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To cite this article: Chaim Noy (2018) Memory, media, and museum audience's discourse of remembering, *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15:1, 19-38, DOI: [10.1080/17405904.2017.1392331](https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1392331)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1392331>



Published online: 23 Oct 2017.



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Memory, media, and museum audience's discourse of remembering

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ABSTRACT

This study joins a prolific line of critical research on collective memory in relation to museums as 'sites of memory'. It takes the political relations between museums and memory as the background against which audience production of discourses of remembering is analyzed. Collective memory is approached not as a passive 'retainer' of information, but as sets of public mnemonic practices which transpire in specific material and semiotic settings. The analysis is comparative and takes place in two Jewish history museums in the US and Israel. It begins by ethnographically studying museums' memory media, whereby discourse is produced and displayed. Then, the rhetorical currency of collective memory discourse is identified, illustrating that museum audiences' discourses of remembering are dynamic remediations that break with institutional formats (annals/records/logs) and establish audiences' voice and subjectivity. Centrally, the analysis of more complex texts offers a tripartite typology of audiences' discursive strategies: (1) Establishing addressivity, which concerns audiences' self-positioning or whether they reflect on the museum's historic narration or 'step into' it by directly conversing with historical figures; (2) Re-citing, which concerns acts of importing texts into the museums' discourse, creating new intertextualities and charging both the museum discourse and the cited texts with new meanings; (3) Re-timing, which concerns indexing different mythical, religious, and national timeframes, which serve to embed the time of the museum visit. The study concludes by critically noting the scarcity of subversive visitor discourse in museums, and the vitality of collective ethnonational memory in Israel compared to transnational/cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 10 April 2017
Accepted 4 October 2017

KEYWORDS

Memory studies; museums; visitors; visitor discourse; collective memory; Jewish history; history; Holocaust; commemoration

Introduction

There is a prolific line of critical research on collective memory in relation to museums as 'sites of memory', often pursued in respect to a wider array of sites including monuments and sites of heritage (Bennett, 1995; Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010; Katriel, 1997; Linenthal, 1995; Williams, 2007; Young, 1993; Zolberg, 1995). Most of the work on collective memory takes its lead from Maurice Halbwachs's (1992) theorizing, which shaped the way collective memory has been discussed and developed mainly along the two themes he juxtaposed

in *La mémoire collective* (1950): the characteristics that social groups share, and which in turn marks and constitutes them as such, and the specific modern relation to time. Halbwachs's juxtaposition theorized the rearrangement of hegemonic power within the unique conditions of modernity, and the work of the institutions that apply it (see comprehensive reviews in Olick, 2007; Olick & Robbins, 1998). His work anticipated the second half of the twentieth century as an epoch characterized by the '[t]he acceleration of history' (with its 'increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good', Nora, 1999, p. 7), and inspired Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) critical reformulation of nationalism in relation to both memory and the past. Along these lines, and further in accord with Nora's (1999) emphasis on *lieux de mémoire* (rather than *milieux de mémoire*), scholars studying collective memory – including all those mentioned hitherto – often point at museums as rhetorical and media/mediational institutions where the political relationship between memories and history emerges as 'entangled, conflictual, and co-constitutive' (Sturken, 1997; p. 43. Also Connerton, 1989; Huyssen, 2000, p. 3; Olick, 2007, p. 14).

I take this condition as my point of departure, as I shift from museums to museum audiences, or more accurately, to the institutional museum-audience interaction. While research in the subfield of *museum visitor studies* has examined visitors' expectations, motivations, and recollections over time (Falk & Dierking, 2000), museum audience discourse and (co-)construction of memories has been under-researched. Jones (C. Jones, 2015) comments in this regard that 'more needs to be done to provide a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of how users experience and 'make sense' of museums' (p. 543), and Scott, Dodd, and Sandell (2014) note that while research has 'previously focused on recall and comprehension of museum messages, the current view is of users as 'making sense' and 'making meaning' of their museum encounters' (pp. 12–13. Also Crane, 1997; Macdonald, 2005; Noy, 2015). This lag is especially noteworthy in light of the 'outward' turn museums have been undergoing during the last decades, shifting from a collection-based orientation to one that is more focused on engaging their audiences. Now, particularly, a 'top-down approach must be supplemented by a bottom-up approach to the performance of scripts about the past at commemorative sites' (Winter, 2010, p. 64).

This study looks at the discursive strategies by which audiences in two history museums engage the sites' narrations, thus negotiating a version of collective memory discourse that *they* wish to publically ascertain. My view of collective memory is shaped by Olick's discussions, specifically those building on one of Halbwachs's (1992) core arguments, namely that it is 'in society that people normally acquire their memories ... recall, recognize and localize' them (p. 38). Olick (2007) approaches collective memory 'not [as] an agency of storage but [as] an active process of construction and reconstruction in time' (Olick, 2007, p. 10), where 'social actors engage in concerted action to either maintain or transform images of the past' (p. 8). In this light, I view collective memory discourse as *interactional, situated, and public*. It is interactional in the sense that it is a social accomplishment nested in the ebb and flow of specific, localized interactions. Collective memory is not a doctrine that media institutions simply impose on their audiences, and instead, what is remembered, how and by whom, is arrived at as part of an ongoing negotiation where different actors occupy different positions and roles. Collective memory discourse is situated in the sense that it is 'sited': it is material (A. Jones, 2007) and it transpires in

specific places through technologies of mediation (Neiger, Meyers, & Zandberg, 2011; Scollon & Scollon, 2007). Finally, collective memory discourse is public in a twofold sense: it is observable (not residing in the mind and is visibly recognized by the parties concerned), and it takes place in museums and institutions which partake in the construction of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962/1989, and following him also Bennett, 1995).

