

# EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHY

## Authenticity, Embodiment and Cultural Heritage

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The intention in this article is to propose an alternative to the modernist structural manner of referring to and representing the Holocaust. The alternative is based on performative paradigms in tourist research and on the reading of Peter Eisenmann's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a cultural heritage site in the center of Berlin. In places of remembrance such as Auschwitz-Birkenau the place is the scene of the crime but in the emotional geography of Peter Eisenmann the visitor experiences a cool authenticity, a light physical inscription in the cultural heritage. Contrary to the consuming of places which the gazing tourist perform the witnessing visitor invests bodily in this place and this investment becomes the coin of exchange with the past.

*Keywords:* Holocaust tourism, witnessing, body-investment, cool authenticity

Places mean a lot to us as individuals. We were born there, we went to school there, we met the love of our life there, and our grandparents have lived there all their lives. In other words, the site seems per se to hold the phenomenological perspective of embodiment and place. More complex entities, such as nations, also have places as important components in their own construction of the nation, often the sites of important battles, whether defeats or victories. Cognitively seen, we can partake in various relationships with our surroundings: we can sense them, imagine them, or understand them (Sartre 1940). Memory is inscribed in the sensing – or more radically: memory is necessary if we are to sense reality at all (Rosset 1985; Ricoeur 2000). But likewise, the meeting with the world is mixed with our conceptions of the world, more imaginary images tied to the fact that we see the world as we want to see it (Storey 2003). In other words, Sartre's tripartition never appears in a pure form, but always in specific combinations. Previous conceptions, memories, and wishful thinking mix with our sensed impression of the world.

When we attempt to describe places' importance, the attempt is often linked to their ability to make us remember the past, bring it forth as something we remember (the memorial, the monument), and in that memory, more or less mythologizing elements can appear. The war monuments found in any city with respect for itself are excellent sites in or around which the past is (re)constructed and the future of the nation is built – often in a mythological light. The traces of the past, of course, vary. Ricoeur says that the past is material, since it can be traced in the landscape, and also that it is immaterial, since it can be traced in the human mind, for instance as the impression of affect. In this article, I will focus on the indexical formation of traces. In classical Peircean semiotics, an indexical sign is a sign closely related to that which it represents (smoke from fire). But rather than point to the referent, indexicality can also be about the effect (pragmatic or emotional) that a text, a work or a phenomenon has on someone (Barthes 1983; Knudsen & Thomsen 2002). This article will focus

on material traces that are indexical in both senses of the word.

In German there is a distinction between different types of memorials to the past. A *Denkmal* (memorial) is a place that symbolically brings to mind the past, meaning that the place has been designated in the present to *represent* the past in certain ways, such as in the form of a monument. An *Erinnerungsort* (a place of remembrance) can also be a monument, but it is a monument specific to that place, because it cannot be anywhere else. Here, the place stands in an indexical relationship to the referent, in that *the place must be the scene of the crime* in order to perform this function. An *Erinnerungsort* does not so much represent as *present* a past that calls forth definite reactions in those who experience such places. A third term, a *Mahnmal* (a warning memorial), is meant to remind us of the past in a certain way: it must be ethically appealing, relevant to a negative historical legacy. An *Erinnerungsort* and a *Denkmal* can thus also be a *Mahnmal*.

### The Nature of the Trace – An Analysis of Signs

The monument for the American soldiers fallen in Vietnam, *The National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.*, called The Wall, which was unveiled in 1984, is a *Denkmal* and a *Mahnmal* for the Vietnam War. Theoretically it could have been placed anywhere, but is situated in Washington, and as such in the official capital, far from the actual crime scenes, but close to the centre of politics. On the monumental black wall are 1,050 names of Americans fallen. The wall has a smooth, shiny surface, and the sober minimalism invites distanced, aesthetic contemplation – totally in the spirit of aesthetic sensibility prevalent in the 1980s. The Vietnam monument interpellates the viewer to ethical reflection via aesthetic distance in the Kantian sense.

