically and spatially distinct from the present. On the other hand, *queer*, or non-linear temporalities, result in archival encounters. Distinct histories of trauma reverberate across time and space to reshape the present and each other at the dramatic point of intersection. Trauma operates in a queer time and space; it moves counter to the state's linear, bio-reproductive unfolding of life under modernity. Likewise, queer time is traumatic; it is deeply entrenched in subcultural and counter-public responses to dominant histories of trauma. It is non-linear in presentation as temporal and spatial delay.

Non-linear time becomes a breach in dominant, nationalist archives of memory and memorialization. This breach mandates the exploration of queer “structures of feeling” and genealogies of knowing to imagine alternative futures (See Foucault, 1980; Benjamin, 1947). As Edkins’ insists,

Linear, homogenous time suits a particular form of power –sovereign power, the power of the modern nation-state. Sovereign power produces and is itself produced by trauma: it provokes wars, genocides and famines. ... By rewriting these traumas into a linear narrative of national heroism...the state conceals the trauma that it has, necessarily, produced. Resistance to this re-scripting—resistance to state narratives of commemoration—constitutes resistance to sovereign power (Edkins, 2003, p. xv).

Consequently, queering 9/11 is less concerned with “evidencing the ‘unarchivable’” (Rawson, 2012, p. 239) or subjugated histories of 9/11 (see chapter 5; Cvetkovich, 2011; Fadda-Conrey, 2011). Queering 9/11 serves to follow the “ephemeral and unusual traces” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 8) generated through traumatic recall, or queer time, in order to reveal affective affiliations (see Gopinath, 2010) that constitute the event’s relationality to other histories of trauma.

“Affect”, according to Cvetkovich, “is a way of charting cultural contexts that might otherwise remain ephemeral because they haven’t solidified into a visible public culture” (2003, p. 48). Jose Esteban Muñoz expands on this idea: “Ephemeral traces, flickering illuminations from other times and places, ... are sites that assist those of us who wish to follow queerness’s promise, its still unrealized potential, to see something else” (Munoz, 2009, p. 28, qtd in Morris and Rawson, 2013, p. 78-79). Queering the archives of 9/11 aims to imagine other narrative possibilities where divergent sites of trauma intersect to produce future archives of knowing beyond the state’s narration of historical memory.

The power of the nation-state to conceal, or reveal, certain histories of trauma, and to delineate past trauma from present, is central to the construction and maintenance of sovereign power, collective memory, and “imagined community” (see Anderson, 1991). Queering 9/11, therefore, attempts to reveal non-dominant archives of traumatic memory and the biopolitical economies they alternatively affect to remember forgotten pasts.

The decision to ground this chapter’s theoretical claims in relation to personal trajectories of traumatic memory is not an attempt to conflate the scale of these two disparate experiences and histories. Nor is it an attempt to claim grounds to some kind of a priori relationship to 9/11 as a result of ‘personal connection.’ Indeed, my own trajectory of queer escapism through higher education is conferred through a series of racial privileges and class maneuvers accrued through my family of origin. Indeed the tensions between my attempt to queer 9/11 memory as a radical political project and my propensity for homonationalism have underscored and heightened my political

sensibilities. I am acutely aware of, for instance, how LGBT sexualities are mobilized in the war on terror to conjure newer, ‘queerer others’ domestically and abroad (see Puar, 2007).

Building upon heteronationalism, for example, Puar’s notion of homonationalism upholds heteronormative values within the LGBTQ community (e.g. gender normativity, monogamy, marriage, etc) to position certain LGBT subjects as acceptable members of the national community, a shift that dramatically coincides with the post-9/11 landscape. Homonationalism assimilates normative LGBTQ identities into the fold of national citizenship at the expense of racialized, gender queer, and immigrant communities of color. In the author’s words, “At this historical juncture, the invocation of the terrorist as a queer, non-national, perversely racialized other has become part of the normative script of the US war on terror” (Puar, 2006, p. 67). No longer viewed as an immediate threat to the nation-state, certain queer bodies—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender—are now of value to the securitization of the state.

My position *to queer 9/11* is derived from this particular socio-political trajectory of U.S. domination and exceptionalism, mobilized in the present moment as xenophobic, racist, and queerphobic constructions of the ‘terrorist other’ (again, see Puar, 2007). The linguistic and political usage of queer throughout this chapter is contingent upon historical shifts in biopower circulating through the war on terror, and is therefore limited in reach and temporary in its efforts to eradicate violence in memory of 9/11. As such, the queer political project outlined throughout this section is designed to probe constructions of certain traumas as ‘queer,’ and thus related to sexuality, sexual rights, and LGBT identities, and others as not queer enough, relegated to the abstract realm of

geopolitics and devoid of mainstream LGBT activism (see Hochberg, 2010). The goal of this chapter is to critique the very notion of what constitutes queer politics, archives, and relationality post-9/11.

These ephemeral connections, contradictions, and moments of possibility continue to drive this project beyond its limitations, and challenge me to re-examine my own position within this matrix of identity, history, and memory. When I first began this project, my process of engagement was not one of discovery. Rather, through my own traumas, the project found me. And this is where I currently leave this project, arriving not at any one definitive answer or explanation, but rather at a beginning, a beginning for fashioning new meanings, definitions, political agendas, and relationships. It is in this spirit that I now address other important new agendas, relationships, and projects that emerge out of the collective trauma of 9/11.

### **Counter-Archives of 9/11: Towards a Peaceful Tomorrow**

According to Cvetkovich, trauma is “a central category for looking at the intersections of emotional and social processes along with the intersections of memory and history” (2003, p. 18). As the author explains, “trauma challenges common understandings of what constitutes an archive. Because trauma can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records at all” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 7). The material and psychic effects of trauma, therefore, often go unacknowledged in contemporary records. Subjugated histories of trauma are excluded from official archives through modes of forgetting, erasure, and silencing.

By theorizing trauma at the intersections of the state and LGBT publics, Cvetkovich's text maps the terrain of queer archives as a political project of "counter-memory" (see Foucault, 1984). As the author explains, "In the absence of institutionalized documentation or in opposition to official histories, [traumatic] memory becomes a valuable historical resource...in order to offer alternatives modes of knowledge" (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 8).

