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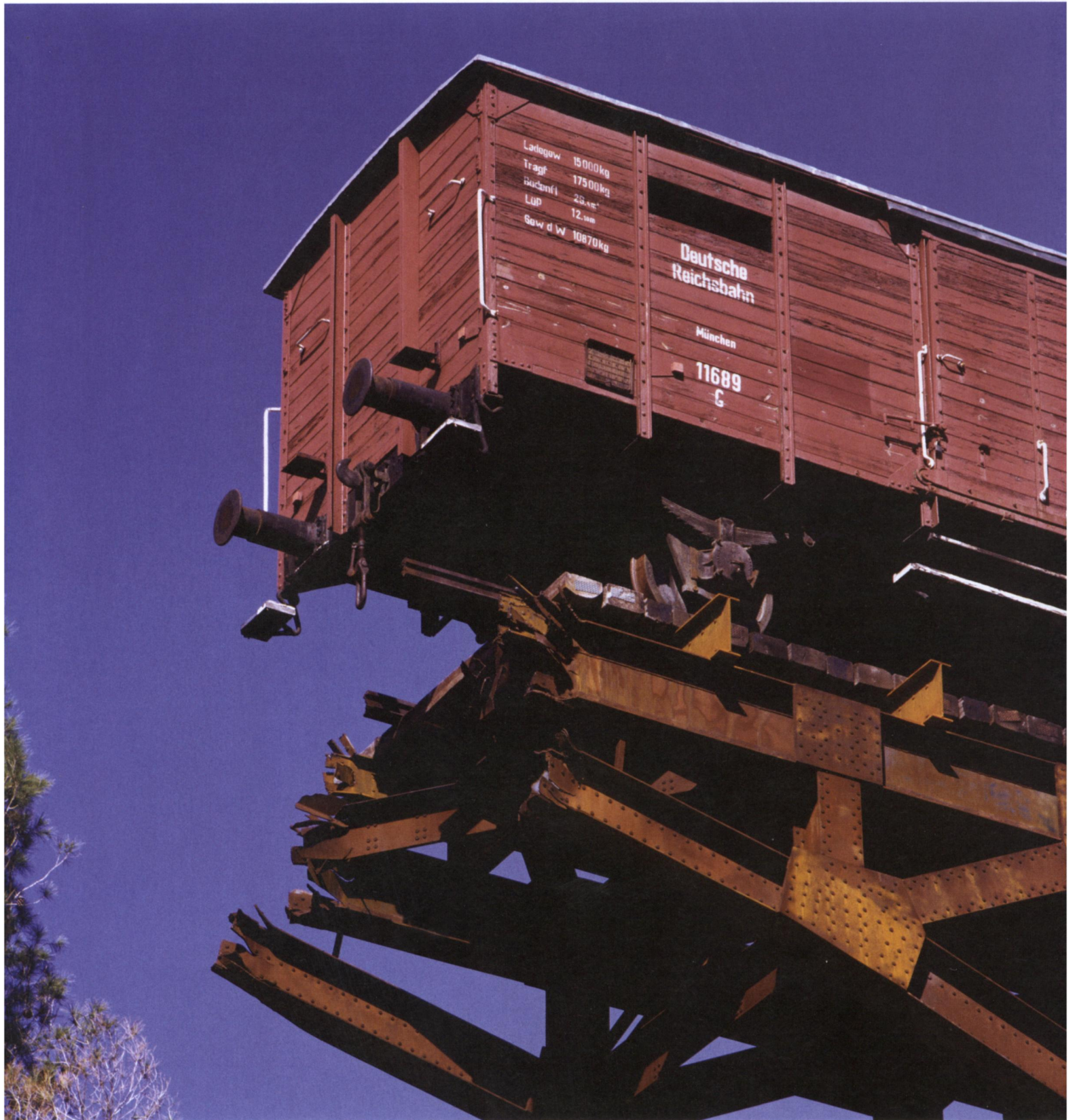
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Moshe Safdie, *Transport Memorial*, 1995, railway car, metal, wood, and concrete. Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem. (Artwork © Moshe Safdie; photograph by Michal Ronnen Safdie)

Israeli Holocaust Memorial Strategies at Yad Vashem: From Silence to Recognition

Natasha Goldman

Yad Vashem is the living site of Israeli national Holocaust memory, where every generation of Israelis adds another memorial to an evolving landscape. The memorials installed from 1953 until the late 1970s are either figural or minimalist in style and focus on the fighters, heroes, and martyrs of the Holocaust. Those installed since the 1980s, in contrast, tend to be conceptual or installation-oriented, often employing visual strategies of absence and disorientation—what

one may call postmodern approaches—and are dedicated to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. This essay traces the development of memorials at Yad Vashem in relation to changes in Israeli attitudes toward the Holocaust, survivors, and their traumas: from silence and shame to understanding and even sympathy.¹ At stake is the potential for memorials to provide a framework for trauma in visual form.²

The starting point of this study is the work of James E. Young, whose research on Holocaust memorials practically has made the subject a unique category of study within the intersecting disciplines of art history, literature, Jewish studies, and Holocaust studies.³ If Young examines theories of memory and collective memory to elucidate the ways in which Holocaust memorials embody current ideas about the past, then it is suggested here that trauma opens up another set of questions that are vital to the commissioning, building, and viewing of Holocaust memorials.

This essay therefore contributes to a larger literature of “trauma studies” in general and the intersection of trauma theory and art in particular.⁴ Most recently, Jill Bennett contributes a transformative analysis to trauma studies in elucidating the relationship between the work of art and the viewer as one that produces “affect.” She claims that “trauma related art is *transactive*, not *communicative*. It often touches us, but it does not communicate the ‘secret’ of personal experience. Affect is produced within and through a work, and it might be experienced by an audience coming to the work.” The viewer neither gains knowledge of the actual traumatic event nor identifies with the victim. An emotional or conceptual link is made between the viewer and a work of art, one which foregrounds the ultimate impossibility of a viewer experiencing anything close to lived trauma and its aftereffects.⁵

This conceptual engagement, in turn, is only possible when there is a potential listener. Bennett invokes Gayatri Spivak’s notion of the politics of resistance or liberation: not only must one speak, but one must be heard.⁶ Dori Laub theorizes such a position, explaining that the act of reading or listening to narratives of extreme human pain is an ethical choice, requiring tolerance of nonlinear narration, silence, and an inability to communicate.⁷

I overlap with and diverge from Bennett’s politics of engagement with works of art about trauma. Enabling is her explanation of a conceptual engagement between a work and the viewer. Bennett’s examples are articulated, however, within a frame where trauma can be vocalized—her discussion of the films of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Agreement are a good example of this. Sometimes trauma *does not have a space* in which it can be articulated. Significant in the case of Israel and Yad Vashem was the complete absence of willing listeners, in the first several decades after the nation’s founding, for Israeli Holocaust victims of trauma.

1. The differences between the early and late memorials might be seen as a transformation from modern to postmodern approaches. My argument is not, however, about a history of style, and I want to avoid a too-easy parallel between the development of trauma in the public sphere and a perhaps too-easy delineation between the modern and the postmodern. Jean-François Lyotard argues that the postmodern is “always already” there, a formulation that remains highly influential. See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

2. Dalia Manor writes that while “much has been published about the Holocaust, about its impact on Israel, and about art that deals with trauma . . . on the subject of Israeli art and the Holocaust very little has been added [since 1995] . . . there have been very few developments in Israeli art and its relationship to the Holocaust.” See Manor, “From Rejection to Recognition: Israeli Art and the Holocaust,” in *Absence/Presence: Critical Essays in the Artistic Memory of the Holocaust*, ed. Stephen C. Feinstein (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 317.