In contrast, we have the Holocaust Museum and the Auschwitz-Birkenau monument as *Erinnerungsort* and *Mahnmal* in that it is both a monument to the past, but also the scene of the crime, where the atrocities of the past took place, so that the ethical interpellation is exceedingly present here.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was added to Unesco's list of

World Heritage sites in 1979. The cultural heritage here is composed of the painful memories in the heart of Europe.

As a memorial, Auschwitz-Birkenau is an indexical sign that documents itself as place. The symbolic plenty of the site is closely linked to its materiality and its ability to document and bear witness as an indexical sign. The site is a trace in itself, and a trace that has both iconic and symbolic manifestation. The site has – bar none – authenticity (Lowenthal 1985).

A European variant of the Washington Wall monument is Peter Eisenmann's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, which was commissioned in 1999 and unveiled in May, 2005. The memorial is located in the heart of Berlin, close to Brandenburger Tor, the German parliament, Joseph Goebbels's villa, Adolf Hitler's chancellery, and underground, the bunker where Hitler shot himself on April 20 1945 – adding a *metonymical proximity* to that which the memorial represents. This is an important point, both in relation to the authenticity of the memorial, but also in relation to the form of experience that the memorial allows. The memorial exists as a space that one can enter, be in for a period of time, and leave again – an affect-space where one can participate in a dialogue with the past based on the body's reaction to the environment.

In other words, both monuments have a symbolic relationship with that which they represent, but there are distinct differences in the monuments' visual impression, and thus the experience of the tourist at the monuments is very different. There have been a number of significant shifts in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities concerning the relationship between ethics and aesthetics, which we can use the Berlin monument to understand, but we can also use them to aid in a reading of the monument that raises it above its weighty modernistic heritage.

I deliberately use the designation "tourist" for the visitors to these historical monuments. With it, I want to point out two things. There is an extensive theme-tourism to crime-scenes ("blacks spots" or "sensation sights", Rojek 1997: 62), and also, the designation "tourist" actualises reflection on the relationship between the tourist-gaze's aesthetic con-

sumption of sites (Urry 1990), and the ethical appeal emitted by Mahnmål sites.

### **Holocaust Tourism<sup>1</sup>**

Every year, 700,000 tourists/pilgrims visit the site of Auschwitz, and six million people each year visit the museums in Amsterdam, Dachau, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, Oświęcim and Washington (Cole 1999: 113). With the Jewish museums in Berlin and Copenhagen and Eisenmann's great monument, the number of visitors far exceeds those who, through their families, were directly involved in the extermination of the Jews. Thus there is what one might call a cultural heritage's mass-tourism to these *Erinnerungsorte, Denkmäler and Mahnmale*, a cultural heritage's tourism that seeks the very traumatic core of the European past.

The juxtaposition of the Holocaust and mass tourism implies a representational-ethical problem long insisted upon by cultural theorists, literary scholars, and historians (Felman & Laub 1992; Friedlander 1992; Lyotard 1988; Sandbye 2001; Pollock 2005). For these theorists, the point is that the Holocaust on the one hand must be remembered by following generations, and on the other hand, that the Holocaust as event is so genuine that it can only be represented with difficulty. In other words, the Holocaust is an event we can barely allow ourselves to represent, because every representation or putting into words implies a hackneying or a profanation. Among other things, that was the lesson learned from the linguistically critical viewpoint of the 1950s and 60s, as it was expressed in French modernism (Duras, Beckett), and by Danish modernists like Villy Sørensen. One might counter by pointing out that some media (such as the photo: Sandbye) are better or more considerate with respect to representing the indescribable, but the point is that the ethical dilemma is expressed via a – let us call it – ban on representation. A ban on representation that can lead to a mythologizing of the event.