Foucault's notion of counter-memory buttresses Cvetkovich's queer archive in two ways. First, as a genealogical approach to historical memory, counter-memories underscore the oscillating movement of historical events and subjectivities. Rather than viewing the past as frozen or disassociated from the present, counter-memories disrupt linear narratives that view time as a linear progression, or the distancing of time through space. Counter-memories, as queer archival frameworks treat historical memory not only as physical assemblages of past times and places, but also as geopolitical affects that mediate our futures (see Micieli-Voutsinas, 2013). As Cvetkovich similarly attests, "The turn to memory is also a turn to the affective or felt experience of history as central to the construction of public cultures" (2003, p. 37). Secondly, Foucault's counter-memory seeks alternative accounts or interpretations of the historical record, which, in true poststructuralist form, become a critique of the quest for knowable truths. For Cvetkovich then, queer archivists must attend to the delicate interfaces emerging as past and present-day trajectories of trauma intersect to fashion new meanings of cultural history and collective memory.

In their related essay, "Queer Archives/Archival Queers," Morris and Rawson (2013) articulate queer archives as processes of remembering that make visible those

lives and desires otherwise marginalized, or erased from dominant narratives of history. Accounting for institutional silences and state “crimes of...homophobia and heteronormativity”, queer archival practices navigate forgotten histories and modes of un/knowning that resist the state and its power to write history (Morris and Rawson, 2013, p. 78). Although their analyses are rooted within LGBT publics (also see Sedgwick, 2003; Halberstam, 2005; 2011; Eng et al, 2005; Muñoz, 2009; Rawson, 2012), Morris and Rawson’s theorizations, much like Cvetkovich, forge openings to shift the trajectory of queer archival practices beyond the politics—and publics—of sexuality. According to Morris and Rawson, “[Q]ueer is not interchangeable with lesbian, gay, or homosexual; instead, queer implies a broad critique of normativity along many different axes of identity, community, and power” (2013, p. 75). As Rawson further notes, queer archives are “nontraditional, anti-institutional, and ephemeral” (2012, p. 239).

Alluding to the transitory and temporary knowledges generated by and produced within queer archives and archival encounters, queer trauma becomes redefined to include histories, identities, and modes of remembrance that exist outside of dominant narratives of belonging and state practices of producing historical memory.

For example, in her article, “Archive, Affect, and the Everyday: Queer Diasporic Re-Visions,” Gayatri Gopinath defines queer archival encounters as emotional attachments to peoples and places “outside [of] a logic of blood and kinship” (2010, p. 167).

Grounding her analysis of queer (diasporic) memory in the aesthetic practices of diasporic visual artists, Gopinath offers additional avenues for theorizing contemporary archival practices outside of the temporal and spatial confines of the nation-state and its linear, unidirectional notion of history (also see Levy, 2010).



Despite their divergent histories and geographies of origin for instance, varied memories of displacement are both considered and constituted relationally within Gopinath's queer archive. As past traumas of exclusion are forgotten, they are also affectively recalled through their associations with other bodies, geographies, and time-spaces, in the work of visual artists. Here, the aesthetic interplay of visual cultures in locating past memories of displacement alongside present-day experiences is conceived to unleash and recall a series of past-present connections. The distinction between past and present time-spaces becomes blurred, however momentarily. Situating queer memory as counter to the nation-state's bio-legal-patriarchal organization of bodies and borders, Gopinath's queer diasporic archive unearths affective ways of knowing and feeling socio-cultural displacements as they are aesthetically reconstituted in the work of visual artists, potentially changing future meaning altogether.

The queer archive (of feeling) rendered tangible throughout Gopinath's analysis of queer memory emerges as an affective mode of entry into the emotional economies of trauma constituted between our memories of "places, people, [and] things." It "conjures other times and places, other landscapes both physical and psychic, and other relationalities and affiliations that are deemed excessive or irrelevant within the conventions of the [nation-state's] official archive" of historical memory (2010, p. 184–85). Queer archival practices seek, therefore, to connect seemingly unrelated geographies, histories, and subjectivities through acts of traumatic recall.

I now turn to September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows (PT), the only organization of 9/11 family members actively organizing to create counter-archives of 9/11 memory. Resisting dominant narratives of 9/11 that uphold nationalist tropes of

victimization and militarism, Peaceful Tomorrows offers queer modes of memory-making in its connection to silenced histories and alternative narratives of suffering. As PT member, Andrea LeBlanc describes the organization's uniqueness,

The focus of other 9/11 groups has been very different... It's been about memorials; it's been about what to do with remains... compensation, legal assistance, insurance, grief and trauma counseling for partners and families. In my mind all of these groups have essentially formed, or did essentially form, around an inward-looking focus. I see them as circling the wagons and taking care of the needs of a victimized community. Peaceful Tomorrows was about looking outwards (Personal Communication, PT, February 8, 2013).

### *Towards a More Peaceful Tomorrow*

Peaceful Tomorrows derives its namesake from the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows" (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). Comprised of approximately 200 family members, and inspired by histories of non-violent activism, the organization is staunchly opposed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the erasure of constitutional and international human rights law throughout the war on terror (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). In its commitment to 'outward thinking,' Peaceful Tomorrows invests its resources in turning collective grief into peaceful action (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). To accomplish this goal, the organization spearheads several political campaigns, including efforts to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and confront Islamophobia domestically and abroad.

I was fortunate to secure interviews with several of the organization's founding members in the spring of 2013 and to learn more about the organization's history, its membership, and political campaigns through members' experiences. According to founding member Colleen Kelly, "our mission [at PT] is about nonviolent response to violence" (Personal communication, PT, January 28, 2013). As Ms. Kelly expands,

The themes of justice and nonviolence are really important to our organization... Our family members were murdered in a pretty horrific way and they suffered greatly, so there must be accountability for the perpetrators of those acts. So then how do we [as a nation] bring justice where we are not continuing cycles of violence? We are conditioned in the U.S. toward violent responses... It was very tough to think outside that box in those early months after September 11<sup>th</sup>, but I do think it is important to find voices, family members or not, who are saying that non-violence is a valid response; it is valid because it includes justice and it includes accountability. There are ways to have accountability without injuring others and creating more grieving families (Personal communication, PT, January 28, 2013).