I ask how museum visitors take on the discursual labor of participating in the institution's historical narration. While the 'curatorial voice initiates this historical process', Lord (2007) observes, 'the visitor must carry it out' (p. 361). If history museums are sites that mediate history, then visiting them – doing the 'museum visit' – embodies the ritual of audiencing history. Museum audiences produce memory discourse via onsite commenting platforms, which are in effect public media (Noy, 2015, 2016a, 2017). For both museums and visitors, onsite commenting platforms allow lasting contributions to the display; a channel whereby visitors 're-enter the museal process: they move from being the end-point or 'receivers' of the 'museum messages' to being part of the process through which museum exhibitions are created' (Macdonald, 2005, p. 131). Studying museums' commenting platforms can also reveal the ways the institutional aim of displaying audience-generated content is materialized in situ (Thumim, 2009, 2010).

Audience discourse in two history museums

I study audience discourses at the Ammunition Hill Museum (AHM) and at the Florida Holocaust Museum (FHM). The AHM is located in East Jerusalem, and is part of a major Israeli site of national commemoration called the Ammunition Hill National Memorial Site. Its location marks the place where a known and difficult battle took place between Israeli and Jordanian forces during the 1967 War. The site commemorates the thirty-seven Israeli soldiers who died in that battle, and more broadly the 182 soldiers who died in the Jerusalem Front. Because this battle and the war as a whole were triumphant, the site juxtaposes commemoration and grief with a euphoric sense of celebration: it honors the soldiers who paved the way for a victorious and lasting outcome in the shape of the 'Emancipation and Reunification of Jerusalem' (these days, the management is readying for the 50th anniversary of the Battle/War by thoroughly restructuring the museum). The soldiers' courageous patriotism, and the ultimate sacrifice they made, ensured the victory of the battle, which in turn – the site's narrative goes – have secured Israel's 'eternally united' capital.

The Ammunition Hill Site and museum were inaugurated in 1975. They were initially proposed by a number of bereaved families, who lobbied successfully and managed to protect the hilly area from rapid urban development and Jewish settlement in the years immediately following the 1967 War. The site soon became popular and indeed iconic in regards to the 1967 war. In 1990 the Israeli Parliament declared the site as a National Memorial Site, and it has since been hosting the Jerusalem Day Ceremonies, attended by the President, Prime-Minister and other dignitaries. Most of the visitors I observed there were either Israeli (mostly observant Jews) or Jewish tourists on Zionist organized expeditions to Israel (such as Birthright groups. Noy, 2015).

The FHM was established in 1992 in the Tampa Bay area. As the only Holocaust museum in Florida – with its large and supportive Jewish communities – it grew rapidly, and was relocated in 1998 to its present location at the touristic part of downtown

St. Petersburg, where it hosts some 28,000 visitors per year. The museum is a typical US Holocaust museum, dedicated to the portrayal of the roots of medieval European anti-Semitism, moving chronologically through the events that lead to the rise of the Nazi Party to then describe the events and consequences of the Holocaust (Luke, 2002). The museum's core exhibition is titled 'History, Heritage and Hope', a title which reflects an attempt to curb the effect that the exhibition might have on visitors, and to steer the experience in more hopeful directions (Noy, 2016b). In this way, too, the FHM is characteristic of Holocaust museums – it offers a redemptive telling (Macdonald, 2008), whereby a 'narrative of progress is imposed on a chronology' (Crane, 2006, p. 107). The evil of the genocide in the past is both encountered and countered by positive moral action in the present (witnessing, remembering, etc.). Most of the visitors I saw at the museum are from North America, including local school and college students on field trips and learning assignments, as well as out-of-state domestic travelers visiting Florida. International tourists too visit the museum, though to a lesser degree, arriving mainly from Germany and Central America.

Like the AHM, the museum in St. Pete supplies a 'contained account of the past' (Macdonald, 2008, p. 173), which is to say a schematic and linear outline of history as *fait accompli*. If one of the defining features of trauma is the inability to narrate it (Felman & Laub, 1992), then these museums' displays have rendered historical trauma rather conveniently and clearly tellable (Wodak & Richardson, 2009). Further, both museums tell an essentially moral story about good and bad, and about the past, the present, and the future. Finally, both museums embody Jewish memory and history, and the centrality of memory in and to Jewish culture (Yerushalmi, 1982). It is here, however, that they differ, associated as they are with two different and powerful discourses: Ammunition Hill celebrates national identity and is part of Zionist political culture. It is physically located where the event it commemorates took place, which is a highly charged political location (Occupied East Jerusalem). In this way it is part of what Aronoff (1993) describes as Zionism's 'national cult of memorializing the dead' (p. 54), where ceremonial memorialization and remembering of traumatic events of recent and distant past (Masada, for instance) play a constitutive role in national memory (Zerubavel, 1995). FHM is associated with North American Jewish culture and its relation to the Holocaust, reflecting an 'Americanized/globalized' state of Holocaust commemoration (Huysen, 2000). And though it is obvious, it is worth repeating that while the former commemorates the death of dozens of soldiers in the battlefield, the latter commemorates genocide. One implication is that while the AHM can afford commemorating the dead individually, Holocaust commemoration is invariably metonymic.

I studied the AHM between 2006 and 2012, and the FHM between 2012 and 2015 (shortly following my family's move from Jerusalem to Florida). I take an ethnography of communication approach, which is integrative and holistic, and focuses on communicative practices and genres (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972; Noy, *in press*). Ethnography of communication incorporates participants' activities and interactions, together with the technomaterial settings of the museums. Therefore, in the following I begin by looking closely into these museums' memory media, which I see as essential for appreciating mechanisms that afford audiences' participation in collective memory discourse. Later, I move to analyze visitors' discourse itself.