Dominick LaCapra (1998) is very precise when he points out that this type of logic contributes to canonising the event by surrounding it with a ban on images like the Jewish ban on pictures. Operating

with the indescribable in the very core of this problem area is to make the monstrosity of the event into a general figure around the limits of representation. LaCapra is extremely sceptical about the reading of this historically specific trauma as a *structural* phenomenon, and as a kind of symbol for modernism (and by the way, it is Adorno, if anyone, who has canonised this way of interpreting the event). LaCapra finds such mythologizing destructive with regard to a historical understanding of the event, and to more context-dependent readings of forms of representation, a cause that I also plead here.

Another criticism of the mythologizing of Auschwitz concerns the unavoidable *fictionalising* of the event by its mythologizing. Tim Cole (1999) expresses the fear that the place is thus made vulnerable to attacks on its documentary truth value. When places are mythologized, they clearly acquire fictional status, thus losing documentary terrain in people's consciousness. Despite what one might think, it becomes more possible to deny the Holocaust when it is mythologized.

Apart from mythologizing, the documentary impulse of the site lies in very concrete relics belonging to the victims of the extermination of the Jews. Suitcases with labels from earlier travels, piles of shoes, hair, prized belongings – all relics with great authenticity, but objects doomed to decay, according to Cole. If the relics are to act as proof of the authenticity of the event, then the Holocaust as symbolic site is doomed to vanish as the things decay. Cole's argument is thus double: on the one hand, he warns against too violent a mythologizing of the event, on the other hand, he warns against too much dependence on perishable relics.<sup>2</sup>

In his work, Eisenmann goes beyond these two points of view, which point out the criticisable in a form of representation that views the Holocaust as a structural figure out of context, and which is on the lookout for fictionalisation as well as too great a dependence on perishable proofs.

### **The Hunger for Reality**

The concept of hunger for reality is central to a characteristic of aesthetic sensibility at the turn of the

century (Knudsen & Thomsen 2002). The 1990s, or some say the entire twentieth century (Žižek 2002), has suffered from the hunger for reality, both in the field of politics as well as in the desire to realise the fantasy image (Nazism), in the field of art through the will of the avant-garde to let art and life merge, or as a “passionate worship of the real” (Žižek 2002; Foster 1996) in a number of fields. The will for reality often results precisely in the limits of what can be spoken and sensed becoming the object of aesthetic attention. Therefore the interest in traumas, whether personal or collective, in art, culture, and politics has been enormous throughout the 90s.

With the trauma, the limits of what can be said and sensed are touched on; with the trauma, reality towers up as precisely *the real*. Interest in reality as a passionate worshipping of the real is a way of presenting *the irrefutable evidence of testimony* on the world. Interest in the eyewitness (Ellis 2002) or testimony on the whole (Felman & Laub 1992; Caruth 1995; Ricoeur 2000) both in artistic practices (Knudsen 2003 a) and in general, for instance in reporting the news, in documentaries etc., is an expression of the fact that accounts from “the edge of life” where bodies and the mental apparatus are in more or less danger (Knudsen 2003 b). These testimonies can be regarded as weighty, because we as observers can see events as affective and physical traces in the descriptions by the witnesses.

These phenomena re-actualise the need to think the phenomenologically sensing body as a body with competences and capacities beyond language. So in itself there is not necessarily any conflict in directly interpellating the body affectively and ethically.

We can say that there are three layers/levels at play that are of interest in the trauma as the core of personal and collective identities. There is a *documentary-referential* level, that treats the irrefutable truth value of that which is described (catastrophic eyewitness stories, as seen with Sept. 11, the Tsunami in South-East Asia, the Beslan hostage affair, Hurricane Katrina in the US). The second level treats *the traces left in the soul* by the traumatic events. Events must be experienced by *someone* in order to be traumatic, and the trauma can be seen and heard in faces

and voices. In that way, the viewer is also activated morally and emotionally (Boltanski 1999; Chouliaraki 2003; Knudsen 2004). Victims and observers are linked in what we might call an affective fellowship.