3. James E. Young, ed., *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorial Museums in History* (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and the Jewish Museum, 1994); James E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and*

My analysis is not a teleology of Holocaust memorials at Yad Vashem, which would imply that Israeli attitudes toward the Holocaust have developed in a positive and unproblematic way. Rather, my point is that as an understanding of trauma evolved in the political, historical, and medical fields, a way to talk about trauma emerged that had repercussions in the visual field of memorial-making. Discourse about trauma has been facilitated only in certain places at certain times—and not in Israel until the late 1980s. This study aims to map the slow engagement with the language of trauma—in visual form—in the production of memorials at Yad Vashem. One way that a new awareness of trauma resonates at Yad Vashem, I argue, is via a representation of absence, which, in turn, is closely linked to psychoanalytic practice and postmodern art.

Psychoanalysts Dori Laub and Daniel Podell suggest that trauma is best understood by the metaphor of an empty space, a hole in the psyche.⁸ The recognition of that space—and not the filling of it—is a step on the way to healing and functioning in the normal world. In recent years Western Europe and the United States have witnessed a surge in the construction of Holocaust memorials that utilize empty spaces, voids, and disorientation, all motifs that fulfill Laub and Podell's description of psychological trauma. Horst Hoheisel's Ashcrott Brunnen (Kassel, 1987), for instance, and Jochen and Esther Gerz's Monument against Fascism (Hamburg Harburg, 1986–93) are both early examples. In architecture, Daniel Libeskind employs the aesthetics of empty spaces and disorientation in his Jewish Museum in Berlin (2001). Most recently, the proposed New York City 9/11 Memorial "Reflecting Absence" embodies what this author reluctantly sees as an overcodification of the aesthetics of absence and identification with victims that often exculpates the viewer from imagining both the space of perpetration and the space of victimization at the same time. As Bennett points out, it is always easy—and an easy way out—to take a moral position and identify with the victim.⁹ To negotiate one's difference from a notion is a far more difficult task.

It is no accident that each of the above is an example of postmodern art. Victor Burgin's essay "The Absence of Presence" defends Conceptual art against Greenbergian modernism and the revival of painting in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For Burgin, postmodern conceptual art is vital for its "recognizing, intervening within, realigning, reorganizing, these networks of differences in which the very definition of 'art' and what it represents is constituted: the glimpse it [conceptual art] allowed us of the possibility of the absence of 'presence,' and thus the possibility of change."¹⁰ Burgin's notion of postmodernism is decidedly style-based (starting with conceptualism) and opposed to Jean-François Lyotard's notion of postmodernism as being "always already" within modernism. For Burgin, "presence" is aligned with high modernism à la Greenberg, the "absence of presence" with postmodernism. Presence, Burgin argues, denies difference by "valorizing one term of an opposition in order to suppress another."¹¹ Without presence (i.e., in its absence), change can occur because oppositions are allowed to work with and against one another in a productive way: men/women; theory/practice; inside/outside of institutions—or, as Bennett would have it, speaker/listener; object/viewer. The recognition of difference between elements results in constructive thinking for both Bennett and Burgin. For the former, difference enables affect, a constructive engagement between object and viewer; for the

Meaning (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); and *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1988).

4. My dissertation, "Missing Absence: Trauma and National Memorials to the Holocaust (University of Rochester, 2002)," analyzes the many approaches to trauma and trauma studies, including those by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, Robert J. Lifton, and others. I focus on Jill Bennett here for her very new contribution to the field in terms of viewership. See Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
5. For the cited term and passage, see Bennett, 5 and 6. For the "conceptual link," see 4. Mark Godfrey comes close to this assessment in suggesting that a work of art can "question one's own role as a post-Holocaust subject, as one responsible in relation to the cause of such despair." See Godfrey, "Barnett Newman's Stations and the Memory of the Holocaust," *October* 108 (Spring 2004): 47. For art and trauma, see also Lisa Salzman and Eric Rosenberg, eds., *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2006).
6. Bennett, 4.

7. Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony, the Process and the Struggle," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 61–75; and "The Empty Circle," *American Psychiatric Association* 46, no. 2 (1988): 507–30.

8. Dori Laub and Daniel Podell, "Art and Trauma," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 76 (1995): 991–1005.

9. Bennett, 17.

10. Victor Burgin, "The Absence of Presence" (1984), in *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford, UK, and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 1100.

11. *Ibid.*, 1099.

latter, the recognition of difference effects change. Taken together in the case of Yad Vashem, affect and change are the very components that structure the later memorials.

A 2001 Yad Vashem press release states that in the midst of a communication revolution coinciding with “a backdrop of increasing interest in Holocaust studies and research” and dramatic changes in “the basic tools for commemoration,” a new plan is needed for the Heroes and Martyrs Authority. An increase of 32 percent in visitors from 1998 to 1999 indicates an upsurge of interest. Yad Vashem, in answer to this state of affairs, drew up a master plan, *Yad Vashem 2001*, which includes a monument for the survivors: “For more than two generations, the survivors have borne witness. Out of their memory and pain, they endeavored to rebuild their lives. The wall reminds us of our duty to remember and transmit the legacy to future generations.”¹² Fifty years after the first memorial was installed at Yad Vashem, all survivors are recognized. During those decades, shame and silence defined the commonly held Israeli attitude toward survivors. Instead of embodying the fighting, heroic, brave “new Jews,” the survivors represented the European intellectual or overly religious “old Jew,” unfit for the new country and its Zionist ideals, an attitude made palpable in Yad Vashem’s early memorials.

Denial of Survivors: The Fighters in Figural and Minimal Form

Yad Vashem’s figural Wall of Remembrance, a modified copy of Nathan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Monument (1948), epitomizes Zionist ideology: it embodies a heightened contrast between the passive old Jews and the fighting new Jews, thereby heroizing the resistance fighters. Until the 1990s, the relief of the fighters functioned as a sign for Yad Vashem as a whole (and was on the cover of the 1967 Yad Vashem information pamphlet, reprinted until the 1980s). It is located on the square of the same name where Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day takes place, signifying a work to be viewed by large groups of people. Groups or representatives of groups are expected to leave the memorial with a sense of pride in the ghetto fighters and a clear message of Israeli strength. An acknowledgement of the difficulties of survivors or sympathy for victims is markedly absent.

The monument consists of reliefs on two walls (instead of back to back on one wall, as in the original in Warsaw), so that one can see both reliefs simultaneously. The frontal relief, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, was installed at Yad Vashem in 1976. In Israel, the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) was understood as a descendant of the Maccabees, and Israel a descendant of the ghetto fighters. The martyrs’ relief, *The Last March*, followed eighteen months later.¹³ Young analyzes the procession relief in terms of its iconographical reference, the Arch of Titus, on which the Romans triumphantly carry a menorah after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Rapoport substitutes the Torah for the menorah, for the former more clearly embodies tradition, diaspora, and the old Jew.¹⁴ The menorah, on the other hand, appeared as a symbol in Israeli memorials in the 1950s and 1960s for its link to the heroic Maccabee story, thereby reflecting a Zionist tendency to hark back to biblical victories as a way to justify its ideology.¹⁵ An emphasis on old-world religiosity preserves stereotypes of the survivors and

12. *Yad Vashem, 2001* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2001).