Mediating collective memory discourse: in situ commenting platforms

In the museums I discuss, commenting platforms take the shape of installations, at the center of which large visitor books are offered. These platforms are collective, or better, collectivizing media, and their affordances, specifically their additive qualities, imply that they always record and display *an assortment* of visitors' texts ('voices'). In his work on memory and commemoration, Gillis (1994) argues that commemorative activities establish collective memory by 'involv[ing] the coordination of individual and group memories' (p. 5), and Landsberg (2004) similarly notes that collective memory 'emerges at the interface of individual and collective experience' (p. 19). Museum commenting platforms offer precisely such interfaces.

At the AHM, the installation is the main exhibit in one of the museum's inner commemorative halls. It consists of an elevated structure of heavy, black steel, which resembles a monument, and which requires visitors to slightly ascend in order to write or read (Figure 1). Note



Figure 1. Commenting platform and commemoration hall at Ammunition Hill Museum.

that ascending to read the book echoes Jews practices of reading the Torah). The heavy visitor book rests on a thick wooden platform. It has a hard leather cover, bearing a military logo in dark red ink, and 100 large pages that are made of parchment-like material. Running down the center of each page is a column of symbols printed in a light military-green: the symbol of the State of Israel, of the city of Jerusalem, of the Israeli army, and of the site's logo. These symbols correspond with large flags hanging from the ceiling nearby (Figure 1). Short instructions are inscribed on a small metal plate fixed near the book:

Students, Soldiers, and Visitors

Please indicate your impressions in a concise and respectful manner

Kindly, regard the guest book in a manner appropriate to the Ammunition Hill Site

At the FHM the installation is located typically near the museum's exit, where visitors leaving the museum pass it by. It consists of a simple pedestal atop of which the large book is positioned, which includes 150 wide white pages (Figure 2). Behind the pedestal towers a specially designed wall, with moral sayings engraved in a handwritten-like font, such as: 'All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. Edmond Burke' and 'Be the change that you want to see in the world. Mahatma Gandhi'. Thus displayed, visitors who read the book or write in it must literally face the 'engravings on the wall', where positive idioms, which do not explicitly or specifically address the Holocaust, offer an encouraging course of action. The wall echoes the title of the core exhibition ('History, Heritage and Hope'), and as the museum's Curator of Exhibitions and Collections explained: 'We wanted something both uplifting and hopeful when people [leave the

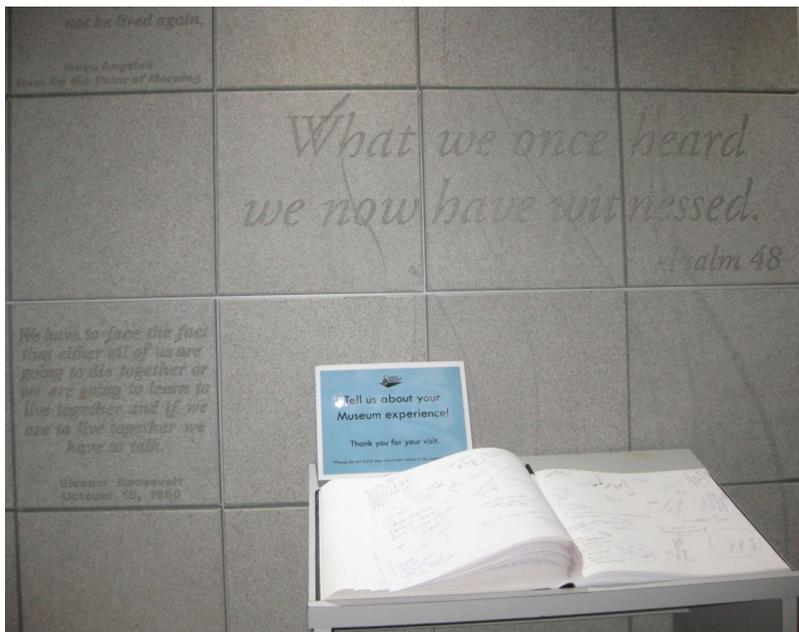


Figure 2. Commenting platform and engraved wall at the Florida Holocaust Museum.

museum] and also to remind them that they can make a difference. That's the last wall that people see' (E. Blankenship, interview, June 14th, 2013). The engraved texts are all signed, suggesting that the texts can be repeated by visitors and serve as a mechanism of attributability.

At the FHM too brief instructions are supplied on a plastic sign positioned near the book: *Tell us about your Museum experience!* and beneath it in smaller letters: *Thank you for your visit.*

Of hundreds of texts on display in both museums, the signs near the books are the only instances where the institutions address visitors explicitly with requests or instructions. The signs 'stand in for the absent curator', Arnold (2006) comments, 'prompting a form of conversation' (p. 99). They are also instances of 'visitor articulation' (Lepik & Carpentier, 2013), attempting to institutionally govern or regulate visitors' positionalities and activities (Thumim, 2010). While the AHM encourages visitors to write 'in a concise and respectful manner', that is deemed 'appropriate', the FHM presupposes that the visit has endowed a 'Museum experience', which visitors are capable and now entitled to elaborate (Noy, 2016b).

The volume I draw on from the AHM was completed during the beginning of my ethnography there (July 2005–August 2006) and contains 1032 texts (mostly in Hebrew and English, with an average length of 16 words per text, excluding visitors' signatures). The FHM book was available between December 2012–May 2014 and contains 2749 texts (most of which are in English, with an average length of 16.3 words per text).¹ Note that despite the AHM's explicit request for 'concise' expression, the average length of texts in these museums is similar. Yet the sign at the FHM does seem to have an effect when it comes to the experiential framing of the visit ('Tell us about your Museum experience!'), and the most frequent noun in visitors' discourse is 'experience' (which occurs in every seventh text on average). This might be a result of other types of intertextualities, yet it does not take place at AHM, where words in the sign are not repeated by visitors in any notable way.

