Endorsement

Katrin Antweiler’s book offers its readers a new set of concepts and empirical studies that deepen and challenge the established understandings about politics of Holocaust remembrance. Braiding together questions of public narrativization and historical emplotment of the Holocaust, the international human rights project and the imperative of contemporary museums to educate and raise awareness, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* shows with admirable deftness that museums, no less than prisons, clinics, or laboratories, are sites of discursive operations of power, discipline, and docile embodiment. While Antweiler skilfully navigates the empirical field of debates, exhibitions, installations, artefacts, and ideas found in three museums of Holocaust remembrance in Germany, Canada, and South Africa, she also needs to be credited with paying careful attention to what is not seen—to discursive inconsistencies and omissions she encountered during her fieldwork, to mnemonic myopias and exclusions, to tacit interests and agendas, as well as to power relations and structures of domination that remain hidden from view. In effect, the book masterfully critiques the presumed reparative effects of contemporary curatorial practices and acts of ‘putting memory on display’—acts that Antweiler aptly dubs ‘exhibitionary atonement’—and thus stipulates an important reflection about the political frameworks of visibility in relation to the broader narratives of redress for historical wrongdoing.

By meticulously demonstrating its central premise—that the way we remember the painful and difficult past is inseparable from the emergence of truth regimes, dominant norms, and citizen-subjects—the book casts into stark relief the key problem of global governmentality and global citizenship: that the notion of shared humanity and of the human as a universal rights holder is a politically contested and ethically suspect category. Drawing expertly on a wide spectrum of scholarly texts from memory and museum studies, governmentality theory, human rights museology, post-colonial debates, and critiques of neo-liberalism, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* presents the political and ethical implications of the imbrication of human rights with mnemonic discourses, museum displays, and educational programs with clarity, eloquence, and sophistication.

If indeed the provocative thesis at the heart of the book is correct—that museums’ capacity to disseminate knowledge and to produce memory is inseparable from the social processes of subjectification—how do we respond to these interpellations into position of moral innocence, dutiful and compassionate citizenship, and ‘norm entrepreneurship’? Equally critical of narratives of progr-
ress and tolerance, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* offers no easy answers; it does, however, outline for the reader a hypothetical project of a museum that is to come, and which the author intriguingly references as ‘the Museum of Doubt’. She thus explores the potential of memory to fuel resistance, counter-action, and civic disobedience, and the museum as a space where one can, potentially, become receptive to what is confronting, uncomfortable, perhaps even unbearable, in history.

This book is a *tour de force* critique of the ways in which in today’s world memory has been institutionalized, instrumentalized, and optimized to neo-liberal effects. Antweiler clearly demonstrates that memory has emerged as a key technique of power and governance. Anyone in doubt about how our dominant cultural patterns of remembrance and commemoration produce political rationalities, shape norms of conduct, and influence cultural policy, should reach for this brilliant and masterful text.