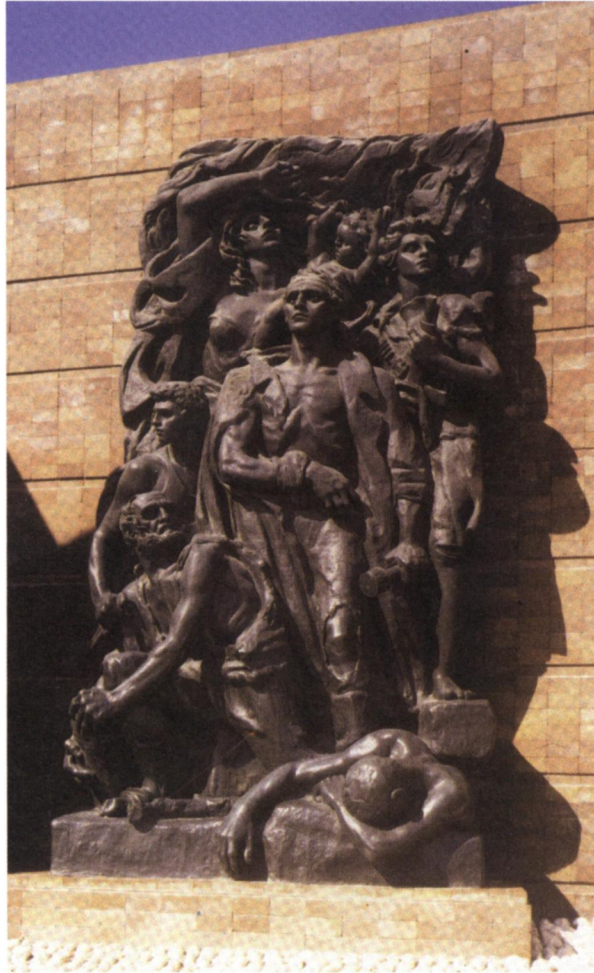
13. Young, *The Art of Memory*, 184.

14. The decision to recast the *Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Monument* in Israel came about partly amid fears that its existence in Poland would not be guaranteed. After the Six-Day War in 1967, Poles expelled Jews from the Communist party and unions in anti-Semitic purges. As a result of these events, American Jews and Israelis feared that the Jewish meaning of the memorial in Warsaw would be forgotten. Leon Jolson, an American survivor and philanthropist, commissioned a reproduction of the monument at Yad Vashem with several significant changes. Young, *The Art of Memory*, 183.

15. See Young, *The Art of Memory*, 174.

Nathan Rapoport, *The Ghetto Uprising*, from the Wall of Remembrance, 1976, cast bronze, 13 ft. 1½ in. x 9 ft. 8½ in. x 49¼ in. (4 x 2.95 x 1.25 m). Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem, gift of Leon and Ann Jolson. (Artwork © Estate of Nathan Rapoport; photograph provided by Yad Vashem)

Nathan Rapoport, *The Last March*, from the Wall of Remembrance, detail, 1976, cast bronze, 16 ft. 5 in. x 6 ft. 6½ in. (5 x 2 m). Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem, gift of Leon and Ann Jolson. (Artwork © Estate of Nathan Rapoport; photograph provided by Yad Vashem)



victims; the pain of the many is suppressed in favor of the heroism of the few, an Israeli attitude not uncommon at the time.

Dina Porat explains that although differences of opinion exist regarding the treatment of survivors in postwar Israel, the prevailing belief “is the critical one: attitudes toward the Jews of Europe and those survivors who came to Israel during the 1940s and early 1950s are a source of disgrace to Israeli society.”¹⁶ This opinion contends that it was only after the Adolf Eichmann trial in 1961–62 that attitudes began to soften from contempt and criticism to empathy and identification in the 1970s and 1980s. This chronology of attitudes, she writes, is “common knowledge” in Israeli society.

Arriving in Israel either during World War II or after their stays in displaced-persons camps, survivors found that their experiences in the concentration camps and death camps were virtually ignored.¹⁷ Survivors arriving during the period of 1948–53 “were registered and various particulars (about them) were recorded, but apparently none of the questions asked related to their experiences during the Holocaust.”¹⁸ They were expected to participate in a positive common struggle of building a new community and their difficulties were “forcefully repressed but not solved.”¹⁹ Before the 1962 Eichmann trial, “the attitude of the public and government institutions amounted to a denial that any problems existed which warranted any special attention . . . there was an attitude prevailing towards the survivor of an uneasiness, if not outright embarrassment” about the assumed passivity, helplessness, humiliation, weakness, and cowardice implied in the “shameful secret” or myth that the survivors had allowed themselves to be led like “sheep to the slaughter.”²⁰ This mentality heroized the fighter, placed blame on the dead, and failed to recognize the emotional pain of the survivors:

In the early days, the expression of an emotional burden of any segment of the Israeli population was considered inappropriate. During the 40s and 50s the model of the Sabra dominated Israeli culture, focusing on struggle and action and contribution to the welfare of society at the expense of individual emotional needs.²¹

Workers in the medical field, for their part, were not equipped to address the survivors’ experiences.²² When practitioners tried to encourage survivors to share their experiences, they found themselves changing the subject and refusing to work through their patients’ traumatic pasts. The survivors were silent because no one wanted to listen; the medical profession contributed to this “conspiracy of silence.”

An unwillingness to hear the survivors’ stories left no space for the healing effects of testimony, for those to whom Laub refers as the ethical, empathetic listeners. In this situation “untold stories often pass more powerfully from generation to generation than stories that are discussible . . . parents do not tell, and children do not ask,” resulting in a conspiracy of silence between survivors and their children.²³ Often survivors never sought therapy, but rather formed “normalization strategies” which, in Dan Bar-On’s opinion, could be another form of repression.²⁴ Only the fighters, Bar-On states, were lauded and made welcome: “In the political atmosphere of the War of Independence, there was a tendency to legitimize only those who fought in the ghetto uprisings or with the partisans.”²⁵

16. Dina Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes toward the Jews of Europe and Holocaust Survivors,” in *The Holocaust and History*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 785.

17. See Yael Danieli, “On Not Confronting the Holocaust,” in *Remembering for the Future: Working Papers and Addenda*, vol. 2, ed. Yehuda Bauer et al. (Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press, 1989), 1257.

18. H. Z. Winnick, *Israel-Netherlands Symposium on the Impact of Persecution*, cited in Danieli, 1258.

19. Danieli, 1258, and L. Eitinger, cited in Danieli, 1258.

20. M. Vardy, *Counseling the Bereaved* (New York: Wurzweiler School of Social Work of Yeshiva University, 1977), 4–5. According to one kibbutz Haggadah, “Hitler alone is not responsible for the death of six million—but all of us and above all the six million. If they knew that the Jew had power, they would not have all been butchered . . .” See Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Politics in Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 55.

21. Dan Bar-On, “Transgenerational Aftereffects of the Holocaust in Israel: Three Generations,” in *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*, ed. Efraim Sicher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 107.

22. Danieli, 1261.

23. *Ibid.*, 99.