'The time of the visitor': from annals to memory

Before proceeding to address visitors' discursive strategies of re-producing collective memory discourse, I offer a brief, if detailed, elaboration on the kind of *rhetorical currency* that commenting platforms manage. I firstly note that while a few of the texts include only signatures (13% in Jerusalem and 8% in Florida), most of the visitors who write perform a shift from operating within the institutional time recorded by annals, where signatures mark the visit temporally, to operating within what Blair and Michel (2000) fittingly call 'the time of the visitor' (p. 47). In other words, most visitors *actively narrate* their visit: they articulate their actions within a meaningful narrative framework of their own production, rather than in an a-temporal institutional form (annals/records. White, 1980). Consider the following text, which is formulaic and widespread, and which does not include evaluation of the museum but a very brief recount of the visit²:

I. AHM

Here visited/ the Levine family./ date: 22\7\05.

This short text is illustrative of how visitors succinctly establish authorship: verbs are used to conjure activity, deictic terms to establish indexical relations, and pronouns to construct

identity – all of which instantiate visitors' *telling and framing* of the event of the visit. To restate, the reporting of the event of the visit is lifted out of an institutional framework (records/annals), and is performed instead as an event that is narrativized by its protagonists. More specifically: in this short text, 'Here' is a spatial proximal deictic that frames the place of the visit from the *visitors' viewpoint*. Instead of mentioning the museum's name, which can be done both on- and off-site, these visitors are doing what only visitors can afford, which is to validly claim that they traveled and arrived at the site ('Here'). '[M]emorial sites are *destinations*', Blair (1999) reminds us, and traveling to visit them 'demand[s] physical labor of a would-be audience member' (p. 46, italics in the original henceforth). Like tourists' photos of iconic destinations, which display the cultural capital embodied in acts of traveling and visiting, the Levine family is publically attesting to its actual arrival at the site.

The next word is a verb ('visited'), which specifies and frames the action that the visitors are undertaking. It is a way (one of few) of (self-)characterizing what this family is engaged in and how it goes on record for actively 'being here'. The verb's inflection squarely locates the act of signing within the narrative 'time of the visitor', as it 'imports [the act of visiting] into the present' (Blair & Michel, 2000, p. 47). I am referring to the choice to use *past tense*, implying that the verb does not index what is currently happening ('we are visiting'), but future readers/audiences. We are reminded that collective remembering is a future-oriented act, which is prospective and anticipated, and where the future often 'functions as a rhetorical and semiotic resource' (Duncan, 2014, p. 420). It is here that 'the time of the visitor' and 'the time of the museum' coalesce, which recalls Scannell's (2000) note on mediation in the public sphere: 'history is relocated: it is no longer 'then,' but 'now,' no longer 'there' but 'here'' (p. 21).

The identity of the authors is then conveyed explicitly (by name: 'The Levine family'). This designation can be seen as an elaboration of the preceding verb, which is in plural form (*bikarnu* means in Hebrew 'we visited'). Hence the 'we' takes the specific shape of a surname ('who visited?' 'This family did'), indicating the nature of the undersigned group of visitors (a family with a recognizably Jewish surname). Importantly, the name indexes both the text's authors – who are undersigned, and its protagonists – these family members are the heroes of this brief, self-narrated tale.

The text then concludes by indicating the time of the visit, yet instead of simply writing the date, the word 'date' is itself written. It is as though the visitors are adding a formal register to the platform ('date:'), to then fill it by supplying the actual date. This type of addition is generally infrequent and raises a question regarding why this isn't done with regards to other bits of information that the text supplies (such as, 'name: the Levine family'). It might be that the date is of some special significance, which might also explain why it is underlined, but this is speculative and beyond the point.

The point is that such telegraphic texts capture the basic *rhetorical currency* of public participation in collective memory discourse, which underlies more elaborate texts and visitor discourse more generally. In discussing memorials and collective memory, Pollock (cited in Blair & Michel, 2000) points out that history is made into 'a scene awaiting intervention by the performing subject' (p. 40). The performance, it should be clear, is what constitutes the subject in the public sphere to begin with, shifting visitors to assume the role of active audiences.

Signing in: collective memory discourse

Most of the texts in the AHM and the FHM do more than merely index the visit. Stated differently, they index the visit with more elaboration and by employing additional discursive strategies and resources. The texts address and evoke the historical and moral narratives that the museums mediate, and affirm, expand on and negotiate elements in the version of the collective memory the museums propose. I now turn to outline three discursive strategies of responsiveness, through which audiences pursue these actions, which I schematically term Establishing addressivity, Re-citing, and Re-timing. These strategies often overlap and intermix, yet my point is that by outlining and highlighting them we can observe patterns of participation and negotiation of collective memory and simultaneously audiences' understandings of what is expected of them.

My analytical approach centers on a situated and dialogical/interactional view of discourse (Bakhtin, 1986), joined with attention to context and the materiality and spatiality of discourse: where and how visitors establish the sociocultural contexts of their own utterances (aligned with ethnography of communication. Also Scollon & Scollon, 2007). If discourse is a form of social inter/action, then my stress is less on referential content (content analysis, recurring themes) and more on how visitors accomplish action (addressing, authoring, re-narrating) as participants in the molding of collective memory discourse. The following examples are chosen on pedagogical grounds, supplying the clearest and richest illustrations of visitors' discursive strategies, and hopefully the most effective ones for discussing them.