Offering alternative responses to pervasive cultural sentiments, Peaceful Tomorrows is dedicated to the non-violent and legal pursuit of justice for victims' family members. Through PT, 9/11 families mobilize their grief in resistance to dominant, nationalist discourses of cultural suffering that endorse military intervention and human rights abuses as the principal response to violence.

Themes of justice and non-violence resonated throughout my interviews with Peaceful Tomorrows. Members described seeking alternative dialogues and political spaces to challenge prevailing cultural responses to the terror attacks. As founding PT member Terry Rockefeller recalled of her initial experiences with the organization,

With Peaceful Tomorrows there was such a sense of kindred spirit... To have 9/11 families say, "Please don't kill other people", it was just astounding. ... I hurt so much from 9/11 that I couldn't imagine hurting other people. It was a visceral feeling. It was this visceral sense that 9/11 had been—I just kept visualizing bombs falling on a family in Afghanistan and it was just like a plane hitting the World Trade Center. It just seemed like repeating this horrible thing... It would be repeating it, and it was exactly the wrong thing to do. (Personal communication, PT, February 7, 2013).

In describing her politicization of 9/11 as a visceral response to the impending war with Afghanistan, Ms. Rockefeller redirects trauma in an important maneuver to think—and, perhaps more importantly, feel—beyond dominant, state discourses of loss, suffering, and vindication. Here, visceral memory compels the research informant to re-member her

own grief and pain, which in turn leads her to speak against those fostering public emotion as a weapon to inflict suffering elsewhere.

PT member, Robyn Bernstein echoes this observation, saying, “one of the tenets of Peaceful Tomorrows is that other people do not experience the tragic loss of life that we did, the civilian cost of aggression and war... We organize to raise awareness and to stop other people from having that experience” (Personal Communication, PT, February 12, 2013). In other words, by challenging geopolitical hierarchies of victimization that value the suffering of Americans over those residing elsewhere (see chapter 5), PT families resist state practices of memory and memorialization that both normalize their losses and politicize their pain as worthy of retribution and other acts of national aggression.

The abuse of cultural memory continues to justify military action and the suspension of law by the state to enact post-9/11 human rights violations and the unlawful use of torture and military intervention abroad. Justifications operate—as my interviewees stressed—on the backs of 9/11 families and their loved ones. As PT member Andrea LeBlanc offers,

In the early years people were silenced. They were accused of being anti-patriotic if they said anything. So much has been said over the years about not respecting those that were killed on 9/11, and PT members just bridle with that. The position we take [at PT] gives others permission to actually embrace—to believe what they already believe (Personal Communication, PT, February 8, 2013).

The responses of the United States government to the attacks have, as a result, become key points of contention for Peaceful Tomorrows’ political organizing. The primary way that Peaceful Tomorrows contests dominant, nationalist archives of 9/11 memory is through their mobilization of familial grief, trauma, and loss to construct a collective

future beyond retribution. The strength of their message stems from the organization's unique voice *as* family members (Personal Communication, Nancy Meyer, PT, March 15, 2013).

As prevailing scripts of 9/11 memory continue to produce a culture of xenophobia and habitual fear (see Pain and Smith, 2008), the United States is locked into what I theorize as a post-traumatic loop of violation and vengeance. Thinking—and feeling—beyond this loop is imperative if we as a nation are to truly envision a more peaceful tomorrow. To contribute to such efforts, Peaceful Tomorrows learns from other groups and organizations dedicated to healing from cultural trauma. As Ms. LeBlanc eloquently summarizes, “Talking and getting to know the ‘other’, and being open to the story of the other side, is the only way things are going to change” (Personal Communication, PT, February 8, 2013).

The remainder of this section addresses the political alliances and counter-archives of trauma fostered between PT and its partnering organizations. In these archives, personal and cultural trauma is mobilized to deflect grief and suffering elsewhere, as well as to heal across difference. Although several partnerships were mentioned throughout my interviews with PT, I focus here on those collaborations mentioned most frequently (for a full list of partnering organizations, please visit their website).

### *Parents Circle*

Prior to its founding on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002, Peaceful Tomorrows was contacted by several organizations. Among the first was Parents Circle, an organization comprised of both Israeli and Palestinian parents who have lost children to the ongoing occupation

and its ensuing conflict. According to Yitzhak Frankenthal, the organization's founder, "if we, who have lost our dear ones, do not seek revenge and hatred but reconciliation—so can anyone" (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). Echoing sentiments of Peaceful Tomorrows, Parents Circle organizes politically from a place of pain and loss to break future cycles of violence. The organizations partner through workshops and speaking engagements to share their experiences in order to counter scripts of victimization that foster and justify ongoing cultural violence by both the Israeli and U.S. states in the name of bereavement (see chapter 4).

### *Institute for Healing of Memories*

Located in Cape Town, South Africa, the Institute for Healing of Memories (IHM) was founded by Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican anti-apartheid activist who, because of his political work against the apartheid government, was victim to a letter bomb that left him severely disabled (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). According to Peaceful Tomorrows,

Father Michael's work assists faith communities in the process of healing the psychological, emotional, and spiritual wounds of violence. His ministry in South Africa addresses the ongoing trauma from the apartheid period, and he also travels the world to work with communities seeking to emerge from violence and injustice to nonviolence and just relationships (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013).

As founding PT member, Colleen Kelly recalls of her first interaction with Father Michael:

I met Michael in April of 2002 and he's the first person who said to me (we were both speaking at a conference about forgiveness in memory), "you can't forgive your brother's killers." And this is after I met him for about two minutes... And I looked at him like, "well you have some nerve?!" [laughs] He then went on to say, "Your brother is the only one who can forgive the people who actually murdered him. The only thing you can forgive is how this has affected you and the path of your own life." And I know that that sounds like it should be self-

evident, but it's not! Because when you've been harmed, the instinct is to go after the people who have harmed the person that you loved; you take it on as your own stuff. I think one of the most important things when it comes to memory and memorializing is realizing both individually and collectively what is yours—what is yours to heal from and what is yours to let go, and what is *not* your responsibility. It's not about forgiving the perpetrator and getting over it. It's really about your own healing and what you need to do to heal yourself. And sometimes that involves forgiveness [of others] and sometimes that involves forgiving yourself (Personal Communication, PT, January 28, 2013).