24. Dan Bar-On, *Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 24.

25. Bar-On, “Transgenerational Aftereffects,” 99.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising became a principal element in the developing myth of heroism in Israel's 1948 War of Independence—the order calling for national mobilization even cited the uprising as a heroic Jewish precedent.²⁶ When morale reached an all-time low at the kibbutz Yad Mordechai (the kibbutz's name translates as “memorial to Mordechai,” the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), the uprising became a prototype—troops debated whether to retreat from the Egyptians or to follow the ghetto fighters' model. They did retreat, but held off Egyptian forces long enough so that Tel Aviv could gather its own defenses and remain sovereign. The event was viewed not only as heroic—it was miraculous. The story of the ghetto fighters was glorified into a founding Israeli myth. In the 1950s and 1960s, although “there was no school curriculum at all concerning the subject [the Holocaust], every boy and girl was familiar with the name Anielewicz and the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, but only few had heard names like Treblinka and Auschwitz.”²⁷

Artists in the 1950s, meanwhile, glorified the image of the Israeli warrior “as one who surpassed ordinary mortals in stature, beauty, and stance,” an extreme reaction to the “derogatory image of the Diaspora Jew.”²⁸ Films dealt with Holocaust survivors, but often cast them in a Zionist light. Often they featured survivors as children who, at the climax of the film, lose their “feminine, Diasporic” characteristics, reach adulthood, and become Zionist new Jews.²⁹ While the Diaspora Jew was negated in art and film, the same image was highly politicized in public trials. In 1961–62, Eichmann was put on trial for the implementation of the mass murder of the Jewish people, changing the catastrophe of the Holocaust into a series of personalized stories with faces. Here there was a clear-cut enemy: a Nazi was on trial. Survivors were called upon to give their testimony; their stories were told for the first time. A new legitimacy was given to the story of the life and death of the simple Jew, one of the millions, who was neither a hero nor a traitor.³⁰ The trial gave momentum to Holocaust research, and “consciousness of the Holocaust fused into the hard core of Israeli collective identity.”³¹

Soon after, the abysmal weeks preceding the Six-Day War in 1967, which were marked by economic and psychological depression and the fear of another Holocaust, fused collective action and readiness against a life-or-death threat.³² The analogy of the Six-Day War to the Holocaust was exacerbated when many Israelis saw Arabs in the roles of Germans.³³ After Israel's victory, however, Israeli soldiers found themselves in the role of the oppressors in occupied territories, creating a confusing counterpart to their knowledge, however minimal, of German occupiers in Europe.³⁴ The perceived heroism of the Six-Day War coincided with the continual building of memorials for the fighters of the Holocaust.

Commemorating the Jewish resistance during the Holocaust, Buky Schwartz's Pillar of Heroism is an example of the “hero type” memorial at Yad Vashem. Unlike Rapoport's figural work, Schwartz's monument is minimal in style and embodies the minimalist “rhetoric of power” that Anna Chave so aptly describes when sculptural objects evoke a force upon the viewer.³⁵ Schwartz's twenty-one-meter-high stainless-steel pillar looms over the viewer, imposing in its towering presence.

Schwartz is a sculptor, video artist, and self-described Sabra whose work has been marked by an interest in modernist abstraction. Together with Pinhas Eshet,

26. Hannah Yablonka, “The Formation of Holocaust Consciousness in the State of Israel: The Early Days,” in *Breaking Crystal*, 121.

27. N. Keren, “Ideologies: Attitudes and Holocaust Teaching in the State of Israel—History and Recent Development,” in Bauer et al., *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 1, 1031. Chaim Schatzker writes that the educational curriculum did not include the Holocaust. The teachers themselves very often were survivors and perhaps were not capable of teaching children about experiences related to their own. Schatzker in *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 1, 970. Other sources indicate a frustration on the part of students who had to “tolerate” European teachers who embodied the negative image of the Diaspora Jew. During the Eichmann trial, Schatzker explains, it became clear to education professionals that students could not process the information they heard about the trial, Eichmann's actions, and survivors' stories, prompting a change in the school curriculum. See Chaim Schatzker, “The Impact of the Holocaust on Israeli Society and Israeli Education,” in *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 1, 968–74. See also Dina Porat, “Teaching the Holocaust to Israeli Students, 1974–1987,” in *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 3, 2692–97.

28. Esther Levinger, “Socialist-Zionist Ideology in Israeli War Memorials of the 1950s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (1993): 737.

29. Nurith Gertz, “From Jew to Hebrew: The ‘Zion Narrative’ in Israeli Cinema of the 1940s and 1950s,” in *Israeli Issues* 4, no. 4 (1998): 175–82.

30. Yechiam Weitz, “Political Dimensions of Holocaust Memory in Israel,” *The Shaping of Israeli Identity*, ed. Robert Wistrich and David Ohana (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 141.

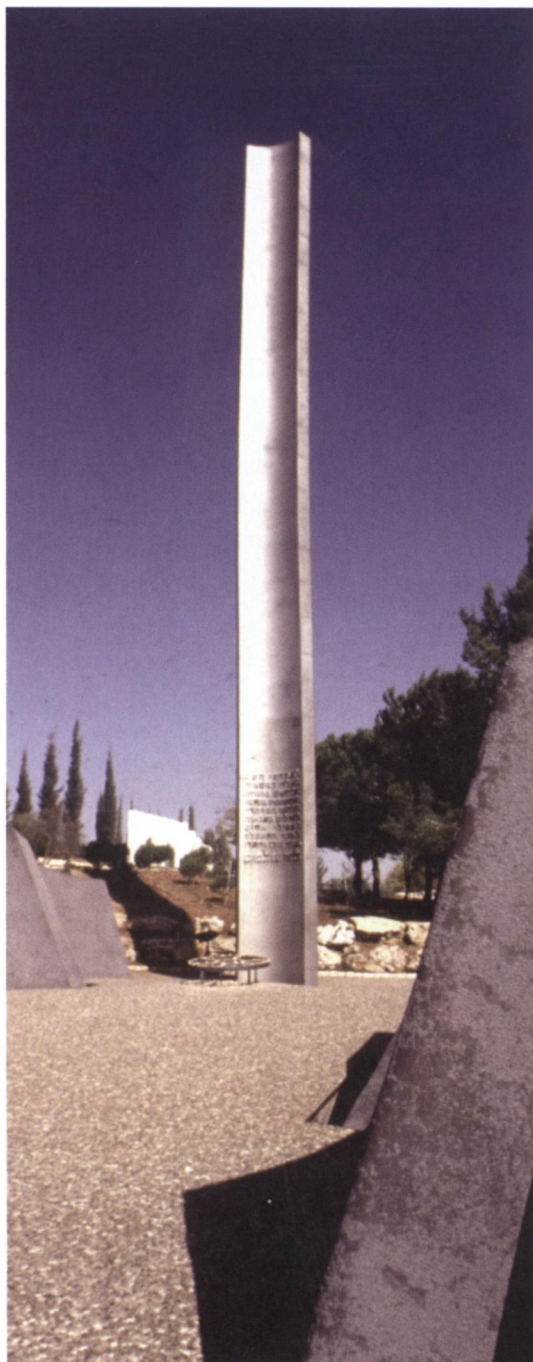
31. Yablonka, 133.

32. Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Fathers and Sons* (New York and Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1981), 216.

33. At the end of the war (viewed as a euphoric victory by Israel), Israel occupied the whole West Bank, including the Eastern part of Jerusalem (formerly Jordan), providing access to previously closed-off holy places. See Keren, 1030.

34. Porat, “Teaching the Holocaust,” 2693. In Zionist ideology, there were either oppressors or oppressed, and the history of the Holocaust suddenly put Israeli soldiers in the role of the oppressors.

35. Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” *Arts Magazine* 64 (January 1990): 44–63.