The third level could be called the *pragmatic effects* of the trauma, or its context-related meaning. Obviously this is a question of different interpretations of the cultivation of limits. The cultivation of limits was an expression of linguistic criticism or linguistic scepticism in France in the 1950s and 60s (symptomatically expressed in Barthe’s famous comment on the language as Fascist!). In the 90’s valorising of both individual and collective traumas, there is no question of a frontal attack on the symbolic order. Rather it is a question of its limits being thematised in order for it to be re-established. The victims ask to be re-inscribed in a relationship that has momentarily been broken, and the witnesses again validate this re-establishment of a contract and confirm it in the hearing of others. In other words, a re-establishment of a contract of fellowship.

The first level treats the relationship of the representation to the referential level (truth), the second level is concerned with whether the victims are able to affect the witnesses emotionally, and the third level is concerned with reciprocal acknowledgment and the establishment of new contracts between victim and witness. On the last level, we find ourselves in the witness’s practice and pragmatic use of the phenomena.

Before turning to Eisenmann’s memorial, it would be advantageous to look at how theoretical literature on tourism has gone from thematising the relationship between tourist and destination as a balance of power to thematising it as a bodily state.

### **Tourism, Gaze and Body**

The tourist experience in Auschwitz has been described as follows in *Images of the Holocaust*: “We were tourists of guilt and righteousness: guilt at an almost pornographic sense of expectancy of the voyeurism ahead. And yet guilt tempered by a sense of righteousness at choosing to come to this place” (Cole 1999: 97). According to Cole, elements of the emotions linked to the Holocaust-tourist experience

are righteousness and guilty voyeuristic greed at the prospect of the chamber of horrors that Auschwitz is to us descendants.

The feeling of guilt refers to the voyeurism, but also to the fundamental fact that it emanates from a body that is safe from the threat of death permanently hanging over the inmates of Auschwitz. Urry (1990) has thematised the tourist's gaze as analogous to the doctor's gaze at a patient, a gaze with the power to diagnose the patient in relation to a specific professional knowledge, and which places the patient in an inferior and subservient position as one who is being gazed upon. Urry thematises the relationship between the tourist and the locality as a structural relationship between One and the Other.

In continuation of Dean MacCannell's (1976) thematising of the western tourist's longing for originality and authenticity as a reflection of modern life's lack of these things, Urry operates with the tourist bringing his preconceptions with him from home, and these are not changed or tested by the tourist experience. Modern tourism's indubitably increased degree of mediatisation to some degree confirms this ethnocentric figure, so that "a circular confirmation of self-identity" (Jackson 2005: 191) is implicated. Mediaisation – through the Internet, TV, and films – can easily contribute to maintaining a specific gaze on the world in spite of increased mobility, both virtually and physically.

The Tsunami photo which is the cover illustration of this issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* was named News Photo of the year 2004, and was taken by photographer Martin Lehmann and published in the Danish newspaper *Politiken*. The photo can help us formulate some fundamental changes in the understanding of tourism, the gaze, and power; changes that have taken place since Urry's book from 1990. Since it was published, there has been a performative shift in tourism-research (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). The modern tourist experience is no longer thematised solely as a visual phenomenon, but as a *bodily investment in a place* (Crouch & Lübbren 2003).

This picture can be seen as a perfect echo of Holocaust-tourism's feelings of guilt over being in the place where such horrific things have happened,

coupled with self-righteousness at having chosen this place. Of course, we cannot know what motive the tourists in the picture have for being there, or more correctly, for remaining there, in this post-catastrophic place, but the result of their remaining can clearly be seen. We can say that the picture shows both local inhabitants and visitors in the same frame as being the same, yet different. The catastrophe showed that both groups are potential victims, precisely because of their physical presence at the site, but there is a clear degree of difference in the victim-state, depending on whether the site is "home" or an exotic foreign destination.

On one level, the picture can be interpreted as the total triumph of western, ethnocentric tourism. Here lie three self-satisfied westerners, fully absorbed in their own holiday project, completely lacking any form of sensitivity to the suffering of others. Despite the fact that the place shows clear traces of the catastrophe, and thus takes on the character of a concrete "vulnerable" place, the tourists insist the place – as a mental projection of their own desires – still be the holiday paradise they originally came here to enjoy. In this interpretation, the balance of power is unambiguous. The western tourist's search for exotic authenticity (which is a mythologizing of people and places) does not allow itself to be corrected by "petty" considerations of the intrusion of reality into his or her holiday paradise.