Establishing addressivity

One strategy that visitors employ to constitute themselves through memory practices in museal spaces is by addressivity structures, where who is communicating with whom is established (implicitly or explicitly). Addressivity is a central concept in Bakhtin's (1986) dialogical view, which postulates that communication is essentially characterized by utterances' 'quality of being directed to someone' (p. 95). For Bakhtin's theory of literature, addressivity helps constitute different literary genres, the figures that occupy them, and possibilities for action they afford. In the context of collective memory, Allison (2013) comments that museums are characterized by addressivity, whereby 'individuals and publics may dialogue with them and be inspired by them' (p. 149). Macdonald (2005), too, acknowledges that museum visitors' 'self-positioning may also be influenced by who they imagine that they are addressing' (p. 126). Through articulating addressivities visitors are able to construct themselves as different types of social actors, and the spaces and temporalities within which they operate. We should keep in mind that in these (and most other) museums, '[v]isitors are interlocutors without discussion partners ... they usually have only objects and texts to respond to, rarely curators, historians, or experts' (Crane, 1997, p. 48). Consider the following eight texts.

II. AHM

1.

To the Ammunition Hill Museum! We visited here, the place is very special. We were moved to see how the soldiers fought, and in their merit we have The State of Israel. Ulpan Class/ Zvia High school J-m/ h.t.sh.s.v³

2.

To my fallen hero comrades./ [I'm] saluting you./ [A] warrior

3.

3.5.2006/ In your merit we live here in Mount Scopus⁴/ and Unified Jerusalem/ May your memory be a blessing./ Jacqueline

4.

Thanks for giving your lives to/ *Jerusalem*/ Avinoam [surname]

5.

To the soldiers -/ We owe you/ EVERYTHING.

III. FHM

1.

THANK YOU FOR/ SHARING aND PRESERVING/ THIS STORY! WE WILL/ NEVER FORGET./ [SURNAME]/ FAMILY/ 12-JUL-2013

2.

5-19-13/ Thank you for keeping/ the memory of this alive./ Though horrible it serves/ as a great reminder as to/ why we cannot just stand/ by while atrocities are committed

3.

2\21\14/ Very moving and well done/ exhibit on par with/ the Holocaust Mus. in D.C.

The first text (II.1) has the visit as its focus and the museum as its addressee (which it mentions explicitly: 'To the Ammunition Hill Museum!'). What the visitors are writing *about* and who they are writing *to* are (co-)related features, because the visitors are addressing the museum with regards to its display and the historical narrative it mediates (the museum is accountable for the display). The text opens and closes by establishing the identities of both addressee and addressors. The body of the text conveys a positive evaluation of the museum, accomplished by attesting to the emotional effect it had on the visitors ('very special ... We were moved'), and by visitors' elaboration of the site's moral takeaway ('in their merit we have The State of Israel'). This is a lesson on sacrifice and patriotism, and the visitors are publically showing that they 'got it' and that they are able to recall (literally re-inscribe) it in their own words. Sacrificing lives for the nation crucially supplies the *causal connection* this museum seeks to establish between past and present: those living in the present *owe their lives* to those who have sacrificed theirs in the past. Time here is not so much a duration as it is an *aspect* (Preziosi, 2009, p. 40). Time is employed to establish a relationship of indebtedness between the present and the past, which is at the crux of collective remembrance in national contexts.

The subsequent texts are *qualitatively different* in terms of their addressivity: texts II.2-5 are *not* directed at the museum nor do they address the visit. Instead, these texts correspond *directly with historical actors*, namely the dead soldiers. The action that text 2 pursues is the public display of the iconic gesture of the military salute – here verbalized ('[I'm] saluting you') – as part of establishing an interaction that takes place not between

the visitor and the museum, but between the visitor and his 'fallen hero comrades'. As a public display in a commemoration museum, this text is not so much interacting with the past as it is made to be part of it, and future visitors can imagine and visualize the author, a male 'warrior' (gender is indicated in Hebrew) exchanging salutes with 'his' companions. The terse style, too, may index a masculinized action.

This text, and the ones following it, are in fact more typical of the texts written in the AHM in that their majority addresses the dead soldiers (approximately 65%). These texts correspond directly with the heroic actors who populate the historical scene, showing gratitude and re-establishing, by way of re-calling and re-telling, the *causal link* connecting past, present and future. This link is essentially moral, and the present is both explained by and indebted to the past. There are various ways visitors describe the 'present' as emerging within these relations, and in text II.3 the present is the duration wherein visitors can 'live here in Mount Scopus and [in] Unified Jerusalem'. In other texts, being able to visit Jerusalem and pray there characterize the present.

Note that in text II.4, the word 'Jerusalem' is written in Hebrew, which demonstrates code-switching where the holy language is used to index the holy city (code-switching is often used to mark identities and ideologies. Dolitsky & Bensimon-Choukroun, 2000). Code-switching here contributes to the framing and highlighting of the soldiers' historical actions as sacred. In the code-switch in the next example (II.5), these are the opening three words that are in Hebrew, stressing and sanctifying in this way the addressees: the historical soldiers-protagonists.

No similar addressivity structure is found at the FHM, and *none* of the book's 2749 texts has historical actors as their addressees. Instead, all the texts address the museum and the visit, and the variations they evince concern the different ways they do so. The first three texts (III.1-3) illustrate how visitors credit the museum for being both a memory container and a mnemonic agent: the institution is 'keeping' memory of past events and displaying it ('SHARING aND PRESERVING'), encouraging remembrance ('a great reminder'), and propelling future-facing moral actions of remembrance ('WE WILL NEVER FORGET'). Visitors employ a rich lexicon of adjectives and verbs to describe the effect the visit had on them: moving, touching, saddening, sobering, memorable, extraordinary, forceful, mind-blowing, and life-changing are a few examples. These descriptives are often accompanied by intensifying terms such as great, absolutely, super, very, best, a lot, and always.

The first two texts (III.1-2) are structured around a move from the museum to the visitors or from cause to effect: the texts begin by expressing gratitude to the mnemonic institution, to then reciprocate visitors' moral takeaway, which is the way visitors supply *their* part of the deal. Visitors do so by using first-person plural form ('WE WILL', 'we cannot'), and by showing that they understand their role in the reproduction of collective memory discourse, and willingly undertake it.