Buky Schwartz, *Pillar of Heroism*, installation view and detail with Hebrew inscription, 1968, steel and concrete, 68 ft. 10¼ in. high (21 m). Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem. (Artwork © Buky Schwartz; photograph provided by Yad Vashem)

he was one of the leading Ten Plus Sculptors, a group comprising young artists in the 1960s, many of whom studied in Paris and London, who were known for their unconventional exhibitions with unusual formats (miniature or exceptionally large or circular) and experiments in collective work.³⁶ Abstraction was a way for Israeli artists to enter the international art scene, to be taken seriously, and to avoid the conflicts of memory and identity in Israel.³⁷

On November 26, 1962, there were forty-one submissions for the competition to build the Pillar of Heroism. A one-hundred-foot-high tower by Naomi Henzck, a student of sculptor Ze'ev Ben Zvi, won first prize, but was never built. Instead, Schwarz's much more highly polished stainless-steel pillar was installed fifteen years later. Its inscription reads: "Now and forever in memory of those who rebelled in the camps and the ghettos, who fought in the woods, in the underground with the Allied forces; braved their way to Eretz Israel; and died sanctifying the name of God."³⁸ While the memorial explicitly valorizes the hero, the dedication speech of the memorial, delivered by Yitzak Arad, chief education officer of the army and former partisan, implicitly invokes the "ordinary Jew" who heroically lived through the Holocaust:

The world wonders from where our soldiers draw their inspiration for their bravery, what are its sources? The answer is that the source of our heroism in the present lies in the heritage of the heroism of the Jewish people, a heritage that is as old as the history of the Jewish people. . . . In this long chain we must see the special place of Jewish heroism in the Holocaust period: the heroism of the rebels in the ghettos and the death camps, of the Jewish partisans in the forests of Eastern Europe and in the Balkan mountains, of the Jewish underground fighters all over Europe. This chain of heroism also includes the heroism of the ordinary Jew who, under the conditions of the ghetto and the death camps, preserved his image as a human being, fought for his survival day after day, and thus heroically fought the battle of survival of the entire Jewish people.³⁹

For the Israeli public, the Pillar of Heroism glorifies the fighters and heroes and at the same time uncannily functions as a sign of the victims. Alan Grossberg's novel *See Under: Love* is recognized as a work about the Holocaust, trauma, and the Israeli public. In it, the Pillar of Heroism becomes a sign of the chimneys in camps of destruction:

Sometimes when Momik lies on his stomach in ambush, he sees the tall smokestack of the new building they just finished over on Mt. Herzl, which they call Yad Vashem, a funny sort of name, and he pretends it's a ship sailing by full of illegal immigrants from Over There that nobody wants to take in . . . and he's going to have to rescue that ship somehow . . . and when he asked his old people what the smokestack is for, they looked at each other, and finally Munin told him that there's a museum there, and Aaron Marcus, who hadn't been out of his house for a couple of years, asked, Is it an art museum? and Hannah Zeitrin smiled crookedly and said, Oh sure it is, a museum of human art, that's what kind of art.⁴⁰

"His old people" refers to the Holocaust survivors with whom Momik, a nine-year-old schoolboy, spends his afternoons after school. Momik exhibits the signs

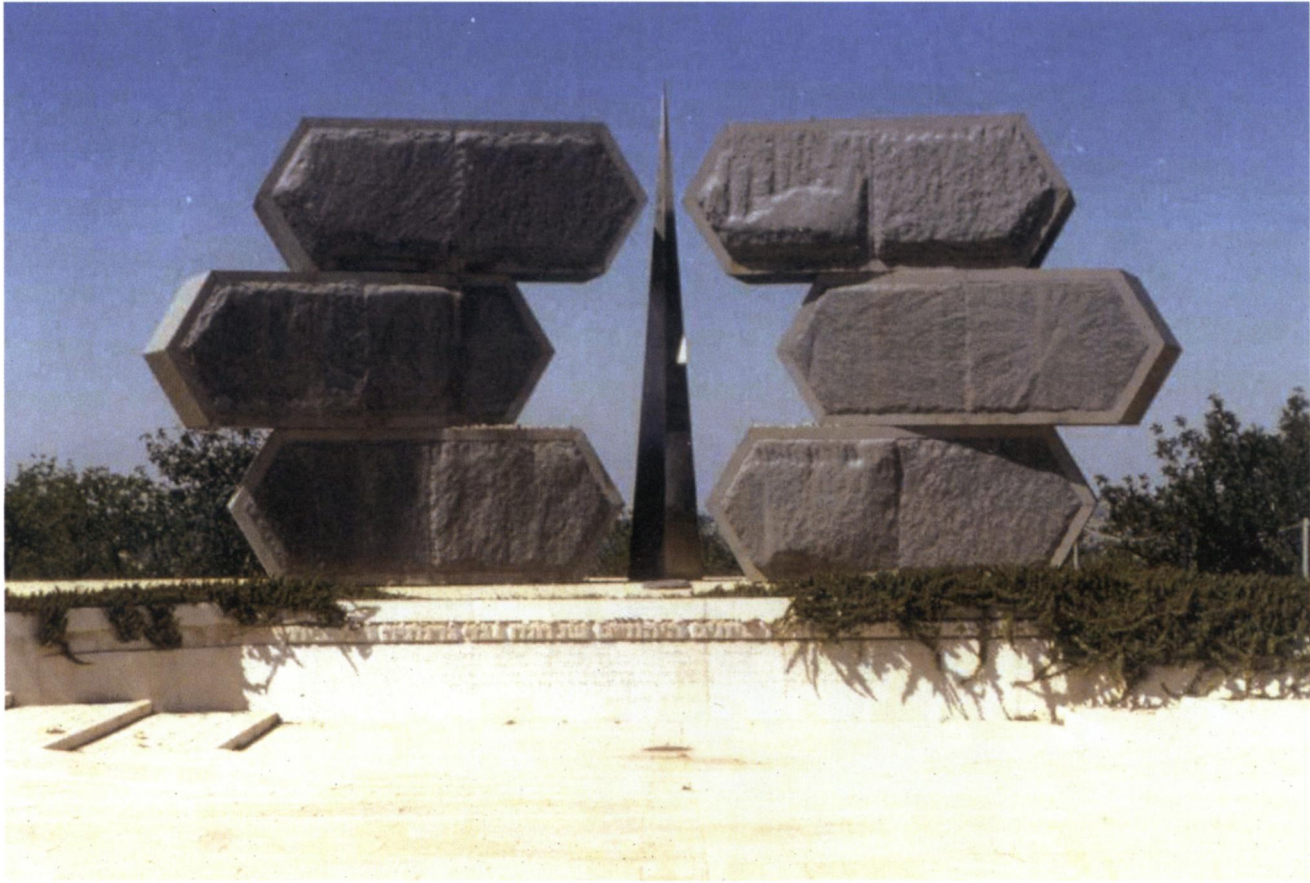
36. Gideon Ofrat, *One Hundred Years of Art in Israel*, trans. Peretz Kidron (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 226.

37. Moshe Barasch, Yona Fischer, and Yyal Zalmona, eds., *Artists of Israel 1920–1980* (New York: Jewish Museum, and Detroit: Wayne State University, 1981), 51.

38. See Yad Vashem Web site, <http://yad-vashem.org.il/visiting/sites/pillar.html>

39. Quoted in Young, *Texture of Memory*, 256, emphasis added.

40. David Grossman, *See Under: Love*, trans. Betsy Rosenberg (London: Cape, 1990), 55.



Bernie Fink, Monument to the Jewish Soldiers and Partisans Who Fought against Nazi Germany, 1985, granite and stainless steel, 16 ft. 5 in. x 6 ft. 6¼ in. x 6 ft. 6¼ in. (5 x 2 x 2 m). Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem. (Artwork © Bernie Fink; photograph provided by the author)

of second-generation trauma throughout the story; that he wants to save the immigrants on the boat heightens his feeling of responsibility for the first generation. He yearns to rescue not only the elusive immigrants on the imaginary boat, but also his parents from the silence that pervades their daily existence. For the survivor Hannah Zeitrin, “the smokestack” is reminiscent of the gas chambers, and the “museum of human life” refers to those smokestacks as well as to the museum at Yad Vashem. The minimalist monument to heroism becomes a monument to trauma. Official rhetoric is undermined by popular belief.