In a reading of the balance of power in pact with Urry's thoughts from *The Tourist Gaze*, the two representatives of the local inhabitants are the staged "victims" in the tourist's own narrative. But the two inhabitants, turning their faces to the camera, are smiling. Without denying that there is a balance of power in the relationship between the tourist and the local inhabitants, the body language expresses conscious demeanour.

Whether or not the smile means that the local inhabitants are "playing the part" of happy, service-minded tourist-servants (i.e. playing the part in a staged authenticity (MacCannell 1976)), or it is the expression of a "smile, you're on" attitude, or more likely, it is a commentary grin at the grotesque sight that meets the viewer (the photographer, us), the

smile is an expression of a consciousness of the role that partly lifts the smiling persons above the tragedy of the situation. Here, it is a question of people who react more “role-consciously” or theatrically in relation to their own role as “happy locals”. We have no way of knowing whether they are happy, or what the real reason for the expression is, but the conscious performance gives the local “performers” in the picture, in spite of their dependence on the tourist economy, a kind of symbolic power.

The symbolic power lies in their, by their performance, showing themselves conscious of their stagedness and steadfastness in determining relationships. The smiling attitude and the direct reference to the visual setup create an alliance between the photographer/viewer and the local person, which suddenly places the tourist as staged. The photo depicts the tourist as introverted, self-centred – and in the picture, this is objectified from without. That is to say that a certain tourist mode – the ethnocentric tourist gaze in Urry’s sense – is portrayed as a partial element of this photo, but it is insufficient to determine how the entire picture can or should be read. The picture objectifies the visiting tourists (who thus take over the inhabitants’ place for the ethnocentric gaze); it allots a reciprocity to the inhabitants that competes with the unequivocal balance of power. The viewer of the photo then becomes a meta-tourist, who is no longer part of a culture-clash, but who is a witness to the clash in this photo, which juggles several forms of tourism.

Neither the tourists nor the local people in the picture pose as victims or potential victims, and this acts to give the picture the surplus of meaning that is one of its basic components. The third level of reading the picture is precisely its formal surface level, which is marked by the juxtaposition of elements that cannot be juxtaposed: wreckage, smiles, sunbathers. The picture does not rest in a spontaneous reading, and it is this structural excess that makes the photo dynamic and enigmatic.

The interpretation of this photo shows that the unequivocal balance of power maintained by Urry’s perspective can be challenged by a new gaze at the tourist experience as body-invested and body-

exposed. So experience-oriented tourism to “black spots” need not necessarily be read as a callous search for an intense, genuine experience, or as ethically problematic because of the ethical imbalance in the relationship between victim and visiting tourist (Urry 1990: 7). The phenomenologically sensing, experiencing body – simply being there, in that place – is an expression of a symbolic exchange with the victims. The “coin” exchanged can be compared to the wordless embrace, the silent empathy.

### **Authenticity**

Who is the Other in Holocaust tourism, which must be regarded as cultural-heritage tourism in the broad sense? Is the Other simply a staged element in my own theatre? (I prove my self-righteousness as a good citizen by visiting this tourist attraction, thus distinguishing myself from the others, who only go to Disneyland to enjoy themselves ...) On the contrary, I would say, and especially not when it comes to Eisenmann’s experiential work in the centre of Berlin.