The third and last text (III.3) begins with two compliments that address the emotional effect and a (related) appreciation of the exhibition ('Very moving and well done'). It then draws a comparison between this museum and the paradigmatic US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Judging the former as 'on par' with the latter is a way to bestow a valid compliment, while at the same time establishing the visitor as a competent pursuer of Holocaust commemoration (a connoisseur of sorts). Indeed, the book contains texts which indicate that their authors have previously visited Holocaust commemoration sites in US and/or Europe. These texts establish their authors as 'regulars' in terms of

visiting Holocaust commemoration sites, reflecting a global grid or network of Holocaust commemoration (which is ‘Americanized/globalized’, according to Huyssen, 2000, or ‘transnational/cosmopolitan’, according to Levy & Sznajder, 2002), within which the FHM is a valid node. Furthermore, this network is hierarchized, and drawing comparisons between different sites and types thereof is common. As one of the texts cited in Macdonald (2005) attests: ‘Concentration camps are basically more interesting and shocking. Nevertheless – this exhibition’s not bad!’ (p. 129). During my ethnography I witnessed visitors, who, right upon their initial interaction with the museum’s ticket office, mentioned Holocaust sites they previously visited. I believe that this is primarily a matter of entitlement and cultural capital, but it also sheds light on the intertwining of travel and recollection (Noy, 2016a).

Re-citing collective discourse

A second discursive strategy that visitors employ concerns recalling segments of popular discourse and reproducing them in situ. A case at hand is the frequency of drawings of the national Israeli flag in Ammunition Hill, and of the widespread repetition of the expressions of the ‘Never again’ type in the FHM. These textual and visual re-productions are frequent to the point they become *idiomatic of genres of visitor discourse*. Indeed, they account for the reason that many observers note that museum visitor books platforms seem repetitive. They are, and intently so!

IV. AHM

1.

Jerusalem of Gold/ and of bronze and of light/ Zvi [Surname]

2.

“And in their death they were not parted/ and [they] were stronger than lions”/ we will always remember and not forget/ the courage of the Israeli warriors/ who overtook Jerusalem so we can/ live here peacefully!/ thank you! Nava

V. FHM

1.

Never forget!/ JB

2.

Always Remember,/ Never Forget./ Stefan [surname]

3.

Never again!/ Keep teaching and reading/ and speak up./ Never again!

Texts that re-cite familiar bits of collective discourse entail how, by doing participation ‘properly’, visitors show that they know what is required of them and are able to (re)produce it onsite and on request. The link between reproduction of a text and memory is substantial’, Blair (1999, p. 38) comments, and there is nothing mechanical in this type of

reproduction, nor banal in the meanings that these written reiterations communicate. Visitors' memory-work here concerns importing 'correct' texts and images, and embedding them in and through site-specific media.

Compared to the FHM, the AHM contains a significantly richer variation of popular texts that visitors recall and re-inscribe. For instance, text IV.1 includes a quote from a famous Israeli song (Jerusalem of Gold, written and composed around the 1967 war). The song enjoys a near-anthem status in Israeli culture in terms of its popularity and the national sentiments it evokes, its lyrics highlighting Jerusalem as the longed-for national capital. The short cited text shows that citing (together with signing) suffices as a token of participation. The entry is also bilingual (the cited words are in Hebrew and the signature in English), and code-switching here stresses the precision and authenticity of the quote.

Likewise, the next text (IV.2) cites a familiar biblical verse – part of a eulogy attributed to King David (2 Samuel 1:23), where the hearty relationship between warrior men is praised (King Saul and his son, Jonathan). With the help of quotation marks, the visitor highlights the cited text so it is clearly recognizable as a citation. Yet the quote serves here to introduce the visitor's own text, and with the help of the cited biblical verse, the visitor's text then disperses across and weaves together four different timeframes: 1. The biblical time of the eulogy, 2. The 1967 War and the events the AHM commemorates (when 'Israeli warriors ... overtook Jerusalem'), 3. The present, which is the duration that past sacrifices have secured and ensured/enabled ('so we can live here peacefully!'), and which is also the time of the visitor; the present time of writing. This text is thus a location where the past is made simultaneously meaningful and personal, as 'museum visitors are encouraged to understand the past by relating it to their own present circumstances' (Lord, 2007, p. 358). 4. The future, or more accurately the future-as-projected by the decree 'to always remember'. With regards to the last point, the assertion 'we will always remember', is a commissive speech act. It is a publically stated political/moral resolution on behalf of the visitor, which situates the visitor as a moral agent not only in the here-and-now of the visit, but also beyond in measures of both time and space. A related point concerns the use of first-person plural pronouns throughout the text, while signing it the single, by which the text is made to index an imagined collective (unlike the Levine family's text, which indexes participating family members). At the AHM, the collective 'we' designates the 'national 'we-group'' (Wodak, Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009, p. 33).

At the FHM it is mostly the dictum 'Always Remember, Never Forget', that is repeated, either in itself or as part of a larger text. Texts V.1-2 suggest that merely repeating the dictum qualifies as a contribution. 'Never again!' is a similar token, the public expression of which fulfills visitors' 'moral duty' (Macdonald, 2008, p. 169), and in example V.3 it serves to both open the text and close it. This unsigned text advocates that the pedagogical activities of teaching, reading and speaking up, which the museum is allegedly pursuing, will ensure that the Holocaust does not repeat. Writing amounts to 'a talismanic activity', Macdonald nicely (2008) observes, 'that can contribute towards warding off a bad future' (p. 170).

Re-timing: indexing collective time(s) of remembering

A third discursual strategy which visitors employ is *indexing collective time(s)*, or marking special occasions that they judge to be relevant to, or enhancing of, their acts of visiting.