Bernie Fink’s Memorial to the Jewish Soldiers and Partisans Who Fought against Nazi Germany (1985) is dedicated to the Jewish heroes of the Holocaust who fought against the Nazis as Allied soldiers, as partisans, in the resistance movements, and in the ghettos. Even during the changing atmosphere regarding opinions about the Holocaust in the mid-1980s, Yad Vashem still filled its function as a memorial dedicated to “heroes and martyrs.” Six great, oblong, hexagonal granite blocks (representing the six million) rest in two stacks of three, forming an opening in the shape of a Jewish star. The monument stands in front of a tiered sunken plaza in the shape of the menorah, recalling ancient Jewish rebellion. Clearly symbolic elements heighten the connections to heroism, while the imposing sleek forms are linked, as is Schwartz’s memorial, to minimalism. Fink’s memorial was built just on the cusp of a historical moment when attitudes were beginning to change radically.



Moshe Safdie, Children's Memorial, details showing children's photographs and reflected memorial candles, 1987, Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem (artwork © Moshe Safdie; photographs by Michal Ronnen Safdie)

41. Moshe Safdie was born in Israel, but emigrated to Canada, with his family, when he was fifteen years old. See Uriel M. Adiv, "Safdie, Moshe," at Grove Art Online, available by subscription at <http://www.oup.com/online/groveart/>.

Postmodern Strategies: Absence and Disorientation in Memorials

In 1976 Moshe Safdie was invited to Yad Vashem to create a children's memorial, dedicated in 1987. The great success of his Habitat '67 apartment complex (for the 1967 World Exposition) in Montreal prompted the invitation, for the Israeli government found in him an Israeli architect of international acclaim.⁴¹ Safdie was asked by the Knesset to design a small museum to the one and a half million Jewish children killed in the Holocaust. Government officials imagined a documentary museum, with vitrines and historical explanations. Safdie, however, thought that visitors would be emotionally exhausted after their visits to the Historical Museum already located on the site. Instead of designing a documentary space, he presented an alternative model: an architectural complex consist-



ing of a room lined with mirrors, containing five endlessly reflecting candles. The administration, according to Safdie, was hesitant to build the memorial; the officials' main concern was that the use of light might be seen as uplifting.⁴² They stalled on a decision until American survivors saw the model and were immediately convinced of its power and relevance. Abraham and Edita Spiegel, whose son was killed at Auschwitz, saw the project and immediately sponsored its construction. Safdie is quick to point out that the Children's Memorial was built before the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, which fundamentally shifted war memorials away from heroizing motifs and toward contemplation, respect, and sorrow. It took American survivors and an exiled Israeli architect to make possible the first memorial at Yad Vashem that addressed victims, albeit a delineated group of victims—the children.

42. Interview with Moshe Safdie, August 26, 2004, Somerville, MA.

Upon entering the memorial, the visitor passes a large, mounted square of clear glass, inscribed to the memory of the children, and walks into a bunker-like tunnel that leads to a hollowed-out underground cavern. On the right hangs a plaque of Uziel Spiegel, Abraham and Edita Spiegel's son. Through a door and around the bend, the visitor is greeted by atonal music and a recorded recitation in English and Hebrew of children's names, ages, and places of origin, coinciding with large-format photographic portraits of children. They appear to represent a range of nationalities and religious backgrounds. A small door allows people to enter single file and leads to a darkened room. Reflected in mirrors, five memorial candles splinter into millions of lights. The Talmud states that souls of unburied dead never find rest in their endless wanderings about the universe, and the reflecting flames are for Safdie "the souls of the children."⁴³ A path leads visitors single-file through the space. As the room is disorienting and filled with both darkness and light, it might very well be the kind of visual code that Laub and Podell speak of when they write that art about trauma is marked by empty spaces, disorientation, and discomfort.⁴⁴ The change in attitudes in Israel allowed viewers to accept the visual metaphors and aesthetic codes employed in the Children's Memorial.

Regardless of visitors' reactions (some have called it "pure kitsch"), the memorial clearly does not depict Zionism in the guise of ghetto fighters. The move toward sympathizing with the innocent victims who were not fighters coincided with an acceptance of survivors and their stories that started in the early 1960s with the Eichmann trial. These attitudes visually coalesced in Safdie's memorial in 1987, when trauma had become an accepted medical condition for which the survivors and their families were treated. The psychotherapist Dina Wardi describes the role children play in family memory and inherited trauma.

The sign of the candle, for instance, takes on heightened significance when viewed in terms of Israeli psychotherapeutic practice that addresses trauma. While candles in the Children's Memorial signify deceased children, the metaphor of the candle more broadly signifies the memory of deceased family members in survivors' families. About the work Safdie said: "The more I entered the material, the more I became convinced that what was needed was a *ner neshama*, a memorial candle, multiplied to infinity through its mirror image."⁴⁵ A *ner neshama*, in the Jewish tradition, is a sign for the dead. Wardi describes the role of children of Holocaust survivors who are singled out to represent those who died in the Holocaust. Following ancient Jewish tradition, children often bear the names of dead relatives. When named after relatives who died in the Holocaust, she explains, these children, whom she calls "memorial candles," often bear the burden of Holocaust mourning for the entire family.

Wardi observes that survivors often single out one child to bear the burden of memory and death. That child often functions as a metaphor on whom parents unload their needs and conflicts.⁴⁶ Survivors considered the establishment of new families a response to the central element in the Nazi plan: to exterminate all Jews of Europe, and very important, mothers and children. "I was born in 1946," relates one survivor, "I have three given names: Arye, Zvi, Moshe, and three family names. I am actually carrying the whole family around

43. Moshe Safdie, *Jerusalem: The Future of the Past* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 197.

44. Laub and Podell, 991–1005.

45. Safdie, 196.

46. Dina Wardi and Efraim Sicher, "The Burden of Memory," in *Breaking Crystal*, 24.

on my shoulders.”⁴⁷ The other children in the family, at least consciously freed of these burdens, grow up to have semi-normal lives, while the memorial-candle child often has trouble with relationships, careers, and family. The memorial candle is the emotional healer, while the siblings are the physical healers, establishing their own families and thus “rebuilding” entire families.⁴⁸ Bar-On contributes to this research by demonstrating that not only the memorial-candle children, but also their siblings bear the burden of memory and trauma.⁴⁹ Classical memory theory orders images in empty spaces (such as empty buildings), so as to ensure better memory. In the case of the memorial candle, the memory of a dead relative is “shelved,” so to say, on the body of a living child, and memory spaces become a kind of memory body, for which there seems to be no precedent.⁵⁰ It might be safe to say, following Wardi, that the memorial-candle child functions for the parents as a continual, if rarely expressed, shock of past trauma.