I mentioned that Auschwitz as tourist attraction has great authentic value, because its sign-character is indexical. The site has an aura and symbolic wealth in the Benjaminic sense, because it is the actual original crime scene. In his discussion of the originality of a work of art, Benjamin distinguishes between auratic objects and traces. The trace is just that in which the relationship between representation and that which is represented is close (as in the indexical sign), while auratic objects are distinguished by the distance they instil (Bærenholdt & Haldrup 2004). In their article about cultural-heritage tourism for the Viking museum in Roskilde, Bærenholdt and Haldrup find that it is “the replicas, the re-enactments and so forth that enable visitors to ‘take possession of things’” (2004: 86). In other words, it is only when cultural heritage has an experiential dimension that it feels authentic. In this connection it is important to distinguish between genuineness and authenticity. Genuineness relates to the object’s character of being a genuine trace (hair, shoes, or suitcases that belonged to prisoners in the Auschwitz concentration camp), while authenticity

concerns the *bodily-phenomenological* experience of a place, which can involve various types of stage-setting at and of the sites.

When as an analyst one finds that tourists experience stage-set elements of a culture-heritage tourist attraction as more authentic than elements that are “only” traces, the finding refers to precisely the analytic distinction we must make between genuineness and authenticity. Genuineness poses the question of the truth of the trace, while authenticity always concerns the reception of an event, the *experience of authenticity*. The point is that stage-set traces can also make for extremely authentic experiences, just as genuine traces need not have an experiential value.

With the authenticity term, we leave the discussion of the genuineness of traces (truth), and turn to a discussion of the effect of events (pragmatism). The effects can be both pragmatic and affective (like traces on the soul).

Focussing on the bodily-phenomenological experience of something gives rise to specific types of aesthetics. Thus, aesthetics become sense-borne, relational, more open, less elitist than modernistic aesthetics, since it is the relationship between thing/place and the person experiencing it that is in focus (Knudsen & Thomsen 2002: 17). This form of sense-borne and experiential aesthetics developed to a marked degree throughout the art and culture of the 1990s.

Another recurrent aesthetic trait that can be stressed in the expression of the 90's, is the mating of “hot” and “cool” strategies. Beginning with the 90s, a proximity strategy is often mated with “coolness” and distance. In snapshot photography, dogma films, art-performance and installation, and minimalist prose, cool “surface consciousness and affective approach interact” (ibid.: 8). The “hot” strategies can then be designated as those that primarily make an affective approach to the audience, or that have the bodily involvement of the viewer as an element in the shaping of the work or event. The “cool” strategies involve emotional and cognitive distance.

Tom Selwyn introduces a distinction between “cool” and “hot” authenticity that can be used here. Warm authenticity touches on the mythological or

meta-narrative character of tourism. In tourism, the relationship between the self and the other is played through as a mythological relationship. The other “derives from belonging to an imagined world which is variously pre-modern, pre-commoditized or part of a benign whole recaptured in the mind of a tourist” (Selwyn 1996: 21). The other is mythologized, but unlike what happens in Orientalism's demonisation and idealisation of the other, this takes place with a social goal in mind: the other stands for a form of sociality that the tourist has lost sight of in his post-modern landscape. Thus the longing for authenticity is still an important driving force for post-modern tourists.

The cool search for authenticity is about the tourist's desire for knowledge. In it, the tourist is viewed as an ethnographer, who in semi-scientific fashion seeks out his object. For Selwyn, cool authenticity is essential, since it is able to dam up tourists' mythological fantasies about the other. If authenticity were not present as a dimension of knowledge, there would be “no way out of an eventual wholesale Disneyfication of one part of the world built on the wasteland of the other” (ibid.: 30).

So we can conclude the discussion of the concept of authenticity as follows: 1) the adjective “authentic” is used about something that is felt and experienced as such, and refers primarily to the reception of places and their staging. It is useful to distinguish between the genuineness of places or phenomena, which has to do with the degree of truth and closeness to the referential, and their authenticity. 2) We then move from a discussion of genuineness and originality on a referential level to a discussion of authenticity on a recipient level. 3) On the recipient level – or more precisely, in the relationship between work/phenomenon and recipient – we can distinguish between “cool” and “hot” effects. The proximity strategy has as a “hot” effect the fact that it inscribes the recipient bodily and affectively, fundamentally creating fellowships. Distance strategies are linked to a dimension of knowledge in the objects and thus create an analytic-reflexive distance.