Collective timing concerns the evocation of national, collective and mythical timeframes or epochs. Such discursual mechanisms are manifest richly at AHM, but less so at the FHM. In the former, visitors frequently index multiple timeframes, including Israel's national holidays (Independence Day, the Jerusalem Unification Day), and major political or geopolitical events, such as Wars. Religious Jewish holidays are also indexed, though less frequently. These are all collective events and times that sustain the ethnonational Jewish temporal grid. Occasionally, biographical moments are indexed, such as bar-mitzvahs, whereby visitors' biography and the national timeline are intertwined. Writing on commenting platforms supplies an occasion to bring these temporalities together and to align the individual with religious and national chronotopes.

At the FHM, the mention of non-calendrical timeframes is nearly absent. Memorial Day is mentioned once, and so is the 'free museum day'; two Jewish visitors write 'Happy Pass-over'. Biographical events, too, are rarely mentioned (one visitor mentions honeymooning in Florida). Rather, at the FHM re-timing may be best seen as taking place implicitly through discourses of witnessing, which function in acknowledging the presence or the ongoing 'now-ness' of the Holocaust. A small fragment of the texts mention witnessing (less than 2%), but 'never forget/always remember/never again' serve to extend the relevance of the Holocaust to the present and the future.

VI. AHM

1.

The 58th Day of Independence/ of the State of Israel

2.

The place is very moving/ especially in these days of the Second Lebanon War/ when soldiers are fighting in Lebanon for our houses in the Galilee./ Courage, bravery and mostly/ faith that have led our soldiers then will lead/ us today as well to calmness/ security and peace./ The Dolev Family

In the examples above, the first text suggests that merely indexing the Day of Independence suffices as a contribution. No evaluations are offered, but instead the assertion that visitors know the special date on which they came to visit. Readers of the text might also deduce that the writers might have scheduled their visit to the AHM on this special date, which bestows it with additional ceremonial meaning and commemoration/patriotic capital. If I previously noted that the visitors to the FHM mention Holocaust sites that they visited, thus locating the museum on a global-geographical grid, indexing the Day of Independence in Jerusalem locates the visit within a chronological-national grid.

In the second text, the Dolev Family mentions the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War, in this way drawing a parallel between events of the past and the present, which are judged to be analogous. The visitors find the site 'especially' moving is light of the ongoing war. While circumstances change, Israeli soldiers' 'Courage, bravery and mostly faith' remain unceasing, and so is the outcome in the battlefield. In a cyclic fashion, military might repeatedly reassures 'calmness security and peace', which is how these visitors envision civic life. Similar texts that mention the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War indicate, 'we enjoyed despite all the bombings from Lebanon' and 'we've arrived to Jerusalem despite all the bombings', which point at a range of meanings and positions that the co-occurring war

conveys. These texts are possible and plausible due to the frequent recurrence of wars in which Israel is involved. At the FHM, visitors mention recurring genocides, yet they do so rarely and do not indicate having been personally effected by them.

Conclusions

Juxtaposing the FHM and the AHM offers a comparative view of how history museums invite audience discourse and the (co)-construction of collective memory. The two Jewish museums I studied commemorate traumas, which they both moralize, albeit differently and even reversely: The AHM glorifies a 'heroic' battle where three dozen Israeli soldiers died, while at the FHM the commemorated historical trauma is colossal, and the museum curbs (rather than intensifies) its display: the core exhibition is titled 'History, Heritage and Hope,' which avoids any mention of the Holocaust and which carries a positive and hopeful orientation.

Focusing on how these museums' memory media are framed suggests ways that 'rhetorical texts hail or *summon* the person' (Blair, 1999, p. 46) – presently the museum visitor. The AHM's summon takes place in one of the inner and most sanctified halls, and concisely asks for audiences' 'impressions'. The FHM's summon is, in comparison, rich with discourse that is optimistic and encouraging. It focuses on the 'Museum experience' and is located at the museum's exit. While this location is typical of visitor books, it specifically accords with the museum's attempt to shape visitors' 'experience' in a positive direction when they leave the premises.

While museums stand or fall on how well they 'produce the past' (Katriel, 1997), it is in the museum-audience interaction that pasts are re-mediated and re-membered as part of the work of reproducing collective memory discourse. I initially examined a shift from visiting to audiencing as it is embodied in the basic *rhetorical currency* that museum commenting platforms elicit and manage. The analysis of very brief texts illuminates how their genre is embedded in specific media-memory ecologies, and how they diverge from the framework of annals/records/logs (institutional entries) to publically present voice. The notion of *rhetorical currency* suggests that studying visitors' discourses in museums as 'content' alone is incomplete and conceptually inaccurate. Visitors do not simply 'generate content', and they are rather engaged in ritualistic forms of participation, specifically writing, which is part and parcel of the public ritual of the museum visit. Conner (1989) notes that commemoration should be viewed 'not as a type of symbolic representation but as a specie of [the] performative' (p. 70), and these are precisely the affordances of the museums' memory media that allow visitors to go 'on air' (on-display), to access collective memory discourse, and to offer their take on it.