By placing trauma survivors in conversation through the organization's transnational networks, the Institute for Healing of Memories provided Peaceful Tomorrows with an organizational blueprint for approaching victimization from a place of survival. They demonstrated a willingness to engage others' trauma and bring their stories into individual and intercultural healing processes. Ms. Kelly recalls the collaboration, which included organizing public events and speaking engagements:

We were new, we were a younger kind of fledgling organization, and here were people who had kind of gone through this before us and said, "No, this can be done. It's important that our voices be heard because not everyone wants revenge or wants violence, or wants to respond in the way that the world might think. There are alternative narratives to be heard." So they [IHM] were another really good example for us as our group was forming... It was really helpful to know that there are other groups that are going down this path. Many people have led the way for Peaceful Tomorrows and showed us very concrete examples of how to do this differently. Gave us permission to do that. (Personal Communication, PT, January 28, 2013).

### *The Never Again Campaign*

The Never Again Project (NAC) was one of the first organizations to reach out to Peaceful Tomorrows after it formed in early 2002. NAC was founded in 1985 through the collaborative effort of Japanese and U.S.-based peace activists to share the stories of a-bomb survivors and educate others on the civilian, psychic, and environmental cost of atomic war. Since 2002, the organizations have partnered on anti-nuclear initiatives and

a “person-to-person” speaking campaign that places survivors of the a-bomb in conversation with global audiences (Peaceful Tomorrows, 2013). The project began as a way to place perpetrators and victims of trauma in conversation with each other in order to promote intercultural healing.

One of Peaceful Tomorrows’ strongest collaborations, The Never Again Project, brings the transformative power of trauma to the very heart of 9/11 memory at the World Trade Center. Since the 2001 terror attacks, the World Trade Center has become notoriously associated with the expression “Ground Zero.” The term’s evocation is rooted within post-WWII discourse, particularly the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the U.S. military (see Greenberg, 2003). The cultural usurpation of the term, however, has neither addressed U.S. past or present wrongdoing, nor has it sustained meaningful conversations on cross-cultural forgiveness as a result of shared, albeit dramatically different, experiences of violence.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, several scholars argued against the uncritical mobilization of the euphemism “Ground Zero.” They engaged the issue as a missed opportunity to address the U.S.’s role in producing cultural suffering and mobilize around the opportunity for national reflection and global healing (see Greenberg, 2003, and Kaplan, 2005, as examples). Rather than evade U.S. responsibility for the horrific violence of atomic warfare, the collaboration between PT and NAC has placed survivors and members of the perpetrating nation in direct contact in order acknowledge this shameful past, as well as foster cross-cultural healing for past and present events. The counter-archive created in partnership by these two organizations aims to reinscribe



subaltern narratives of history and memory, self and other, and to produce alternative futures.

### **Conclusion:**

As this dissertation has argued, trauma is visceral. The biosocial responses we undergo as a traumatized culture are dictated by the emotional landscapes from which the post-traumatic order is derived. Thinking and feeling beyond these dominant structures require, therefore, the acknowledgement that structures of feeling are socially, politically, and economically sustained. For instance, as the example of Peaceful Tomorrows shows, resistance to state narratives of memory and practices of memorialization that both normalize traumatic loss and politicize collective grief in the service of national aggression is possible if and when we listen to the wounds of another. As one PT member puts it:

You know, time changes things... you can choose to heal or you can *choose* not to. It's a choice that we all make, it's a [political] struggle. It is only as time goes on and that there is some kind of a healing process, or a whatever kind of process you want to call it, that people are able to look at things differently and see a different narrative (Personal Communication, PT, January 28, 2013).

While much of this research has addressed collective and hegemonic forms of memorialization, the power to heal individually and collectively from traumatic occurrences resides within ourselves. In the end, how we as a culture choose to heal from the events of September 11, 2001, (if we in fact choose to heal at all) will require us to hear counter-narratives of history, memory, and of ourselves. We will have to put these stories in conversation to work and move towards a more peaceful, more honest, tomorrow. Toward this end, this chapter has offered a counter-memory and queer

archival alternative to ongoing memorial processes within sites of 9/11 memory throughout the United States.

## Rummaging Through the Wreckage: Conclusions

Our lives are not our own... From womb to tomb our lives are bound to others, past and present. And by each crime, and every kindness, we birth our future (*Cloud Atlas*, Tykwer, Wachowski, and Wachowski, 2012).

Propelled by a desire to understand how trauma functions as a post-9/11 psychic regime dynamically shaping cultural history, collective memory, and political subjectivities, this dissertation contributes to three areas of research. First, it analyzes the emerging discourse of 9/11 memory in relation to the event's memorialization at the World Trade Center and throughout the Northeast. Here, the dissertation theorizes collective memory as spatially and temporally dynamic at nationally-dedicated sites of memory. Meaning at these sites is negotiated through transnational discourses of grief and security, victimization and suffering, circulating throughout the war on terror. To this end, I propose a multi-scalar, transnational approach to traumatic memory in the post-9/11 landscape, thus contributing to contemporary debates on transnational constructions of collective memory, which no longer delimit memories as place-bound.

Although much of the geographic literature on collective memory continues to focus on the socio-political and metaphysical construction of *place* through memory (see chapter 2 as an example of this), this dissertation makes a significant shift in focus to the construction of *memory* through place. Such a maneuver allows for the unhinging of memories from physical environments and affixing them to the non-linear temporalities and polymorphous spatialities of traumatic memory. Here, places of memory—and memories of place—constitute “affective attachments” (Gopinath, 2010) with one another as memory travels between local and global archives of trauma.

As my analysis of “contrapuntal memory” (Said, 1978) in chapter 4 highlights, one never engages trauma alone. Building upon the spatial and temporal frameworks of traumatic delay for example, chapter 4 underscores the re-construction of one traumatic event in relation to another. As such, the second contribution of this dissertation is sustained attention to the affective spaces emerging *between* traumas.