A memorial for victims who are children is easier to make than a memorial for victims who are adults—and it is here that this memorial comes close to fulfilling what Bennett calls the “moralizing” function of works of art that clearly spell out “good” victims versus “evil” perpetrators, thereby leaving the position of the viewer allied with the victim and never contemplating his or her potentiality for sadistic behavior.⁵¹ In this instance, children obviously are not able to lead a resistance fight; their passivity is accepted as morally right and just. One could argue that the memorial embodies Zionist ideology that heroizes the fighter and blames the victim—the only reason these victims are not blamed is because they are children.⁵²

If the tradition of private mourning existed in the naming process described above, a more public shift in attitudes slowly developed. Bar-On’s study of Israeli families coincided with a noticeable change in Israeli society in the 1970s and 1980s, marked by a less judgmental attitude toward Holocaust survivors and a need to speak: “Acknowledgment of complex emotional processes, of the need for self-actualization, and of differences between individuals and generations came about only in the seventies and eighties. A more mature society emerged, which learned to acknowledge the high cost of previous patterns.”⁵³

This change in attitudes was found not only in the medical community, of which Bar-On is a part, but also in public speeches, newspapers, and literature. It is now recognized that this change in attitudes “has permeated almost every segment of the community.”⁵⁴ Porat analyzes three instances of speeches and writings by people who interacted with survivors in the 1950s, and who, in the 1990s, publicly made it known that they had rethought their positions in relation to the survivors. She refers to a speech by Ehud Barak, the novels of Hanoch Bartov, and the memoirs of a Holocaust survivor, Avraham Tory. Each text indicates a sympathetic position against the ideology that the victims “went like sheep to the slaughter.” Bartov stated publicly that he was unable to voice these opinions earlier, but that changes in Israeli culture in the 1990s made it possible—and even necessary—to do so. The changes were not sudden, but rather were the products of a series of events culminating in changes to commonly held beliefs, some of which—and by far not all—I have described above. Porat suggests factors contributing to this change:

47. Quoted in Diane Wardi, *Memorial Candles* (London: Tavistock Routledge, 1992), 28.

48. Wardi, *Memorial Candles*, 38.

49. Bar-On, *Fear and Hope*.

50. Aby Warburg’s approach to memory included the notion that bodies can carry memory, and although he was dealing specifically with painted images of bodies, his might be the only precedent for attempting to put memory on a body. He was concerned with the way that bodies, in paintings, carry explosive energies from the past in specific motifs, such as flowing gowns and hair. The viewer who recognizes these motifs as ones repeated from the past can be greeted by a bodily “shock” of recognition.

51. Bennett, 15.

52. In this context it is important to remark on the dualism of catastrophe and redemption, as Saul Friedländer explains it. The memorial on Mt. Zion is part of the orthodox Yeshiva complex and focuses its exhibition area on the catastrophe of the Holocaust. A full comparison between the Mt. Zion memorial and Yad Vashem would be a challenging project. Friedländer, “Memory of the Shoah in Israel,” in *The Art of Memory*.

53. Bar-On, *Fear and Hope*, 29.

54. Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 785.

- complicated wars in the Middle East lead to more empathy toward other Jews in distress;
- following the Yom Kippur War a process of self-examination included a rethinking of Zionism;
- a post-World War II concern with “the man in the street” as opposed to the hero;
- Ben-Gurion’s call for a “new man” was being replaced by a return to Jewish history and culture;
- the more Israel became established, the less it needed to cling to an idea of heroism; and
- a 1995 “each person has a name” ceremony in the Knesset commemorated the living.⁵⁵

The Gulf War played an important role, for various aspects of it were understood as metaphors for the Holocaust. Survivors, for instance, viewed themselves as “experts” about living under the threat of death.⁵⁶ Wearing gas masks reminded Israelis of the Holocaust, and the fact that gas was supplied to Iraq by German megacompanies only exacerbated the metaphor. While Saddam Hussein was compared to Hitler, Israelis compared their passive position with the passive situation of Jews in Europe fifty years earlier. The Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, dancing on their roofs at the sight of missiles falling over Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan, brought back the memory of Poles dancing at the sight of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The survivors, meanwhile, felt that they had “been through it already”:

We, the survivors, are the true Zionists of today, because we know what it means standing up against fears, against those who attack you. . . . We know, more than Sabras, more than newcomers from other countries and situations, the value of the Jewish state. . . . Each of us witnessed such horrors and suffering . . . that now a few bombs that destroyed a few buildings here and there, or being confined to your place for just a few weeks, and in your own country, seem to us a children’s game.⁵⁷

Moshe Zuckermann analyzes the Israeli press during the Gulf War and demonstrates through surveys that “Holocaust survivors and their families show the lowest level of anxiety compared to other groups in the population.”⁵⁸ Survivors knew all there was to know, writes Porat, and could not be frightened again by trifling details such as wearing gas masks. A newspaper article published ten days after the war started attested to the need to reevaluate notions about the Holocaust in light of the fears generated by the Gulf War:

Our attitude to the Jews murdered in the Holocaust, an attitude of hard-hearted vanity mixed with insecurity and anxiety, changed considerably. It became more sober, human, and soft, a lot less “Israeli,” a lot more “Jewish.” The certainty that “it will never happen to us” has turned into a realization that “it did happen to us.” . . . In this respect, the recent events are one more step in the process of changing our attitude [to] . . . the Jewish reaction in the war. The Jews of Europe took from us, perhaps finally,

55. These bullet points paraphrase Porat’s text. Porat explains that in the public debates of 1995, survivors were cared for so that they could serve as voters, but were received with contempt by Israelis. Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 795.

56. The following accounts of the Gulf War are from Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 793–94.

57. Conversation between Porat and Avraham Tory, February 1991, cited in Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 792.

58. Moshe Zuckermann, *Shoah baheder ha’arum* (*Holocaust in the Sealed Room*), cited in Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 794.

the status we assumed we deserved, the status of judges sitting, cold and distant, on the high bench, issuing a verdict on millions of Jews.⁵⁹

As attitudes toward the survivors changed, the possibility for a trauma victim to take the position as “speaker” emerged, thus enabling a position for the “listener.”⁶⁰ Between the period of pre-state Israel and the Gulf War, a language of trauma became accepted. Perhaps not unexpectedly, the forms chosen for official memorials also changed. While earlier memorials heroize the survivors who fought in resistance, later memorials embody a more open and empathetic—although not necessarily unproblematic—official attitude toward the victims and survivors.

The changes described in the preceding pages should not be called, too simply, “positive” changes. In his analysis of Israeli films from the 1940s through the 1960s, Gertz explains that new attitudes toward survivors resulted in representations that only reinforced Zionist ideology. While earlier films exaggerate Zionist ideals of heroism and negate images of Diaspora Jews, films in the 1960s show a strong relationship between the survivors and their Diaspora past.⁶¹ These films only bring to the surface what was hidden before: making these images visible is not necessarily positive, for the images are still parts of Zionist ideology. Before, they were hidden. Now, they are visible but otherwise unchanged. In the framework of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, the point at which one is willing and ready to listen to stories of extreme pain is an important step in a healing process that also marks an ethical decision to deal with the traumatic past. Hidden images come to the fore, but what matters are the ways in which they are handled and respected by viewers.

Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zemach’s Valley of the Communities (1987–92) at Yad Vashem embodies respect for the dead rather than praise for the heroes. Cut from natural bedrock, the valley is a labyrinthine structure divided into geographical areas naming Jewish communities that were practically—but not completely—destroyed.⁶² In the period in which the memorial was built, the concept of memorializing the dead paralleled Israeli cultural rhetoric that understood the survivors’ traumas and their relevance for contemporary Israeli society. To approach the memorial, one walks down a curving road. From above, the space resembles an archaeological site, with shining, cream-color stones that are reminiscent of those that line the Jerusalem streets. Before one enters the memorial, however, a vista of the next hill, covered with the buildings of the living communities of Jerusalem, creates a counterpart to the names of destroyed villages and cities below. The names of five thousand communities are carved into rocks that rise to heights of thirty or more feet.⁶³ “The valley itself is a labyrinth of courtyards and walls, of openings and dead ends in which it is intended that visitors will sense some degree of insecurity, of being trapped in a frustrating maze that threatens to collapse upon them, of being caught in a place from which escape is difficult.”⁶⁴

Similar to the experiences of individuals in the Children’s Memorial, visitors to the Valley of the Communities experience the site as individuals, for, due to its construction, it is practically impossible to view the memorial as part of a group of visitors. Different individuals might view the site in various ways. While Jewish visitors may search for the names of their families’ former homes,

59. Yechiam Weitz, “Yes, It Happened to Us As Well,” *Davar*, January 25, 1991, cited in Porat, “Israeli Society and Recent Attitudes,” 794.