The analysis of longer texts highlights three responsive discursive strategies that characterize visitors' memory discourse. Establishing addressivity, Re-citing, and Re-timing serve as three analytical, heuristic tools, which I offer in a preliminary manner. These discursive strategies serve to reconstruct different types of collective memories and narratives, together with visitors' roles and responsibilities. *Establishing addressivity* concerns who visitors address when remediating and remembering in museums. By opting one addressivity structure over another, visitors reflect on the museum ('thank you for a very special place'), or alternatively 'short-circuit' institutional mediation to interact directly with history: 'We owe you EVERYTHING'. *Re-citing* concerns recalling practices

that demonstrate that visitors know relevant cultural discourses, and are able to reproduce them in situ and on request. As participants in the museum narration, visitors add to its display, doing so through writing activities that are ritualistic forms of entextualization (Urban, 1996). In this way, new intertextualities emerge, enriching and updating collective memory discourse, while at the same time transforming texts that were initially *unrelated* to the museums' discourses ('resemiotization'. Scollon, 2008). Lastly, *Re-timing* concerns how, over and above institutional chronology of record-keeping (annals/records), visitors index collective time(s) so as to position themselves within relevant temporal frameworks (or chronotopes. Bakhtin, 1986). From this point and on, the 'time of the visitor' should not be taken literally as the time of the visit, but as the *performative and politicized temporal frame* within which the ritual of the visit is engulfed. I note with regards to these strategies, that within a museal context we may view them as echoing curatorial practices (if only in the spaces allotted to visitors): Re-citing is a collecting practice where visitors add textual artifacts (which they deem relevant) to the museum's collection and display; Re-timing illustrates how visitors (re)arrange temporalities on display; and Establishing addressivity demonstrates visitors' opportunity to establish *their* vectors of dialogicality, such as, for instance, engaging in dialogue in, but *not with*, the museum.

The analysis of these discursual strategies, the variations they evince, and the frequencies in which they are employed, shed light on sociocultural and institutional modes of participation in the interactional, situated, and public (re)production of collective memory discourse. In the remaining space, however, I wish to illuminate two additional empirical points. First, that only little takes place in terms of visitors' re-rendering of these museums' narrations and the collective remembering they institutionally advocate. At the AHM there are virtually no texts that express critique in relation to the site's political agenda of sanctifying the memory of the 'fallen heroes' and with it the conjoined ethos of warfare and patriotism. At the FHM much is offered by way of post-Holocaust hope, agency and redemption, but little in terms of either the colossality of the Holocaust or the repeated recurrences of genocides worldwide. Visitors' discourse affirms that Holocaust memory 'is a prevalent dominant discourse', as Simon (2006) notes critically, 'that reduces the significance of this history to the warning 'we must not let the past be repeated'' (p. 118).

Second, compared to Holocaust commemoration in St. Pete, Florida, collective memory discourse at Jerusalem is significantly richer and more vital. In terms of Establishing addressivity, most texts address historical figures directly, which none of the texts at the FHM do. They do not offer comments on the museum's display as much as they perform profoundly appreciative interactions with the historical protagonists, re-establishing their glorification and positioning them in the same ontic plane as the visitors (and vice versa). In terms of Re-citing, the Holocaust's de-contextualization is also its de-politicization, and the textual and visual vocabulary pertaining to collective national memory is far richer than that of the Holocaust, and connects memory with a plethora of contemporary discourses. Moreover, and as I noted earlier, the AHM's commemorative book emerges as a *regenerative platform*, where themes that were formerly *unrelated* to national commemoration are charged with national meanings. This gives an organic sense to collective national memory at Ammunition Hill. Similarly, through Re-timing practices historical events are relived and revitalized, and are linked to various temporal frameworks – from ethnonational holidays and holly days, to co-occurring wars, terror attacks, and

other national events. As a result, while in both museums visitors' discourse are moralized and future-oriented, national or nationalist memory discourse feels urgent, vital, and multi-faceted compared with the idiomatic and clichéd 'never forget'.

These findings are partly a result of the different types of location that these museums inhabit: one at the site of a historic battle and at the epicenter of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the other – an Atlantic away from Europe. Visitor discourse at AHM is tightly 'embedded within the 'Container of the Nation-State'' (Levy & Sznajder, 2002, p. 89), while the global spread of sites and representations of Holocaust commemoration offers that the 'Holocaust is turned into a holocaust', which is a sign that has become 'a de-contextualized symbol' (Levy & Sznajder, 2002; p. 102. Also Sznajder, 2013. This suggests future comparisons with visitor discourses at historic Holocaust sites). In Peters (2001) theorizing of media and witnessing across space and time, he observes that 'distance is a ground of distrust and doubt' (p. 717). He suggests that spatiotemporal proximities can afford media users – presently museum audiences – the role of witnesses. I conclude that while at the FHM visitor discourse does not seem to suggest they are witnesses, we can call this 'less than witnessing', at the AHM the shorter duration and the annihilation of physical distance from the historical events, and the immediacy and perpetual quality of wars and the Conflict, contribute to a 'more than witnessing' role, i.e. problematically re-situating audiences in, rather than separate from, history.

Notes

1. Arriving at accurate figures of visitors who write or read in the books is tricky, mainly because many simply do not reach the location of the platforms. At the AHM, visitors often stop short before reaching the innermost halls, and at the FHM they sometimes visit only the second floor (the temporary exhibitions) or the third floor (intended for talks and presentations). Still, my observations in these and other museums indicate that approximately 10% of the visitors read the books (compared with 20% as reported in Macdonald, 2005), and about a half of this figure or less write in them (Noy, 2015).
2. Transcription note. Forward slash sign [/] indicates a line break, a backward slash [\] indicates the use of forward slash sign, and square brackets indicate paratextual features and comments I added. I use [surname] to replace visitors' surnames for reasons of anonymity (in cases where visitors' anonymity might be compromised). Italicized words indicate words that were originally written in Hebrew (otherwise texts were written in English).
3. Ulpan classes are intensive Hebrew learning classes, and 'J-m' is shorthand for 'Jerusalem.' The date is written according to the Jewish calendar (the year 5766 is indicated in Hebrew letters).
4. Mount Scopus is a location in north-east Jerusalem.

Acknowledgment

I am deeply thankful to CDS's two anonymous Reviewers, and the Editor, for their insightful comments – discussions, really – which helped me rearticulate my positions on a topic of peculiar difficulty. The article is dedicated to my daughters: Noa, who likes (loves) museums, and Yael, who dislikes (hates) them.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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