In the emerging archive of trauma at the World Trade Center, for example, the rhetorical mobilization of Holocaust memory assists in the logistical and emotional framing of 9/11 memory beyond the United States. Here, the political salience of this particular memory convergence produces an emotional landscape in favor of dominant scripts of memory and trauma circulating globally post-9/11. By deconstructing geopolitically hegemonic narratives of memory and trauma, I mobilize critical geopolitical theorizations of the nation-state (chapter 4 and 5), queer deployments of affect (chapters 5 and 6), and feminist theories of emotion and embodiment (chapter 2 and 3) to navigate post-structural ideas of power, knowledge, and discourse.

I draw upon queer theories of affect and archive in Chapters 5 and 6 to articulate counter-hegemonic examples of trauma that disrupt normative frameworks of victim-perpetrator operating geopolitically. Attention to queer spatialities and temporalities enables understandings of 9/11 memory through emotional attachments and visceral pulls to subaltern archives of memory.

This dissertation also maps what I term ‘visceral memory,’ an affective form of collective memory-making that focus on the emotional reverberations of violent pasts as they are encoded within, and felt, at sites of memory. Visceral memory acknowledges the transmission of traumatic memories through bodily sensations derived from

encounters with memorial environments. Building upon the innovative work of feminist geographers (Pain and Smith 2008; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010), the arguments throughout this dissertation explore the geopolitical potential of mobilizing viscosity in the post-9/11 context to manipulate the ‘social body’ to feel collective emotion.

In chapter 2 and 3, the management of collective emotion is central to state responses to trauma. Reestablishing the post-9/11 order requires the state to reassert normalcy in the aftermath of traumatic events. The state does this in part by narrating cultural memory in order to ease social fears and anxieties over the nature of disastrous events and corroborate their meaning. Establishing a locus for collective blame and organizing collective grief are central to the politics of reconciliation. As I argue, however, this of course is never satisfied as grief is enduring, the manic response to a wound that does not heal.

The third and final contribution of this study is my outline of an emerging ‘9/11 Industry.’ According to Norman Finkelstein’s (2000) seminal text, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, the cultural impetus to remember is political by nature. As Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu concur, “What memories are ultimately made visible (or invisible) on the landscape do not simply emerge out of thin air” (2008, p. 161-162). As such, the creation of any cultural memory mandates an understanding of its geopolitical cache and affective power. Here, memories of traumatic suffering are not only mobilized as a geopolitical strategy (chapter 4), but as an emotional economy of worth (chapter 5).

### *Future Rummaging*

As 9/11 memory continues to unfold and evolve with the 9/11 memorial museum opening to the public in May 2014, what remains to be seen is how collective memory will be mobilized in the future to frame domestic and global events. Future research directions thus mandate engaging the work of 9/11 memory in transnational contexts. In the 2013 debates about whether the international community generally and the U.S. specifically should intervene in the Syrian civil conflict, for example, commentators returned repeatedly to post-9/11 engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. They debated the degree to which the Syrian situation was distinct or a continuation of the global war on terrorism.

Prior to Syria, President Obama's address on the Libya civil uprising in March of 2011 described U.S. military intervention against the Qaddafi regime as humanitarian after enacting a 'No Fly Zone.' Citing delayed responses to past humanitarian crises, namely Bosnia, the President announced that: "Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to *atrocities* in other countries. United States of America is different. As President, I refuse to wait for the *images of slaughter and mass graves* before taking action" (28 March, 2011). Here, Mr. Obama's usage of key Holocaust terminology, including atrocities, images of slaughter, mass graves, summon Holocaust memories and U.S. rescue narratives in particular, without explicitly mapping Hitler onto Qaddafi. However, the President's implicit analogy between the humanitarian crisis in Libya and the murders perpetrated during the Jewish-Holocaust continues to legitimate post-9/11 memory-scripts that equate Arab-Muslims with neo-Nazis within the broader war on terror context.

In his opening statements, for instance, Mr. Obama highlighted the U.S. military's role in Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to its mandate to "go after Al Qaeda all across the globe" (28 March, 2011). By equating his decision for geopolitical action in Libya to U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq,<sup>69</sup> the President's rhetorical rationale for U.S. military action against Qaddafi functions as a kind of preemptive security measure aimed at containing the double threat of (Arab-Muslim?) terrorism and avoiding another humanitarian (Nazi?) crisis.<sup>70</sup>

Lastly, the precarious case of India and Pakistan looms largely in the post-9/11 trauma economy. For instance, in the hours following the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, Indian authorities immediately blamed the country's northern neighbor, Pakistan. Since that time, the events in Mumbai have become known throughout the Indian subcontinent as 'India's 9/11.' The discursive move to frame the Mumbai attacks in relation to the events of September 11, 2001 revives Hindu-Muslim tensions in the region. It also aligns neo-liberal, Hindu-dominated India with the U.S. and Israel through the shared perception of Muslim terrorism (see Oza, 2009). The post-9/11 trauma economy thus fosters a new transnational archive of trauma, solidified through scripts of remembering September 11, 2001, the Holocaust, and Indian Partition throughout the war on terror.

This is further evident in a press statement made by the President of the NSI1MM

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<sup>69</sup> As an aside, it should be mentioned that the President also addressed U.S. military involvement in the nuclear disaster cleanup efforts in Japan.

<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that in the Libyan case, the civilian cost of "humanitarian intervention" has produced more civilian deaths than those cited in the initial "crimes against humanity" for which intervention against the state's leader was deemed necessary (See Claudia Gazzini, "Was the Libya Intervention Necessary?" *Middle East Report*, 261, Winter 2011). Similarly, the U.S.'s intervention in Iraq has produced somewhere between 100,000-130,000 civilians casualties, according to IBC estimates, and although Mr. Hussein's crimes are estimated upwards of 800,000 over his 25 year reign, he was only officially convicted of 148 deaths prior to his execution. Consequently, the question remains whether the civilian price for these 'humanitarian interventions' were worth it to those communities most impacted by the violence.

extending his sympathies to the families affected by the Mumbai attacks on behalf of the Memorial Museum and its extended, “imagined community” (J. Daniels, Personal correspondence, December 1, 2008; also see Anderson, 1991).