60. Felman and Laub describe an ethics of listening, which Bennett, among others, criticizes for the seemingly facile appropriation of sympathy. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, eds., *Testimony: Crises in Witnessing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

61. Gertz, 175–96.

62. Efraim Sicher writes that a controversy arose during the planning of the valley because it paradoxically immortalizes the lost Jewish world and reconstructs it as a ruin, another *khurban*. The title “Valley of the Communities” ultimately was chosen over “Valley of the Destroyed Communities” as some Holocaust survivors *did* go back to live in their towns and villages. See Sicher, “The Burden of Memory: The Writing of the Post-Holocaust Generation,” in *Breaking Crystal*, 43.

63. One hundred and seven walls roughly correspond to the geographic arrangement of the map of Europe and North Africa. The names that appear in Hebrew characters are those commonly used by the Jews themselves, whereas those written in Latin characters were the versions popular with the non-Jews on the eve of the Second World War. The different sizes of font indicate the different sizes of the Jewish communities. The names are not engraved on the walls in lists, but appear to be haphazardly arranged. This was done in order to emphasize the dispersed nature of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora. See the Yad Vashem Web site at www.yad-vashem.org.

64. Yad Vashem Web site, http://yad-vashem.org.il/visiting/index_visiting.html.





Moshe Safdie, Transport Memorial, 1995, railway car, metal, wood, and concrete. Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem. (Artwork © Moshe Safdie; photograph by Michal Ronnen Safdie)

opposite:
Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zemach, Valley of the Communities, view into maze from above and detail of engraved names of communities (artwork © Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zemach; photographs by the author)

65. Judith Tydor Baumel, "In Everlasting Memory: Individual and Communal Holocaust Memory in Israel," in *The Shaping of Israeli Identity*, 145–70.

German or other European visitors might search for the names of their hometowns. Individuals are confronted with millions of dead, represented by the thousands of communities listed on the rocks. The viewer might be unprepared to experience this overwhelming number of dead, and the feeling of being lost and disoriented can be forced upon the viewer. Nevertheless, the form the memorial takes and the goal it fills, that is, to create a space where the viewer feels disoriented and alone, runs counter to the objectives of the hero-fighter Zionist memorials.

The Valley of the Communities is reminiscent of unofficial, private memorials in Israel. Judith Tydor Baumel analyzes forms of individual and communal Holocaust commemoration in Israel, referring to *yizkor* memorial books, monuments, memorial stones, and inscriptions on tombstones.⁶⁵ The Valley of the Communities, she writes, is a curious analogue to the creation of memorial

stones put up by small European communities in memory of their destroyed towns and villages. Individuals and small communities often concentrated on remembering the dead for their own commemoration—Zionist ideas of heroism and resistance are markedly absent. After the war, the *landsmanschaften*, organizations composed of former members of a European community, felt obliged to install memorial stones over nonexistent graves. This type of commemoration started in 1947.⁶⁶ By the 1960s, long boulevards lined with memorial stones were created, most notably at the entrances to the three main Tel Aviv cemeteries. Baumel writes that the use of stones in the Valley of the Communities is similar to *landsmanschaften* memorial stones—a place for reflection and a substitute grave, without martyrs' ashes. "The fact that this project was adopted by the vanguard of national Holocaust commemoration—a body which for years promoted the ethos of physical heroism in its memorials and research projects—is proof of a conceptual transition occurring within Israeli society." She continues, "Today there is a greater willingness to grant legitimacy to a European immigrant culture, to recognize its vitality and to incorporate parts of it within national commemorative patterns. . . . In the 1990s, the concept of memorializing the dead fit with Israeli cultural rhetoric that was sympathetic to survivors' traumas. For the first time, Israelis were willing to hear the stories and experiences of survivors."⁶⁷

While Safdie's second memorial, the Transport Memorial, is not dedicated to survivors, the voice of a survivor was given a preeminent space in it. Completed in 1994, the memorial consists of a railway car, donated from Poland, which precariously juts out from the replicated remains of a bridge after an explosion. The bundle of mangled steel is supported by a concrete retaining wall. A railway platform comes into view as the visitor descends the retaining wall, on which is inscribed an individual survivor's account of the conditions in similar cars: "Over one hundred people were packed into our cattle car. . . . It is impossible to describe the tragic situation in our airless, closed car. Everyone tried to push his way to a small air opening . . ." For the first time at Yad Vashem, a survivor's voice is made visible.

Wall in Tribute to the Survivors: Modernism Revisited

In the foregoing examples, the visual trope of trauma has yielded spaces for sympathetic viewers to consider the plight of all victims, without invoking a hierarchy among them. Since the redesigning of Yad Vashem in 2005, a new memorial entitled the Wall in Tribute to the Survivors greets visitors upon their entry. It is part of the much larger redesign of the museum complex by Moshe Safdie. Although the entire complex deserves attention, only the Wall in Tribute to the Survivors will be addressed here.

The Wall in Tribute to the Survivors is minimal in design, its massive white, hollow, concrete pillars creating a colonnade signifying both strength and classicism. At the same time, however, it invokes a minimal aesthetic associated with high modernism and with the obtrusive power of an object in relation to the viewer; an object is present in its very materiality, challenging the viewer and his or her notion of space and place.⁶⁸ If most of the memorials, including Safdie's earlier contributions, focus on absence and disorientation, this memorial can be read as combining this strategy with the earlier presence of minimalism.

66. Baumel, 155. In 1947, members of the former Polish-Jewish community of Zdonka-Wolla received a small bag of ashes from the Chelmno extermination camp in Poland. The *landsmanschaften* received a free plot of land from the Tel Aviv cemetery. It was not until the mid-1950s that a bureaucratic process was set up for the installation of this type of commemoration.

67. Baumel, 166.

68. Chave, 44–63.



Moshe Safdie, Wall in Tribute to the Survivors, 2005, concrete, Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem (artwork © Moshe Safdie; photograph by Timothy Hursley)

Vacillating between light and shadow, positive and negative space, a colonnade preserves absence, as have other memorials described above. The alternation of columns and negative space, however, adds another component to the visual trope of absence: presence. The columns are unabashedly there. More important, perhaps, is the biblical inscription that emphasizes healing and renewal: "I will put my breath into you and you shall live again, and I will set upon you your own soul."⁶⁹

The monument was designed to act as a border between the everyday world and a sacred world of memorialization. According to Safdie, "The Wall is a line from everyday to sacred: a border, an entrance; you know you are making a change to a new space."⁷⁰ If earlier memorials did not address survivors, a monument dedicated to them now enables the physical and mental transition to the site. It requests the viewer to move either singly or in a group: one can walk along or through a colonnade. Disorientation is not the goal, as is the case in the Valley of the Communities and the Children's Memorial. Instead of the motifs of the labyrinth or the darkened interior, Safdie gives us stable presence in familiar though almost overpowering forms. Leading beyond the dichotomy of modern and postmodern architecture, a colonnade dedicated to the survivors defines the entrance to Israel's national site of Holocaust memory.

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69. Ezekiel 37: 12, 14.

70. Interview with Safdie, July 26, 2004, Somerville, MA.