Holocaust tourism or black-spot tourism in general is, of course, special as regards the discussion of

authenticity. As traces, the sites are genuine, and they are all scenes of crimes or located in the metonymic vicinity of the scenes of the actions symbolised. That is to say that these are sites that are sought out because they are traces, so that authenticity is closely linked to genuineness. In Holocaust tourism, all levels behave effectively: the referential truth level, the affective viewer level, and the symbolic re-inscribing level (I come here, but I can leave again).

In the special form of cultural-heritage tourism we find in relation to the Holocaust, the tourist's "other" is the victim. In this form of tourism, a monument over the victims is built, while the viewer does not suffer the same fate. Griselda Pollock sees travelling to and leaving the places again as ethically problematic, and thus maintains the structural reading of the places' representation of the event. "To go, to tour *and to leave*, is to defy that demonic logic, to put 'Auschwitz' back in a place with an entrance *and an exit*, to see its impoverished remains as the closed containers of a history that is past and fading" (Pollock 2005: 176).

My point in this connection is that it is possible to make a form of representation of this gruesome event that is ethically defensible, and that this representational form approaches presentation, i.e. is dependent on the visitor's bodily investment in the phenomenon. Just as in Lehman's photo, the post-Urryan tourist is one who is bodily exposed and bodily invested.

### **The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**

The Memorial for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust consists of Peter Eisenmann's 19,000 square meters of sculpture park above ground, along with the 800 square meters of information and documentation centre underground. In the centre, the many camps outside Germany are documented, with the stories of victims from each country from which Jews were deported. In addition there is documentation for the high degree to which German Jews were and are an integral part of German history.

The sculpture park consists of 2,700 rectangular stelae, all 95 cm wide and placed at distances of 95 cm. The total length is 2,375 m and the height of the

pillars varies from 0 to 4 m. The grid structure is full of holes, which means that new spaces frequently appear inside the structure, either making the passages expand, contract, or occasionally end in a dead end. The informational material on the site states that the memorial explores the relationship between the rational closed system and the chaos and lack of stability that the system nevertheless gives rise to. One might say that there is a great difference in how the memorial is overseen visually, and the experience of moving around in it as an affective space. The floor level constantly varies; rises and falls are incorporated into the structure of the stelae, making the bodily experience slightly dizzying. Rather like the feeling of losing contact with the ground caused by the camera's movement in Lars Von Trier's films.<sup>3</sup>

In the underground documentation centre, we find a great number of stories, texts, knowledge, voices, and pictures. Above ground, in Eisenmann's work, there are no pictures and no texts, merely a room one can enter. And obviously its use varies widely. Some – like children – play, others wander contemplatively about, while others concentrate on attempting to decipher the structure.

On the surface, the memorial maintains the modernistic stricture on images and representation, in that nothing indicates the actual event (no piles of shoes, of hair or possessions). There are no concrete victims present that we as witnesses can recognize as victims. There are no catastrophic scenes. The pictures we carry in our memories of this epoch in European history are certainly present in the imaginations of some of the visitors. But my point with regard to Eisenmann's work is that because of its expanse, it acts as a *place* in the centre of Berlin, a place that because of its aesthetic construction offers the visitor intensity and a special bodily experience. It is a pluralistic place, a memorial, but also an oasis in the city, an intensive space.

It can be advantageous to read the memorial as an emotional geographic place, in which feelings must be understood "experientially and conceptually – in terms of its socio-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states" (Bondi, Davidson & Smith 2006: 3). We

are dealing with an architecture where the intensity arises from the site's position in the metonymical proximity of a "crime scene" to which the visitor's body reacts, and of the experience that the place "calls to" the visitor's bodily investment in it. As previously stated, the symbolic form of exchange at this site is the bodily investment of the visitor.