As the trauma of 9/11 continues to reverberate throughout the disparate geographies of the global war on terror, subaltern archives are essential to resisting dominant narratives of suffering, locally and globally. The theoretical maneuver to situate subaltern memory as counter-hegemonic to dominant narrative of 9/11 is not an attempt to claim that the subaltern—a specific anti-colonial site—possesses or produces “authentic” and, thus, “liberatory” memory. Any theory of “subaltern memory” in the post-9/11 landscape must centrally locate the various ways in which memories, even those deemed “resistant” to dominant narratives, can and do work in the favor of present-day neocolonial, postcolonial, and imperial practices of inclusion-exclusion (e.g., Bacchetta 1999; cf. Ong 1999). Nor is it to claim that the subaltern is closer to the metaphysical and thus more “prone” to affective or emotional realms of being. Rather, the discursive yoking of subaltern and “counter-memory” (see Legg, 2007), I argue, aims both to de-center U.S. exceptionalism post-9/11, as well as theorize the affective practices of counter-memory circulating across transnational archives of suffering. Studies of collective memory must theorize across ostensibly unrelated locales in order to understand the relational production and affective process that occurs as memories, particularly traumatic memories, are recalled across time and space.



## **Epilogue:**

### *Beyond Wounding, Trauma after 9/11*

Conducting this research has brought me closer to my father and the spaces of my childhood in more ways than one. When I began conducting research on the World Trade Center memorial in 2008, I relied on my father and his work contacts at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to procure my access to NS11MM staff members. It was the second email I sent to him after the 9/11 attacks. Conducting research in New York City also required utilizing my parents' house as a temporary residence to save on research expenses. I spent more time 'at home' while conducting dissertation research than I had since I left home for college at the age of eighteen.

In April of 2012, my father came to Syracuse to meet my seven-month-old daughter Paisley for the first time. It was also the first time he had come to visit me without my mother. We were sitting down at the dining room table just finishing up from lunch when I decided to pull out my digital recorder. Neither of us realized it at the time, but my father was about to become a research informant and 'officially' enter my study. I placed the digital voice recorder in between us and began recording.

The conversation that transpired at my dining room table addresses several of the themes presented throughout this research. But most importantly, it asks the reader to contemplate what it means to live beyond wounds and wounding, beyond just surviving. The following is a transcript of our conversation.

JMV: When was the last time that you went to the World Trade Center?

TM: The last time I went to the World Trade Center? The World Trade Center has been gone a long time.

JMV: I know, when was the last time you went there?

TM: When did it go down, 2001? I would say sometime in 2001 I was there.

JMV: How frequently were you there?

TM: About once a month, I'd go to a meeting.

JMV: What kind of meetings?

TM: The World Trade Center was the PA's [Port Authority's] corporate headquarters. Whenever they were doing big business, they would host them at the World Trade Center. So any big business that we were doing with the airlines, and at that time, 2001, we were doing business with American Airlines. Uh, they were gonna build a billion dollar terminal. We were just starting negotiations with Jet Blue; they were also going to build billion dollar terminals. So whatever airlines it had happened to be, that's where we would host those things.

JMV: They were in what, in building 7? Port Authority?

TM: Port Authority is One World Trade Center.

JMV: That's the north tower.

TM: One World Trade Center. And they had floors on the 63rd and 83rd floors--they had a whole bunch. Of course, we also ran operations in that building, too.

JMV: What do mean, "operations?"

TM: Port Authority took care of the air handling systems in the building, the refrigeration plant in the building, which were all underground, below the building. And operations: people to open the doors, to get the workers in to fix the--you know, get the workers out there, get the contractors to work. They would have an operational staff there, too. So, we manned that building, and we probably had--I don't know how many people actually worked in the building on any given day, but we probably had several hundred.

JMV: PA People?

TM: Yeah, and we still own the property.

JMV: I thought the PA sold it?

TM: We never sold it to Silverstein, we leased it to Silverstein. He's got one of these like, 25-year leases on the properties.

JMV: So what does that mean?

TM: Well if you build a terminal in say, John F. Kennedy airport, you have to lease that property from the Port Authority. We lease it from the city. Okay, so who really owns the property, say, in the WTC, is the city. Including Kennedy airport. Now we lease it from them. We get a 99-year lease from the city. They used to be relatively cheap and in the last few years they've gotten re-negotiated for higher dollars, but back in the old days--in the LaGuardia days, the old mayor days--those leases were like a couple million dollars. Now the leases are like 400 million dollars. So things change, everybody wants their money. And each building is leased. Now, we can sublease portions of that property if we want. So we built the World Trade Centers--Port Authority, with Port Authority money, built all of the World trade Center, the whole complex. At the time---

JMV: What was the goal of it?

TM: Real estate was the goal of it. At the time, and it was a venture away from our original goals, cause our original charter was for ports. We ventured away from it by building real estate, but the city forced that on us--they wanted us to do that. So we built the World Trade Centers. It cost us a billion dollars to build them and that was in the 70s.

JMV: And were you working there at the time?

TM: No, I was not there. When I was there, they were all done. Matter of fact, when you go to have your job interview in the Port Authority, you go to the World Trade Center. When you go to the Port Authority, when you start your job in the Port Authority, you gotta go there for pictures, medical, and they gave you--they used to give you tickets to the windows of the world, free. It was a freebie, now that you're an employee. That was up on the 101st floor or something. But it was a treat, they gave you a treat. In any case, Port Authority owned and operated those buildings just like they own and operate the airports and the tunnels and bridges, and they lease out portions. Those negotiations are what I got involved in. But I didn't get involved with the negotiation of the lease, I got involved with the negotiation of the utilities.

JMV: What does that mean?

TM: Well, it's like your house. Your house has utility systems in it. You have an electrical system, you have a water system, you have a heating system. If one day you decided to rent that front room, you may want to tell that tenant: "You gotta run your own utility systems, bring your own systems in. I'm gonna *cut you* from the existing systems and you bring in your own, this way you pay your own bills." Alright? So, that's something that---that's how the port authority runs theirs. And a lot of leasings, especially in Kennedy--in the airports, those buildings are operated by the airlines that are

buying them, or leasing them, or building them. Of course they revert back to the Port Authority after 25 years, the buildings, and the utility systems was my negotiation—that was my specialty—the utility systems. Then I got so involved that, whenever there were lawyers who had utility issues, in the Port Authority (the Port Authority had a staff of lawyers), I would get invited to these depositions, in the WTC, legal depositions, and I was the expert of the utilities for the Port Authority.

JMV: What exactly was your job title?

TM: What was my title? I was the Manager of the Utility Maintenance Systems.

JMV: So that's PA-wide?

TM: Aviation-wide. Just the airports: Newark, LaGuardia, JFK

JMV: When you had to travel to the WTC from Kennedy, did they fly you?

TM: Years ago, we used to fly all the time. Whenever you wanted to go to the WTC, a helicopter would land in the backyard of the building where you were working. They'd pick you up and drive you right to the heliport. The heliport's right next to the seaport on the water there. South Street Seaport, it's right next to it. Port Authority has a heliport there. So they would fly you there, pick you up with a van, drive you to the WTC, and then when you were finished, drive you back to the heliport and helicopter you back. Now, we abused that so much that I always used to tell everybody a story about when I first started in the Port Authority. [John F.] Kennedy airport had to take care of the heliport, but they didn't have a maintenance staff there, and I was a plumber for the Port Authority when I first started, so I would go over there and they would say, "Listen, I got some leaks, you need to come over here." So, like any good plumber you put your tools together and you try to put some parts together, and you go there. And they would fly me there. So, I would go to the heliport, and I would go to their bathrooms, and I would tell the guy—the guy who was in charge of the heliport—"ah, shit, I need a washer. I ain't got it here." And he would say, "Oh don't worry about it." They would take me on a chopper, bring me back to Kennedy airport, pick up the washer, fly me back to the heliport—this was all for a washer! [laughs] We were pretty bad back in them days. Of course you know, that's all changed.

JMV: So you don't remember the last time you were at the WTC before it went down? Were you scheduled to go there at all, around the time when it went down?

TM: Was I scheduled to go there? There were always meetings being held there.

JMV: Where were you on 9/11? At work?

TM: I was at work, at Kennedy airport.

JMV: What was it like there?

TM: It was interesting because it was early in the morning, everybody's just getting into work and we heard that a plane hit the WTC.

JMV: You were already there though, for hours, weren't you?

TM: Yeah, a couple of hours. By the time we heard I was there a couple of hours. I get into work, 7ish. By 8ish, we're starting to hear news about a plane hitting the WTC. Now, you gotta look at it from a perspective of an employee of the Port Authority. Planes already hit the WTC other times. Not suicidal planes, but little planes, just by accident. They did some damage, local damage, but never did any real damage. They might have killed the driver of the plane, but little planes. So we thought—after the first reports came in—same old story. Of course, the reports got worse—"It was an airliner... It was an American Airliner..." We thought, "Okay, now this is starting to sound pretty serious." So of course we turn on the TV. The ironic part about the TV was that it was at the end of the building on the top floor. The TV was up in a corner, you know how they mount those TVs up in the corner? And there was a big window in front of it, and you could see the smoke from the World Trade Center [through the window]. You couldn't see the World Trade Center, but you could see the smoke coming up into the sky from the World Trade Center. And as you're watching this unveil, a half hour goes by and we're now trying to figure out where *our* people are because it's early in the morning. "Where is everybody, who's going where?"

JMV: What does that mean, "Who's going where?"

TM: Well sometimes guys, instead of coming to work [at another site], are scheduled to go to the World Trade Center; they go right to the World Trade Center. So we want to make sure nobody's heading for the World Trade Center cause things are looking bad. So we find out one of our guys, who was my boss, had a meeting there. And that's where he was going. So we get on the phone and we start dialing the phones.

JMV: Could you even get through at that point?

TM: We did. Before the tower went down and before the second tower got hit. We said,

"Where are you, Ted?"

"Well, I'm just going into the tunnel."

"Well, don't go to the World Trade Center."

"What do you mean don't go to the World Trade Center?"

"DON'T GO TO THE World Trade Center! Turn around. We believe it's a suicide attack. Turn around and get out of there."

I'm not really sure what he did. I don't think he went to the World Trade Center, but I think he went to the area.

JMV: Did he die there?

TM: No, he did not die. Of course, a lot of people did. A lot of good people did.

JMV: Do you know how many from the PA?

TM: 80...I think it was either 86... Yeah something like that. People from the Port Authority, people I knew, not all of them.

JMV: So then what happened?

TM: Right. Then the second plane hits.

JMV: Everyone is watching the news at this point?

TM: Right. And of course, then you know it's an attack. Of course, you try to get a hold of anybody you can and to get them out of there. The rest of the events you know just as well as I do. They were sad events that day.

JMV: Did you get through to anyone else on the phone? Anyone other than Ted?

TM: See, what you check for is *your* people. So, everybody who was going there, *we* got through to them. None of them were in the WTC. None of our people were in the WTC at the time of the attack. Either they were heading there, and they were all diverted to turn around. Now of course, people I worked with in engineering were there already. And when you ask them their story, when the plane first hit, they thought just like us, "Eh, another plane hit the building, no big deal. Ok, let's sit down." But all of a sudden, things got serious in the building and they decided, "You know what? Let's evacuate." And they all walked. They had to walk down their 63 flights to get out of there. One of the guys I know who walked down said there were no lights. So when you're walking down 63 flights of steps, and there's no lights, and it's in a concrete vault... They're concrete vaults [the stairwells]!

JMV: What about the elevators?