We recognise bodily investment from certain film genres, but we also know it from the TV-viewer's affective empathy in both collective and individual suffering, confessions, and traumas, in that these events are communicated to us in especially aesthetic manners. In these cases, the viewer has an affective exchange with the screen, and this "politics of pity" (Boltanski 1999) can result in debate, donations of money, or tears. The similarity between the two forms of experience is that the sight of the needy, the traumatised, the outcast, gives rise to a reaction, which can be political, economic or discursive. And this reaction is brought about by the emotions and the bodily experience. In the visual confrontation with suffering, we as viewers are witnesses to others' testimony, and we are eyewitnesses outside the framework of the catastrophic scenarios. To witness the tragedy of others is the same as to recognise the other (Caruth 1995; Laub 1995). To recognise the other via one's own – often physical – reaction, means a re-incorporation in the symbolic order from which the other – because of the catastrophe – has fallen.

In Eisenmann's memorial, the visitor is also a witness, a witness to a traumatic epoch in European history. But where testimony to suffering from all over the world daily intrudes and cannot be avoided because of the media's compression of time and space, the Holocaust Monument is a site one seeks out as a visitor, like any other cultural heritage site. My point here is that with Eisenmann's memorial, we have a *light* physical inscription in the cultural heritage. Here, there is no monument or memorial one visits, reads and circumvents in the ordinary sense. Here, we really have an intensive site, that one enters, and where one has a physical interchange with history. The memorial is an experiential site, and that which is consumed is emotional intensity. In that way, Ei-

senmann's memorial is an emotional place, child of the increased focus on experiences and physical intensity. The body is not at risk in a form of ritualised overstepping of limits (bungy jump, roller coasters) but the body in this place becomes the coin of exchange with the past.

The memorial is – in spite of its proximity to a crime scene – a thoroughly symbolic place. Emotional ties and fellowships are established between the victims from the past and the survivors of the present through the memorial-visitor's investing body. When Pollock, in his analysis of Auschwitz-Birkenau as current tourist attraction claims that it is ethically offensive as visitor and witness to leave a place from where no one otherwise escaped alive, this reading is linked to Auschwitz-Birkenau as an Erinnerungsort. In that way, Eisenmann's memorial as Denkmal is a thoroughly simulated place with a much freer framework. Auschwitz-Birkenau's genuineness as sign is here replaced by cool authenticity on the level of reception, where the coin of exchange is the body, but where there is an implicit link to a great deal of knowledge. But it does not need to be present in order to experience the place as an intensive emotional geography. One can tell the story to the children who play inside and on top of the memorial.

### Summary

My intention in this article has been to propose an alternative to the modernistic structural manner of referring to and representing the Holocaust. The alternative is formulated based on new paradigms in tourist research, and on the reading of Peter Eisenmann's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as an emotional geography in which the visitor invests his or her body. The question of authenticity is in focus here. In a distinction between cultural-heritage sites as genuine or authentic, Eisenmann's memorial can be designated as authentic because of its physical experiential value. The bodily investment, whose form this article calls cool authentic, is a way of exchanging with and recognising the victims. But it is not the only way: the memorial is also a place where one can be intensively present in

the urban space, and in that case, the site offers an aesthetic oasis.

## Notes

- 1 Some people regard Holocaust tourism as part of a larger genre of modern tourism: "black-spot tourism" (Rojek 1997 and Cole 1999), where places like the Bridge over the River Kwai, the highway crossroads between route 466 and 41 near Cholane, California, the place in Dallas (the Texas School Book Depository) where Lee Harvey Oswald shot JFK, the place (the sidewalk outside the Dakota Apartment building) in New York where John Lennon was shot, and the place in the Parisian tunnel where Princess Diana died. However, there is the significant difference between Holocaust tourism and black-spot tourism that black-spot tourism is closely linked to admiration for the dead and cultivation of their stardom. Holocaust tourism cannot be linked to any such cultic worship; it is a journey to a black hole in the history of Europe.
- 2 The personal, concrete effects as traces, and, of course, the architecture itself, are the focal point of how the Jewish Museum in Berlin represents the event.
- 3 Especially in *Epidemic and Breaking the Waves*.

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