TM: There were two of them... Where they were exactly, I don't remember. Wherever he—wherever they are, there are no windows, and the reason for that is fire protection. Cause once you're inside, you're protected. And he says, but you gotta do these 63 flights in the dark. And there's all kind of people in these exits who can't walk 63 flights down. Some can't walk at all. So you're in line coming down these steps he says. And you're hoping that you get to the bottom and out of there before something happens. So it takes a *long* time he says. So, remember, even though you may be young and healthy and you say, "I'm going to run down them steps to get the hell out of here," it took some people an hour to get to the bottom, and that's how people got caught and got killed. Because the towers didn't survive that long. They survived another hour-ish, hour-and-a-half tops and then they came down. And anybody who was still in those towers, it's too late. So that's the deal.

JMV: Didn't you know the last woman who got pulled out alive?

TM: Yes, I worked with her. She was the last survivor that came out of the World Trade Center. She was pinned. Didn't I tell you that story? She's a young girl. She's got two kids. When the Trade Center went down she was downstairs and when it went down on her she was pinned and knocked unconscious. When she awoke, apparently one of the columns--if you know the bottom of the World Trade Center, the bottom is open, so the building really stands on a bunch of stilts. And each of these columns, these large columns, is what's holding the building above it. So you have this like, big open forum as you walk in the World Trade Center. It's like this giant mall. Stores around the perimeter, big open floors, and you know maybe three flights, three stories high, open. So it looks real pretty. One of those columns was sitting next to her. Yeah, it was right next to her. And when the building came down, one of the--either the ceiling landed on a column and then angled to the floor and she was in that little crevice. And the rest of the World Trade Center came down on her. She wasn't aware of that because she was unconscious to begin with.

JMV: Was she in the basement or the concourse level?

TM: Concourse level. Now there's sub-floors underneath that. But that's where she was. She was trying to get out. It took them two days to find her, so she was the *last living person* found.

JMV: What was it like after 9/11?

TM: The city cut off all entrance roads into the city. Do you know where the Queens line is? You know the southern state? You know where that A-frame house is? That's the borderline: Queens and Nassau. Essentially they had cop cars right across the roads. Anybody trying to go into the city was diverted and turned around, except us. I had my card. I said I was ordered to come to work, I was driving on the Southern State by myself (laughs). It was an interesting time (voice cracks). Scary times for us (cries).

JMV: Could you get through to mom on the phone?

TM: Yeah.

JMV: How come I couldn't get through?

TM: I did talk to you?

JMV: It took hours though, I kept getting the busy signal.

TM: The phones got jammed, I guess. But scary times. The girls at work didn't want to come to work. We built these uh, roadblocks. We built these giant-like pots out of concrete in front of the building. And the girl says--the girls that worked with us-- "What are they for?" And we said, "Oh, we're going to put plants in them." But that's

not what they're for (laughs). But a really interesting side note is uh, El-Al. El-Al airlines. The El-Al people, back in the 70s, were doing all of this stuff to their facility. Back in the 70s they put these castings in front of their building.

JMV: What's El-Al? What kind of airline?

TM: The Israeli airline. They were doing this stuff in the 70s. They built bunkers that they would take luggage into to test to see if there were bombs in it. They had tanks, regular tanks, right in the back on the tarmac. This is back in the 70s. For years they used them.

JMV: When did they get rid of them?

TM: I'm not sure if they ever got rid of them (laughs). And we all made fun of them. "Eh, look at these idiots!" But they knew better. And all of the sudden we *became* them. Guys walking in halls with guns (voice cracks). Scary times (cries).

JMV: When did that stop?

TM: It *doesn't* stop. It slows down.

TM: It ramps up every time of year the Commissioner comes on the phone, or on the TV, and says, "oh, it's a high alert," and all of a sudden it changes again. And then you go from, uh, the colors... I forget the colors. So, tough times. It kind of reminds me of when I was a kid and we lived in the projects, and you would have to be fearful of how to get to the ground floor of your house in the projects. Because we were white and everybody else was black, and for some reason or another, I guess there were racial--tensions? They were real high, and of course there was always issues associated with getting beat up, not getting beat up. My sister was never allowed out of the house! But that type of *tension* is what you worked with now [after 9/11]. You're always worried about, is it a bomb? Isn't it a bomb? The guy left a bag! Things we paid no attention to before, you know? When I first started at the port authority, they gave us this little red card, took your picture, gave you this red card, said, "Put this in your pocket, and when somebody asks you for it, you show them." For years, if somebody asked me for that card--say it would be a guy at one of the gates—and I was in a port authority truck. So what I'd do is—I smoked Marlboro cigarettes, the packaging was red. I used to go like this [flashes pretend pack of cigarettes up from his shirt pocket] (laughs), and just keep on going. The guy couldn't really see my ID. He would only see red. And that's how lackadaisical we were about it. Until now. Now it's like:

"What was your mother's name? What was her maiden name? What was your grandmother's maiden name? You got pictures? Put your hand up, let me get your fingerprints."

"I just wanna get through the gate."

"Well who's that? Who's that sitting next to you?"

"Well he's with me."

"Oh no, no, no, no, no, he's not with you. Could he get out of the car?"



Now you go through these big processes just to do something as simple as... At 30 miles per hour I wouldn't even stop [for someone]. If the guy didn't pick up the gate, I'd break it. Right through. When I first started at the Port Authority, a couple of engineers (they were consultants), said to me, "Oh, man, you gotta take us out on the runway with the Concorde. We want to see the Concorde thing!" "Sure! No problem." Course I didn't have any ID or anything, I just had my car. And I got those guys in the back seat of my car, but nobody's gonna stop me to ask about them, so I flipped my thing [fingers fictional pack of Marlboro reds] and I went. Now we're sitting in the middle of the runway, I got these guys *with cameras*... and we're standing in the middle of the runway watching the Concorde going off right next to us.<sup>71</sup> You know, of course, everything rumbles and shakes [when the Concorde takes off], so it was an exciting festival to see. The two guys were there with their cameras, taking pictures. Today? You couldn't make that happen on a *bet*! Things have changed quite a bit. And of course, it's sad because we always looked at the people from El-Al as sad people. There's no fun in their lives. Everything is about survival. And that's what this becomes, you know? The goal becomes survival.

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<sup>71</sup> The Concorde was a supersonic passenger jet that traveled twice as fast as a standard commercial airliner. The Concorde flew transatlantic flights out of JFK airport from 1976-2003.

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## **Vita**

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